

From: **Gemma Faires**

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Subject: Objection to Planning Application: AWDM/0737/26

To: Planning - <planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk>

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Dear Planning Department

Re: Objection to Planning Application AWDM/0737/26

We wish to register our strongest objection to the planning application AWDM/0737/26.

My family and I are local residents who regularly use the Goring Gap. It is one of the defining features of our community and one of the last remaining stretches of undeveloped coastal landscape in Worthing. It's a place where families walk, children play, wildlife thrives and residents can experience a rare sense of openness and tranquillity. We feel a responsibility to protect this landscape.

Having read this application and the planning history of the site, we believe the proposal should be refused for the following reasons.

- Conflict with Local Planning Policy

The Goring Gap has long been recognised as an important strategic area of open land that prevents the coalescence of Worthing and Ferring and contributes significantly to the character of the borough.

The introduction of commercial leisure uses, associated structures, parking, infrastructure and increased visitor activity would undermine the openness that planning policy seeks to protect. While the proposal may be described as seasonal or community-focused, the planning impact is determined by its physical and operational effects rather than the terminology used to describe it.

Approving this proposal would conflict with the purpose of protecting this important area of undeveloped coastline.

- Loss of the Open Character of the Goring Gap

The greatest value of the site is its openness.

This landscape provides uninterrupted views between the sea and the Downs with the beautiful avenue of Holme Oaks lining it. These qualities cannot coexist with commercial development, buildings, fencing, lighting, signage, seating areas, parking or associated infrastructure.

The gradual urbanisation of the Goring Gap would permanently diminish one of Worthing's most valuable natural assets. Once openness is lost, it cannot realistically be restored.

- Planning History and Legitimate Concerns Regarding Future Intensification

This application cannot reasonably be viewed in isolation. The site has been the subject of several previous planning applications and appeals over recent years. Whilst we appreciate that every application must be considered on its own merits, the repeated attempts to introduce development onto this protected site demonstrate a continuing ambition to commercialise land that has long been recognised as deserving protection.

This planning history creates legitimate concern that the current proposal represents another incremental step towards more extensive development in the future.

Residents have become increasingly concerned that each successive application seeks to normalise a greater level of commercial activity on the site. If this application were approved, it would become progressively more difficult for the Council to resist future proposals for larger structures, additional facilities, longer opening hours or further intensification.

We would like the Council to consider not only the immediate impacts of this proposal but also the precedent it would establish.

- Increased Traffic and Highway Safety

Another great concern is the increase in traffic that this proposal is likely to generate. The surrounding roads are already heavily used, particularly during weekends, school holidays and periods of good weather. Residents regularly experience congestion, limited parking availability and significant traffic associated with the seafront. Introducing a commercial leisure destination serving food and alcohol will inevitably attract additional visitors from outside the immediate area, increasing vehicle movements throughout the day and into the evening. This will create additional conflict between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, particularly families with young children who use the area regularly. The surrounding road network is already under considerable pressure and there is little evidence that it can safely accommodate additional demand without increasing congestion and creating unnecessary danger.

- Noise and Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposal would introduce a level of activity that is wholly different from the current use of the land.

A commercial venue serving refreshments and alcohol is likely to encourage visitors to remain for longer periods, particularly during evenings and weekends.

Residents are likely to experience increased noise from:

- Larger groups gathering on the site.
- Conversations and social activity.
- Vehicle arrivals and departures.
- Deliveries and servicing.

- General commercial activity throughout the day.

The sale of alcohol raises particular concerns about prolonged stays, louder social gatherings and disturbance extending into the evening.

The proposal is also likely to attract larger groups of visitors, increasing the potential for anti-social behaviour, littering and disturbance. Even if these outcomes cannot be guaranteed, they are entirely foreseeable consequences of introducing a commercial leisure venue serving alcohol into what is currently a peaceful open space.

Nearby residents should not be expected to lose the peaceful enjoyment of their homes as a consequence of inappropriate development on protected land.

- Harm to Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Although the site may appear to be simple open grassland, it contributes to local biodiversity and provides valuable habitat and ecological connectivity.

Increased visitor numbers, lighting, noise, infrastructure and commercial activity inevitably place additional pressure on wildlife and reduce the environmental value of the site.

National planning policy places increasing importance on protecting and enhancing biodiversity. This proposal moves in the opposite direction.

- Harmful Precedent

This application should not be viewed simply as a single development proposal. If permission is granted, it risks establishing a precedent that further commercial development within the Goring Gap is acceptable.

Planning decisions are often made incrementally. Today's "small" proposal becomes tomorrow's justification for larger buildings, expanded facilities and increased commercial use.

The Council has a responsibility to protect the long-term integrity of this important landscape.

- Community Benefit

The application places considerable emphasis on the community benefits that the proposed development would provide. However, this fundamentally misunderstands the existing value of the site.

The Goring Gap is already a significant community asset. Its greatest benefit lies not in what could be built upon it, but in the fact that it remains an open, undeveloped landscape that is freely accessible to everyone.

Residents already use the area every day for walking, exercising, enjoying nature, spending time with family, improving their mental wellbeing and appreciating one of the last

remaining undeveloped stretches of coastline within Worthing. These benefits are available without commercialisation, admission charges, infrastructure or permanent facilities.

The suggestion that development is necessary to create community value is misplaced. The community value already exists, and it exists precisely because the land has remained largely untouched.

Once commercial activity, buildings, parking, lighting and associated infrastructure are introduced, the very qualities that make this landscape special are inevitably diminished. Development would not enhance the site's primary purpose; it would fundamentally alter it.

There are many suitable locations across Worthing where cafés, leisure facilities and commercial enterprises can operate successfully. There is only one Goring Gap. Planning decisions should recognise that not every open space needs to be developed or commercialised to be valuable. Sometimes the greatest public benefit is achieved by protecting places exactly as they are.

For my family, and for many others, the Goring Gap represents something increasingly rare: a peaceful, open landscape where children can experience nature, families can walk together and residents can enjoy an uninterrupted sense of space. These qualities are becoming harder to find and, once lost, cannot be recreated.

- Conclusion

We understand that the planning system exists not only to facilitate appropriate development, but also to protect those places whose greatest value lies in remaining undeveloped. The Goring Gap is unquestionably one such place.

This proposal would erode the openness of the landscape, increase traffic on roads that are already congested, introduce unacceptable noise and disturbance, place additional pressure on the local environment and establish a harmful precedent for future development.

As local residents, we do not oppose progress, nor do we oppose appropriate development in suitable locations. However, this is not an appropriate location. The Goring Gap is a unique and irreplaceable part of Worthing's identity, and once its character has been compromised it cannot be recovered.

We respectfully ask the Council to refuse planning permission for application AWD/0737/26 and to continue protecting this remarkable landscape for the benefit of current residents, our children and future generations.

Kind Regards

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