

New Homes Would Wreck Goring Gap

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

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During the noise of the discussions and negotiations over our withdrawal from the EU, much is happening closer to home.

On Monday, escaping the disruption of the self-appointed 'Extinction rebels' I attended the consultation on the proposed development of 465 new homes by Persimmon on the Chatsmore Farm site. This would wreck the Goring Gap and it would make Ferring appear to be part of Worthing.

Persimmon have sprung this as a surprise to me and many residents. As MP, they should have informed me directly. I knew thanks to Ed Miller of the Ferring Conservation Group.

This proposal is against the express views of Worthing Borough Council. It is opposed to by residents in Arun District Council who live in Ferring. When Worthing Hospital was under threat, we created an All-Party Parliamentary Group to protect our local interest. I will propose doing the same again.

On Wednesday, I attended the funeral of the president of my local political association, Peter Vosper. Peter was a true friend and tireless worker for the local party and community of East Preston and the constituency as a whole.

We are reminded by his example of the importance of reliable people who are prepared to work selflessly. I would further like to praise Father Mark Lyon and his parishioners of St Andrew's Church in West Tarring. Father Lyon always does his best to ensure that St Andrew's is a welcoming place for people of all faiths and of none. We appreciate the work that he and his colleagues across the Chichester Diocese do for charity and to support those across the community.

I would like to wish my Jewish friends and constituents a 'Shana Tova' as we celebrate Rosh Hashanah. This is the Jewish new year. It is a very important holiday on the Jewish calendar. It is the first of what Jewish people refer to as the High Holidays (or High Holy Days), a ten-day period that ends with Yom Kippur—the holiest day of the Jewish year.

I had the honour being invited to attend the presentation ceremony for the Queens Award for Voluntary Service, awarded to Heene Community Centre earlier in the summer. The community centre is a buzzing community hub in the west end of Worthing, with several rooms for hire for classes, meetings, and all types of events, such as wedding receptions, children's birthday parties, funeral wakes, special birthdays, baby showers, anniversary parties and concerts. It is part of the fabric of the local area and the charitable work it does to support those locally is greatly appreciated. The classes and events it hosts helps bring people together and helps many stay connected who would otherwise feel isolated and alone. Presenting the award to the centre was the Lord-Lieutenant, Mrs Susan Pyper, who said at the time of the announcement that the "thriving community centre is truly impressive and inspiring, and there is no doubt that you very much deserve this prestigious award!".

Parliament has been prorogued as we prepare for the Queen's speech next Monday and the commencing of a new Parliamentary session. The current session has lasted more than 340 days and needs to be brought to a close. We look forward to the Queen's speech and hope her travels to Parliament are too disrupted by the street campers.