

Planning Department
Worthing Town Hall
Chapel Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN111HA

Adur & Worthing
Councils
27 APR 2026
Business Support

1 Southview Terrace
West Street
Sompting Village
West Sussex
BN150AP

21/04/26

Ref: Planning Application AWDM/0423/26

Dear Mr Barnett,

I strongly object to the proposed change of use of The Gardeners Arms to a residential dwelling. This application represents an unjustified and irreversible loss of Sompting's final pub, and the evidence provided by the applicant does not withstand scrutiny.

1. The proposal would dismantle the last remaining piece of Sompting's community infrastructure Sompting has already been hollowed out by the closure and demolition of every other pub in the village. With the A27 cutting the settlement in half, The Gardeners Arms has been the *only* accessible venue where residents can gather, socialise, and maintain the cohesion of a village community.

As I stated previously, the pub hosted quiz nights, darts, cribbage, raffles and music events—activities that are not available anywhere else locally. These are not luxuries; they are the foundations of social connection in a village that has already lost too much. To remove the last remaining community space is to strip Sompting of its identity entirely. A village without a single meeting place is not a village at all.

2. The claim of 'no demand' is demonstrably false The applicant's narrative that the pub was unwanted is contradicted by the facts. Former tenants—people with direct operational experience—made bids to purchase the freehold and continue running the pub. This is clear, firsthand evidence of demand. It is impossible to argue that a facility is "no longer needed" when individuals were actively trying to buy it for continued use as a pub. That alone should invalidate any assertion that the building had no future as a community asset. Policy 33 requires evidence that there is *no demand*. The presence of willing purchasers, at the point of freehold marketing, proves the opposite.

3. The application still provides no financial evidence whatsoever Despite the scale of the change being sought, the applicant has not produced a single set of trading accounts, profit and loss statements, or any verifiable financial data to demonstrate nonviability.

As I previously stated: 'There is no financial record included in the planning application proving the business was unviable.' This omission is not a technicality—it is a fundamental failure to meet the requirements of Policy 33 and paragraph 98 of the NPPF. A viability claim without financial evidence is not a viability case at all.

4. The proposal would actively harm residents, particularly the elderly and immobile The nearest comparable pubs are 1.7–1.9 km away. With evening bus services now non-existent, many residents—especially older and less mobile people—would be left with no accessible alternative.

This is precisely the kind of “unnecessary loss of valued facilities” that national policy requires councils to guard against. The repeated applications and the current closure, are reducing the community’s ability to meet its day- to-day needs, and the harm is disproportionately impacting on those least able to travel.

5. Conclusion This application seeks to remove Sompting’s last public house without providing the evidence required to justify such a loss. The facts are clear:

- The pub was valued and well used.
- There was genuine interest from parties wishing to continue its operation.
- No financial evidence has been provided to demonstrate nonviability.
- The loss is causing significant and lasting harm to the village and its residents.

For these reasons, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of Policy 33 of the Adur Local Plan and paragraph 98 of the NPPF. It should be refused.

Many thanks



Philippa Nudds