

STATEMENT A31 Jo Sergeant

My views on this application have not changed since I sat on the committee that heard it last year.

- The applicant's argument about viability seems to rest on a perceived right to receive an income without working for it (who said running a pub was easy?) or to receive a selling price based on having already received planning permission to develop housing on the site. Surely this is circular logic and should not be the basis for an approval decision by this Committee.
- In addition to concerns about topography and accessibility, the argument about the proximity of other pubs does not take into account the importance of locality and community identity. Whilst the latter may change and demand for a local could drop, this can hardly be less true for an area like Windmill Hill, not only with the current population but with large amounts of new student housing coming to the area.
- Comments made by the case officer suggest a lack of understanding of the significance of the public house as a community hub. Alcohol isn't the only reason people go to pubs. Many customers will drink tea or coffee, for example, even in the evenings. The importance of a place for people of all cultures to come together and socialise, whether it be morning, afternoon or evening cannot be overstated.

DCB, I urge you to turn down this application. Don't be afraid of the threat of appeal. No way is it a given that the Planning Inspector will see things the applicant's way. See the Inspector's report on the Giant Goram earlier this year and, in particular, reason (a) for dismissing the appeal.

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