

*The following letter will be sent to every member of the Dedham Vale Society during the week commencing 16 March 2009. The committee feel it is really important that members consider the effect of this proposal on the AONB and register their views by letter or email to Mr John Davies well before the final date for submissions on April 17.*

Dear Member,

12<sup>th</sup> March, 2009.

### **HORKESLEY PARK CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE CENTRE**

For the last 70 years the Dedham Vale Society has seen its role as being to protect the peace, tranquillity and beauty of the Dedham Vale from inappropriate development. Whilst fulfilling this role, the Society has always recognised that we live in a rapidly changing environment and sought to assist in managing that change.

Although the educational elements of the Horkesley Park proposals contain much that can be admired, ***the Society believes that it must be opposed as a totally inappropriate development because of its sheer size and serious adverse impact on the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as a whole.***

As the application is outside the Colchester Plan, it has been designated a departure application and, thereby, any decision by CBC must be reviewed to the Regional Office of Government.

**We would ask you, and as many others as you can persuade, to write to:**

John Davies, Principal Planning Officer,  
Colchester Borough Council,  
PO Box 889,  
Town Hall,  
Colchester CO1 1FL.  
or e-mail to: [planning.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@colchester.gov.uk)

**Application No. 090231 MUST be quoted and your address must be given on any letter or email, which must be received by 17<sup>th</sup> April.** Your letters and emails need not be long but will weigh in the consideration of this application. **NUMBERS REALLY DO MATTER – IT IS VITAL THAT AS MANY LETTERS/E-MAILS AS POSSIBLE ARE SENT.**

The following objections have been agreed by the committee of the Dedham Vale Society and you may care to consider them in composing your response:

- 1 The application predicts first year attendance of 485,000 with a turn over of £13.4 m – this must represent an inappropriate development as defined in the CBC Core Strategy Document.
- 2 ***The income for the first year includes £2.8 m from food and restaurant sales and £7.3m from “gifts” – this is, therefore, a retail outlet and such out of town retail facilities are specifically excluded by the national guidelines (contained in PPS6).***
- 3 The forecast attendance is vastly larger than Flatford (250,000), Sutton Hoo (>200,000), Colchester Castle (93,000) – only Colchester Zoo (nowhere near the AONB) is comparable.

- 4 The estimate is that 179 jobs would be lost in local businesses, but that only 155 would be created. They also claim it would create other unquantified jobs in the local economy.
- 5 The application includes “hopper bus” services from Horkesley Park to Carter’s Vineyard, Dedham and Flatford – it is therefore obvious that the management of Horkesley Park plan to encourage people to visit the whole of the Dedham Vale.
- 6 The road infrastructure giving access to the park is inadequate – the application assumes that the A12 Cuckoo Farm junction will be complete by 2011 and the vast majority of traffic will move up the A134. There must be serious doubts, in the present financial climate, that a major junction will be built in that timescale - they cannot afford to mend the potholes!!  
Additionally, people are not sheep and they will exit the A12 anywhere from Higham to Eight Ash Green and move across the AONB. This will be exacerbated by the increasing number of SATNAV systems, which do not follow the directions of developers.
- 7 The road structure around the Park is totally inadequate – the A134 itself has been assessed by the AA as being one of 40 most dangerous roads in England and many side roads into the AONB are single track.
- 8 ***Horkesley Park stands on a hill looking out over the Dedham Vale and will undoubtedly create light and noise pollution across a wide area.***
- 9 Public Rights of Way are under threat. Footpaths 3/4/5 run through the “country park” – is the intention to fence these or close them to the public?
- 10 There are very few “Protected Lanes” in north Essex and the Colchester Borough Council have a policy to protect these from any increase in vehicular traffic and yet the entrance to Horkesley Park is within 300 metres of one of these historic lanes and will certainly be exposed to increased traffic levels.
- 11 Finally, a thought for All Saints Church, a Grade 1 listed building, which has stood in the peace and tranquillity of the Vale for many centuries – it will find itself in the middle of a theme park!!

The list above is not an exhaustive one, but does summarise the main problems – ***size, commercial viability, infrastructure and the adverse impact on the Dedham Vale AONB.*** Further details may be seen on our website, [www.dedhamvalesociety.org.uk](http://www.dedhamvalesociety.org.uk), or that of the Stour Valley Action Group, [www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk](http://www.stourvalleyactiongroup.org.uk)

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES CLOVER.

**PLEASE MAY WE HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS**

We would like to update you regularly on what could be a long campaign and indeed save postage costs for future mailings – could you provide your email address to the Secretary, via this link: [enquiries@dedhamvalesociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@dedhamvalesociety.org.uk)