



■ Say it with banners – members of the Stour Valley Action Group protesting against plans for Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre. They are concerned about extra traffic the development will bring Pictures: NIGEL BROWN QVHYL

Fight against centre is taken to the road

HUNDREDS of campaigners brought traffic to a standstill in Constable Country with a four-wheeled protest at plans for a heritage centre.

About 200 supporters of Stour Valley Action Group took to the road in a cavalcade of weird and wonderful vehicles yesterday, to highlight their concerns about the proposed Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre.

They honked their horns as they drove up and down the A134 between Nags Corner in Nayland, and Coach Road, Great Horkesley, for an hour to demonstrate the pressure they believe the development will put on the route and the surrounding network of country lanes.

Lorries, tractors, vintage cars, fire engines and military vehicles decorated with posters "Say No to Horkesley Park", "Dedham Vale Not for Sale" and "Constable would have hated it" all joined the motoring convoy.

Meanwhile, supporters waving placards lined the roadside to cheer them on.

Those caught up in the gridlock expressed some frustration, but their complaints served to fuel the protesters' fire.

Will Pavry, group chairman, said: "We are doing this to bring

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to the attention of the local area the potentially adverse impact the Horkesley Park development will have on the A134 and all the other local roads.

"We want to make sure the community at large is fully aware of the impact, and we thought the bank holiday an appropriate time to do it as it will have had the least impact on commercial life."

Mr Pavry was backed by fellow protester, Ed Romerlee, 25, of School Street, Stoke-by-Nayland, who said: "This is what the traffic could be like on a daily basis. It's a disgrace. We live in a beautiful area and this application has got a lot of people's backs up."

"I appreciate some people may see it as Nimbyism but you have to protect your own back yard when it's as special as this."

Applicant Bunting and Sons said in its application to Colchester Council that an independent travel assessment found the roads could accommodate predicted traffic levels.

Stephen Bunting, partner in the family company, said: "As far as we are concerned, it was just a publicity stunt."

"The transport assessments

that have been undertaken by professional specialists are far reaching, and include traffic impact assessments, schedules of road improvements and a com-

prehensive travel plan, which promotes non car travel.

"They have concluded that the Horkesley Park proposals are entirely acceptable."

WHAT THE PUBLIC SAY

Sarah Newton, a mother of three, of The Crescent, Great Horkesley, said: "It's just awful to think this is what it could be like every Bank Holiday, if not worse."



"The local roads and the infrastructure are just not up to taking this volume of traffic and we are concerned it will lead to long tail backs and possibly accidents."

Louise Killick, 48, of The Causeway, Great Horkesley said: "I didn't believe there would be so many people here today and I think it does demonstrate how busy this road could be. If this development goes ahead it could be worse. "This is a really lovely part of the countryside. If you build something like that, there is no going back."



Anita Golding, 50, of Water Lane, Great Horkesley, said: "On a normal day, it is a busy road and you have to wait for a long time to even pull onto it. "With the numbers they are talking about, the traffic level is a major concern, particularly for my children, who have to walk down these lanes to catch a bus."

