



## Author fights to stop heritage park, as 30,000 people back controversial plan

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# I'd be sad if this went ahead

says author and artist Mick Inkpen

But support for heritage centre bid outweighs objections by 7 to 1

### EXCLUSIVE

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THOUSANDS of people have had their say on contentious plans for a £20 million heritage and conservation centre.

The deadline for representations on the proposal for the Horkesley Park project was last Friday.

While the exact total of letters has not yet been determined, it is

thought that there have been almost 900

written in protest.

These include correspondence from Little-garth School in Nayland, South Suffolk MP Tim Yeo and the National Trust.

Concerns surround increased traffic and the detrimental impact on local businesses.

Also backing the protest was world-renowned children's author and artist Mick Inkpen, along with his author wife Debbie.

He said: "I'd be very sad to see the Stour Valley commercialised.

"It seems to me that although Horkesley Park wants to celebrate bygone, rural heritage, it is attempting to do this by resorting to the very opposite: the movement of many thousands of vehicles and the creation of a very large business.

"The sheer scale of the proposal seems at odds with the intention."

However, more than SEVEN times the number of supporters have written to Colchester Council to back the application.



■ Their vision – Kate, Hector and Stephen Bunting on the site of the proposed Horkesley Park development. (Q2LTZ-16)

Colchester Council planning officer John Davies said it had received about 7,000 representations in favour of the development.

These include 6,000 pre-printed postcards. In addition, Bunting and Sons said a petition in support of the proposal carried 22,839 signatures.

Among those backing the plans are MP Bob Russell, the Essex Chamber of Commerce and the Suffolk Horse Society.

Great Horkesley Cricket Club has also pledged its support.

A letter from chairman David Laitt states: "We believe that this project will not only benefit Colchester in terms of jobs, but will also provide a valuable educational resource.

"Too much of the local countryside has been lost to housing, but this project will retain the countryside ideals which are close to many people's hearts."

## Protest group sets out its objections

THE Stour Valley Action Group has submitted a 17-page objection letter to the proposals for Horkesley Park.

Members employed their own independent consultants to prepare the document, with a number of detailed reasons set out to explain their anti-stance. These include their belief

that the application is a "thinly disguised" attempt to get planning permission for the buildings and infrastructure of a shopping village.

They also said the applicants had not demonstrated a need for the development.

A statement from the group adds: "Our conclusion is that

the application is defective on so many grounds that it should be withdrawn and abandoned by Bunting and Sons before any more public resources are wasted on its evaluation."

The full document can be read at [stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk/HorkesleyPark2.html](http://stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk/HorkesleyPark2.html)

