

# Legal threat over tourist site 'claims'

**£20MILLION PROPOSAL:** Developer wants 'misleading' information withdrawn

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**By Roddy Ashworth**

A ROW over a proposed conservation and heritage centre on the edge of Constable Country

could end up being resolved in court, the man behind it warned yesterday.

Stephen Bunting, whose latest plan to create a rural tourist attraction in Great Horkesley was unveiled last month, claimed that a pressure group

opposing the proposals had distributed "misleading" information about it.

And he said that unless the allegations were withdrawn, he would consider taking the matter to a judicial review.

Mr Bunting said the claims

were made in a newsletter sent out by the Stour Valley Action Group (SVAG) last week and that if left uncorrected, they could lead to people deciding to formally object to the planning application for Horkesley Park, which is being considered by

Colchester Borough Council. The £20million Horkesley Park scheme, billed as "a celebration of the English countryside", would see a 117-acre site transformed into parkland and gardens

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containing an exhibition centre, an art gallery, shops, restaurants and a Suffolk Punch breeding centre.

But some local people fear the scheme could cause traffic gridlock in roads around the area and lead to noise and light pollution in the adjacent Dedham Vale, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Mr Bunting said yesterday: "I am not in any way trying to stifle debate or impinge on anybody's freedom of speech. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, and of course I respect that.

"But this letter contains things that are just not true. I have written to SVAG and asked them to correct those parts.

"If they fail to do so, it is likely there will be a judicial review."

Mr Bunting said two of the areas he felt were misleading in the letter related to visitor numbers and the number of jobs that Horkesley Park would create.

And he urged people to check the planning application for themselves before making judgments about its contents.

However, yesterday Will Pavry, chairman of SVAG, said he was not aware of any errors in the four-page newsletter sent out by the organisation, and that the figures had been based on those contained in the application.

"I have not seen the letter from Stephen Bunting," he said.

"But all of the figures we have taken come from the documents he has provided. We have been careful as to what we put in our newsletters. I would be very surprised if there are genuine errors.

"Clearly, we have presented the information very much from the point of view of those who are concerned about the effect this could have on the Dedham Vale AONB, while he presents it from his point of view. That is always going to be the case.

"We are concerned that this is primarily going to be a retail development."