



## STOUR VALLEY ACTION GROUP PRESS RELEASE

### 24th April 2009

Today's Essex County Standard carries a shocking banner headline 'Author fights to stop heritage park, as 30,000 people back controversial plan.'

This 30,000 figure is wrong and merits an immediate response.

How is this figure arrived at? According to the article on page 8 of today's ECS, 22,839 people signed a petition in support of a previous Horkesley Park Application in 2007/8. The article also states that 6,000 pre-paid postcards in support of the current application have been received by CBC. It fails to mention that the original petition was discounted by CBC as it applies to a previous Application. All signatories were sent pre-paid postcards to repeat their support this time round and some seem to have replied by signing a very brief, pre-printed statement. Thus a sizable proportion of the headline 30,000 are likely to be duplicated names. In respect of the current Application, no more than 6,000 can possibly be counted.

The SVAG website contains details of how the original petition was gathered, by the showing of Suffolk Punches at agricultural fairs and other public places, by presenting the Suffolk Punch at the centre of a very sketchy Horkesley Park plan, and on many occasions by the offer to signatories of discount vouchers to meals at the Buntings' Anchor Inn in Nayland.

(See <http://www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk/Files/Newsflash7March2009.pdf> and <http://www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk/Files/Newsflash28June07.pdf> )

This petition can have no possible relevance to the current Application.

The website also contains details of the pre-paid postcard campaign.

(See <http://www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk/Campaign.html#PrePaidPostcard> ) Post cards were hand-delivered to many villages in the area, as well as being posted to those who signed the petition. Again the information was sketchy, making no mention of retail elements, admission charges or other commercial elements of the scheme, and asking people simply to trust to broad assertions that Horkesley Park will 'benefit the countryside' and 'will not cause traffic problems.' These cards cannot possibly be treated as serious statements of support!

We believe the public should compare the weight and meaning of these 6,000 reply paid post cards (if that is indeed the correct figure) against the many and lengthy letters sent unsolicited by other members of the public, who were better informed of the issue, who were offered no cheap meals and even paid their own postage.

Colchester Borough Council is still counting, but we believe that to date some 1,000 letters of objection have been received, and some 300 letters in support. Three hundred, not 30,000!

*Suffolk Punch cartoon image available for reproduction on request.*

Contact: Will Pavry 07740783863

Georgina Harding 07891 033 369

SVAG website: [www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk](http://www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk)