

Heritage park bid is dealt a new blow

Business behind the project goes into administration

The family business behind plans for a controversial heritage centre in the Stour Valley has gone into administration.

Bunting and Sons, which has been in existence since 1820, went into administration on Wednesday.

In a statement released yesterday, partner Stephen Bunting said the partners of the company, behind the Stour Valley Visitor Centre at Horkesley Park, were committed to working with the administrators in order to reach a "swift reso-

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lution". He said: "Bunting and Sons has been placed in administration by the bank.

"The partners of Bunting and Sons are deeply saddened by this turn of events which has become unavoidable due to the protracted nature of the ongoing planning application for the creation of the

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Stour Valley Visitor Centre at Horkesley Park.

"The partners are committed to working with the bank's administrators in dealing with this situation. All parties involved remain confident of a positive outcome and swift resolution."

The news comes just weeks after hearings took place as part of an appeal against a refusal to grant planning permission for the Stour Valley Visitor Centre.

But it is believed the current situation will not put an end to the proposed heritage attraction and that the administrators will be looking at the planning application and its value.

Richard Hawes and Dominic Wong of Deloitte, the business advisory firm, have been appointed joint administrators.

A statement released by Deloitte said the joint administrators were continuing to trade while assessing the best options for the business and assets.

The statement added: "Bunting and Sons owns and operates a number of businesses in the rural community in and around the Borough of Colchester, Essex. These include Westwood Park and Horkesley Park.

"Horkesley Park consists of approximately 113 acres of land which is the subject of an ongoing planning application for a heritage centre."

Mr Hawes added: "This site forms an important part of the rural landscape, but had been under financial pressure for a period of time.

"We are continuing to trade the business in order to secure the best outcome."