



Dear Member,

June 2011

I am sure that by now you all know that the Horkesley Park Planning Application number 090231 submitted by Buntings in February 2009 was refused by the Colchester Borough Council Planning Committee at their meeting on May 26th. The Councillors voted 11 – 1 for refusal at the end of a very long and interesting meeting.

The Councillors were primarily judging the Application against the exceptionally detailed report prepared by their Officers which looked at all the benefits and disbenefits of the Application. It recommended refusal; they found that it was contrary to policy at National, Regional and Local level on many grounds. They took advice from their own consultants, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners and Savill, Bird & Axon as well as their own Strategic Policy and Regeneration department. The Councillors went to great trouble to assess the Application themselves and the site visit on the evening of May 24th obviously had a major impact on their decision. Above all, it was the beauty, peace and tranquillity of the valley to the north of the site and the idyllic setting of the Grade I Listed All Saints Church, which would have been engulfed by the development, that seemed to impress them most. They pointed out that AONB's are all about the protection of the existing landscape rather than development for leisure purposes as is the case for National Parks. As an AONB, the Dedham Vale has this protection.

Prior to the Councillors' decision making, both sides gave extensive presentations. Buntings were represented chiefly by members of the family, employees and business associates. The opposition was represented by the Dedham Vale Society, SVAG, CPREssex, Little Horkesley Parish Council, Nayland Parish Council, Suffolk Preservation Society, Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project and the Colne Stour Countryside Association. In addition, three individuals made their own presentations and a letter on Suffolk Punches was read.

We are sure that the consistent opposition to the applications for Horkesley Park over the last ten years will have had a significant impact on the Council's decision on May 26th. As members of SVAG you have played a great part in this but we must also recognise the support particularly from the Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society, the Dedham Vale Society, the Colne Stour Countryside Association, Little Horkesley Parish Council, CPREssex and many, many other organisations and individuals too numerous to mention.

At this stage, we do not know what will happen next. We very much hope that Buntings will accept the overwhelming rejection by the Council and the community. They do of course have the right of Appeal and other possible remedies if they think they have sufficient grounds. An Appeal will be very expensive for the Applicant, the Council Tax payers of Colchester and, possibly, SVAG and other conservation groups. Let us cross that bridge when we come to it!

Thank you all for everything you have done over the years to help everybody achieve this magnificent result !

Will Pavry
Chairman

If we do not already have it, please send us your e-mail address to info@stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk and watch our website on www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk