



The countryside charity
Sussex

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Jeremy Quin MP
House of Commons
London SW1

By e-mail to jeremy.quin.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Mr Quin,

I am writing to you as Chair of CPRE Sussex, the Sussex countryside charity, and a constituent member of the national Campaign to Protect Rural England charity network.

You will undoubtedly be aware of the announcement by Center Parcs UK that they intend to build a major new leisure facility in Mid Sussex at Oldhouse Warren near Worth, subject to grant of planning permission. It is an announcement that has attracted national attention.

CPRE Sussex, the Sussex countryside charity, has no issue with Center Parcs wishing to expand its operations into this part of the South East. Many of us have enjoyed their facilities with our families over the years. The jobs they would create would be a benefit.

CPRE's problem with this proposal is therefore not based on the principle of their desired expansion; but rather with the location that they would like to develop for what they call their "forest village" bearing in mind its size (400 acres) and scale (900 lodges and extensive facilities for up to 4,500 people per day) and the nature of their entertainment operations there.

The company could not have chosen a more inappropriate, environmentally sensitive site for their proposed major development.

It is within the High Weald AONB, one of the country's most precious country landscape crown jewels, whose natural beauty, landscapes and tranquillity the District Council is required by law to protect from inappropriate or excessive development - protection that the Government has only recently pledged to enhance following the Glover Designated Landscapes Review.

Part of the site is, we believe, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest which the NPPF also assures of special protection for its biodiversity and geodiversity.

And the proposed site also includes a sizeable area of ancient woodland.

This is accessible pristine ghyll woodland of the very highest quality, and it cannot benefit from having a major entertainment centre built within its heart. It is inconceivable that the desired Center Parcs facility could be built and operated at this location without ruination of the ecology, biodiversity, geodiversity and tranquillity of this special corner of Mid Sussex, contrary to all principles of environmental enhancement, sustainable planning and climate resilience that the Government claims to espouse.

To promote, enhance and protect a thriving countryside for everyone's benefit

President: Lord Egremont

Campaign to Protect Rural England Sussex Branch CIO | Registered charity number: 1156568

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If, in the face of these protective designations, the planning system is to have any credibility at all, any future planning application by Center Parcs involving this site ought be robustly rejected. There would be no public credibility in any other outcome.

As has been belatedly realised elsewhere (HS2, Whitehaven coal mine, fracking for example) people care passionately about the protection of their local environment and the special parts of their countryside; they do not appreciate them being messed with in the name of big development and private profit. This application is also bound to attract a great deal of public attention.

Let Center Parcs expand, let them create new jobs in this part of the country, and let us all enjoy their new facilities. **But please tell us and our many members that you will support us in telling Center Parcs that they must find a much more sustainable alternative undesignated location where they can develop a climate-change resilient facility, and can use that development genuinely to enhance its surrounding environment and biodiversity.** The current proposed site must remain out of bounds to them. It would be better if that message was made clear to Center Parcs UK before their formal planning application process begins. Will you join us in sending that message?

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dan Osborn
Chair, CPRE Sussex