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From: Gary Love [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 November 2025 19:35
To: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: PLANNiNG REFUSAL - CM/34/25/PL

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Gary Love Family
The Mill
BN175RN

Date: 4th-10-25

Planning Department

Arun District Council
Civic Centre
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
BN17 5LF

For the Attention of: The Planning Officer - Amber Willard

Subject: Formal Objection to Planning Application – Relocation of Car Park, Toilets and Café, Climping Beach

Site Address: Land Adjacent to Crookthorn Lane, Climping BN17 5QU

Planning Reference: CM/34/25/PL

Dear Amber,

We are writing to submit a formal emphatic objection to the above planning application for the relocation of the Clymping Beach car park, toilets, and café to land adjacent to Crookthorn Lane. Having reviewed the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement and associated documents, we wish to register our strong opposition to this proposal on planning, environmental, and community grounds.

This application represents a serious breach of planning policy and would result in permanent, irreversible harm to the rural character, landscape, agricultural land, historical archeological land and local environment of Clymping.

1. Development Outside the Built-Up Area Boundary and within the Settlement Gap

The proposed site lies clearly outside the defined built-up area boundary and within the countryside designated under Policy SD SP2 of the Arun Local Plan. It also falls within the settlement gap protected by Policy SD SP3, which seeks to prevent coalescence between Climping and Littlehampton and safeguard the rural setting of both communities.

The introduction of a large car park, café, and associated infrastructure would erode the openness of this gap, urbanise the countryside, and set a damaging precedent for further encroachment especially in winter when the sunsets at 3:30pm and one would assume the floodlit car park is open till 8pm as suggested by the Bairds. The claim that the site is “adjacent to existing built structures” is misleading – the nearby primary school and scattered agricultural buildings do not justify a major new visitor facility in a protected rural location.

The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies SD SP2, SD SP3, and C SP1 of the Arun Local Plan, as well as Policies CPN 10 and CPN 11 of the Climping Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Unacceptable Loss of Agricultural Land

The site comprises productive Grade 3a agricultural land, defined as the best and most versatile (BMV) soil category. Both national and local policy strongly resist development on such land unless there is a demonstrable overriding need that cannot be met elsewhere.

The applicant's justification is unconvincing and inadequately evidenced. No robust alternative site assessment or sustainability appraisal has been provided. The claim that the loss of farmland is "outweighed by the need" is not substantiated by data or policy necessity.

The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy SO DM1 of the Arun Local Plan and Policy CPN 10 of the Climping Neighbourhood Plan, as well as paragraphs 88–89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which require protection of the countryside and sustainable rural land use.

3. Harm to Landscape Character and Heritage Setting

The proposal would significantly harm the visual quality, tranquillity, and open rural character of the site and surrounding area.

The construction of a car park, building, lighting, and associated hard surfacing would introduce urbanising features into a currently undeveloped agricultural field visible from Crookthorn Lane and public footpaths. The suggested landscaping and hedging are insufficient to mitigate this visual intrusion, particularly in winter months when screening is minimal.

The site also lies in close proximity to several Grade II listed buildings, and the development would adversely affect their setting, contrary to Policy HER DM1 and Policy HER SP1 of the Local Plan. The proposed design, while described as "modest," is wholly unsympathetic to the historic and rural landscape context especially in light of the fact Bronze Age monuments could lie beneath these soils. <https://wessexarchaeologylibrary.org/library/repository/view/168/>

4. Traffic Generation, Highway Safety, and Community Security

Crookthorn Lane is a narrow, rural road serving residential properties, farm access, and St Mary's Primary School. The addition of a visitor car park and café would significantly increase traffic volumes, particularly during weekends and summer months, introducing conflicts between tourist vehicles, delivery lorries, and school traffic.

The applicant's suggestion that "many of these trips already exist" is speculative and unsupported by any transport assessment or empirical data. There is no provision for safe pedestrian or cycle access, and public transport connectivity is extremely limited.

Of equal concern is the safety and security risk associated with an isolated car park in this rural location. Car parks and toilet blocks, particularly those situated away from busy areas, can attract antisocial behaviour and pose "stranger danger" concerns — especially for families, children, and lone visitors. The proposed site is secluded, poorly overlooked, and without the natural surveillance that exists at the current beach facility.

Importantly, the proposed car park's close proximity to St Mary's Primary School increases the need for heightened vigilance and safeguarding of children in the community. The presence of transient visitors and vehicles unfamiliar with the area raises legitimate concerns about child safety, particularly during school hours and drop-off/pick-up times. Locating a public car park adjacent to a rural primary school

runs counter to community safety principles and does not promote a secure or reassuring environment for pupils, parents, or staff.

It is deeply troubling that this proposal lies only a few miles from Kingston Gorse, where **Sarah Payne was abducted and murdered in 2000** — a tragedy that still resonates strongly within our local community. It is therefore vital that any new public facility be located where there is good visibility, regular footfall, and a clear sense of community presence. This proposal does not meet those safety standards and risks undermining public confidence in the area's safety.

The proposal therefore fails to comply with Policy T DM1 (Sustainable Travel), Policy HWB SP1 (Health & Wellbeing), and Policy CPN 14 (Safe Pedestrian and Cycle Networks) of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

5. Environmental and Drainage Concerns

The submitted Foul and Surface Water Drainage Report acknowledges high groundwater levels, yet provides no detailed strategy to demonstrate that surface water will be safely managed. The introduction of impermeable surfacing over a 2.25-hectare site risks increased localised flooding and run-off onto adjacent land and Crookthorn Lane.

Furthermore, the proposed Biodiversity Net Gain Statement lacks robust, site-specific evidence and fails to demonstrate measurable ecological enhancement. The development would likely result in habitat loss and disturbance to local wildlife, contrary to Policies ENV DM5 and W DM1 of the Local Plan.

6. Failure to Demonstrate True Sustainability or Need

Bread Lane is a 1 mile long historical route to the beach, wide enough for large paragliding vehicles to turn around, stress free and offers FREE of charge parking for anyone wishing to visit Clymping. There is ample parking at Clymping's West beach Cafe by the golf club, it has public toilets and is well used, as such there is no need to build any new parking at all other than material gains for the applicant.

The loss of the current beach facility is not just due to coastal erosion, its also down to a Environment Agency Austerity and the applicants;

In February 2020, the applicants used industrial diggers and heavy machinery to demolish the historic flood wall that had long protected the existing café and car park. In doing so, they also destroyed significant **Second World War defensive structures**, including tank traps and gunnel walls — important remnants of Clymping's wartime history. These were not simply obsolete concrete features but **heritage assets of local historical and cultural importance**, representing the community's role in Britain's coastal defence network. For many residents, they were tangible links to the past — features that grandparents once used to tell their grandchildren stories of the brave men and women who protected Clymping during the war.

For almost a century, this flood wall and its associated structures had provided effective coastal protection, safeguarding local homes, farmland, lanes, the village school, and even the A259 from flood and erosion risk. With appropriate maintenance and underpinning, these structures could have continued to serve both a **heritage and functional purpose** for another hundred years. However, on **18 February 2020**, the applicants' use of heavy machinery to remove these

defences resulted in their total loss — an act that **irreversibly damaged a piece of Climping's historical identity and materially increased the area's vulnerability to flooding.**

This action appears inconsistent with **Policy HER DM1** of the **Arun Local Plan**, which requires that development proposals **conserve and, where possible, enhance heritage assets and their settings**, and that harm or loss of such assets be clearly justified and outweighed by demonstrable public benefit. No such justification has been provided, nor has there been any attempt at heritage recording or mitigation.

Furthermore, under **Paragraphs 208–211 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, local planning authorities are required to give great weight to the conservation of heritage assets, recognising that once lost, these assets cannot be replaced. The applicants' actions — in demolishing both the **historic flood wall** and the **WWII coastal defences** — represent a clear disregard for these national policy principles.

The removal of these features did not merely erase heritage; it also **weakened Climping's coastal resilience**, effectively “opening the floodgates” to greater environmental risk. The loss of this protective infrastructure has had lasting consequences for the community, both in terms of physical safety and the destruction of a cherished link to Climping's past.

The applicants demolished all of the flood wall between the beach and Mill Lane under a *Non Disclosure Agreement* (NDA) they covertly entered into with the Environment Agency. The applicants and the Environment Agency have refused a freedom of information on their NDA, yet together they destroyed Mill Lane, the value of local's homes, the car park, toilets and ancillary buildings, now they want buildings elsewhere so they can circumnavigate the planning policies and turn Clymping's strategic gap into a development opportunity for personal gain, and get their £10 a day parking fees + whatever plans they nefariously plot against an under pressure Arun council.

The applicant has not demonstrated that this inland site represents the most sustainable or least harmful alternative. The proposal would dislocate the visitor experience from the coastline it is intended to serve and increase car dependency.

Temporary, adaptive, or smaller-scale alternatives closer to the existing site have not been adequately explored. The proposal thus fails the tests of sustainable development under Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

7. Conflict with the Climping Neighbourhood Plan

This proposal directly conflicts with numerous policies within the Clymping Neighbourhood Plan, including:

- **CPN 5** – supporting only small-scale tourism and recreation facilities;
- **CPN 6** – requiring replacement parking to be equally accessible and sustainable;
- **CPN 10** – protecting high-grade agricultural land;
- **CPN 11** – requiring high-quality design that protects local character;
- **CPN 14** – promoting safe pedestrian and cycle networks, which are absent here.

Approval of this application would undermine the integrity of the adopted Neighbourhood Plan and disregard local community priorities.

Conclusion

This application is fundamentally unsound and inconsistent with national, local, and neighbourhood planning policy. It represents unjustified countryside development, permanent loss of agricultural land, increased traffic and safety risks, visual and heritage harm, and inadequate environmental safeguards.

There is no overriding public benefit that outweighs these cumulative adverse impacts. The proposal fails to satisfy the presumption in favour of sustainable development as defined by the NPPF.

In light of the above — and in particular the community safety concerns and risk associated with locating an unsupervised car park and public toilets in a remote area — I strongly urge Arun District Council to REFUSE this application in its entirety.

Yours faithfully,
Gary Love & Family
