



## ***Respecting the past, shaping the future***

Press release from  
Suffolk Preservation Society  
Date: 06/ 11/ 08

### **SnOasis decision spells “disaster for county”**

**Please note: Richard Ward, director of the Suffolk Preservation Society, is available for interview today. Please contact him direct on 01787 247179.**

The green light today handed to the controversial SnOasis development will spell nothing more than disaster for the county, severely damaging the environment and clogging an already traffic-choked infrastructure with thousands more cars each year.

Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) issued the warning following an announcement by Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that permission had been granted for the vast indoor ski slope and sports complex at Great Blakenham.

The society says the decision has been driven by all the wrong reasons, and has ignored local voices expressing deep concern in favour of a government desire for economic growth in a time of reported recession.

It has also failed to give consideration to the government’s own sustainability policies designed to protect the environment for future generations.

“The Secretary of State has bent over backwards to approve this application, even though it still falls far short of the mark,” said Richard Ward, society director. “It seems the government’s whole rationale is to deliver economic growth wherever and whenever it wishes – without any thought or consideration being given to those living close by.

“This decision is yet another hard blow for our supposedly democratic planning system. Aside from the strong planning-based objections, the views of local groups have again been ignored.”

SPS also warned the development will have a far-reaching environmental impact, not only adding increasingly more traffic to an infrastructure already stretched by too many vehicles but also displacing protected species such as a colony of great crested newts.

## **SnOasis decision spells “disaster for county” 2**

“The presence of the great crested newts should have stood alone as a good enough reason to reject this scheme,” added Mr Ward. “This protected species creates its habitat over several years – but then developers come along and think they can mitigate the impact of their scheme by simply moving them on elsewhere.

“But mitigation is not the same as protection. To truly protect such species, they should be left alone in the first place.

“In fact, we feel this new approach shows the planning system in the UK is rapidly becoming a carbon copy of the system in America, where if something is in the way, you simply move it on and carry on building.

“In the end, the very location of this development is fundamentally flawed and it should never have got past the first planning hurdle. Now we will all have to live with the consequences.”

### **Ends**

#### **Note to editors:**

SPS, founded in 1929, originally worked to protect the county’s buildings and landscape. Today, the society has broadened its focus to help shape Suffolk’s future, largely campaigning for sensitive and appropriate development, more and better quality affordable homes and to ensure sustainable infrastructures are in place to support the county’s communities.

#### **For more information please contact:**

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