

# Administrators called in to save family company

## Future of visitor centre plunged into doubt

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**Plans for a multi-million pound tourist centre near Nayland hang in the balance after news the applicant has gone into administration.**

Family firm Bunting & Sons is behind a scheme to develop 117 acres of land off the A134 at Great Horkesley to include a 101-acre county park, a Suffolk Punch breeding centre and art and craft studios.

But Bristol-based administrators Deloitte has been appointed by the bank to handle the company's affairs.

It says Bunting & Sons is to continue trading while the financial position of the company is assessed.

In a statement, Bunting & Sons said it was "deeply saddened" by the turn of events

which had become unavoidable "due to the protracted nature of the ongoing planning application for the creation of the Stour Valley Visitor Centre at Horkesley Park".

A spokeswoman said: "All parties involved remain confident of a positive outcome and swift resolution."

The family company, which spans seven generations in the Colchester area, runs Westwood Park business and hospitality centre at Great Horkesley, as well as Carter's Vineyards and the Horkesley Park Suffolk Punch display team.

Its planning application for the Stour Valley Visitor Centre at Horkesley Park was rejected by Colchester Borough Council earlier this year, with opposition from community groups, and the company appealed the decision.

A government inspector heard the arguments for

and against the creation of the visitor centre during an appeal hearing earlier this month, and a ruling is expected in January.

The business claimed the £12.9million scheme, including a £500,000 promotional campaign, would be a year-round attraction and create nearly 150 full and part-time jobs.

The planning inquiry was shorter than expected after Bunting & Sons decided it would not pay for legal representation at the hearing.

A spokesman for Deloitte said: "The joint administrators were appointed by the court following a failed bid by the directors to refinance the businesses.

"The joint administrators are continuing to trade on a limited basis while a controlled wind down of Westwood Park is affected and will continue to manage the exit of tenants from the properties."