

Fwd: Planning Application AWDM/0423/26

Reps and Consults



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to me

08:54 (59 minutes ago)

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From: **sarah powell**

Date: Tue, 21 Apr 2026 at 18:50

Subject: Planning Application AWDM/0423/26

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

Ref: Planning Application AWDM/0423/26

Dear Planning (Development Management) team at Adur & Worthing

I wish to object to this application, as the proposal would remove the final remaining public house in Sompting Village and, with it, the last meaningful space in which our community can gather. A village divided by the A27 and increasingly dominated by through traffic cannot afford to lose the one place that still brings people together.

The Gardeners Arms has long served as the social heart of Sompting. It is where neighbours meet, friendships form, and community life is sustained through quiz nights, darts, cribbage, raffles and music events. These are not incidental entertainments; they are the threads that hold a village together. No other venue in Sompting offers this combination of accessibility, informality and affordability. The Parish Hall and Harriet Johnson Centre, while valuable in their own ways, are not substitutes for a public house and are far too costly for regular social use.

The applicant has not demonstrated that the pub is no longer viable. The Viability Assessment openly states that 'there are no accounts available', which means there is no financial evidence on which to base a claim of non viability. Policy 33 of the Adur Local Plan requires clear, demonstrable proof—not speculation. Furthermore, both recent Tenancy at Will operators were often busy, and the planning documents' insistence on calling the building a 'former' pub is misleading. It was still functioning as a pub until they closed the doors, and former tenants themselves attempted to purchase it to continue trading.

Crucially, once the freehold was finally marketed in 2024, multiple serious offers were made, all at the asking price from individuals who wished to keep the premises operating as a public house. This is compelling evidence of demand. A building that

attracts several willing buyers cannot reasonably be described as unviable. Had one of these offers been accepted, the pub would still be open today.

The suggestion that residents can simply walk to alternative pubs is unrealistic. The nearest comparable establishments are nearly two kilometres away, and with evening bus services now non-existent, this would leave elderly, vulnerable and immobile residents effectively cut off. When the Marquis of Granby was approved for demolition in 2022, the Council explicitly relied on The Gardeners Arms to continue serving the village. That assurance should not be disregarded.

The proposal also raises serious concerns about pedestrian safety. The application seeks to reclaim the long used pavement in front of the pub as a private garden. Despite the applicant's assertion that no pavement exists, this route has been used by pedestrians for generations and functions as a public right of way through long use. With no pavement on the opposite side of West Street, removing this path would force pedestrians into the road on a narrow, busy lane. This is not merely inconvenient; it is dangerous.

In summary, the application fails to demonstrate non-viability, ignores clear evidence of demand, removes the last community facility in the village, and introduces new risks to pedestrian safety. The Gardeners Arms is not simply a building; it is the final anchor of community life in Sompting. Its loss to date has had serious profound impacts on our community and for these reasons, I strongly urge the Council to refuse this application.

Kind regards
Sarah Powell

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