

INCINERATOR INQUIRY 14th December 2023

Good afternoon/evening!

My name is Penny Quilter I am a former public health nurse, a trustee of Weymouth Climate Hub and since 2020 have been an active volunteer on Weymouth's Neighbourhood plan Steering Group.

My family have a guest house in the Rodwell area of Weymouth just off the main A354 Portland Road, so I would like to talk about the proposed Waste Incinerator's impact on **Tourism**

Waste incinerators are not tourist attractions!

With easy access to both Weymouth and Portland, our guests are generally those **seeking the outdoors**. They include **international and domestic** sailors & windsurfers attending courses or events at the National Sailing Academy, sea swimmers, diving groups, cyclists using the National cycle network, hikers walking the Southwest coast path, climbers, bird watchers, fishermen and families taking beach holidays. Tour agents include the area on itineraries for international travellers and many guests make return visits when they realise what the area has to offer.

The proposed incinerator risks **damaging the visitor economy across a wide range of facilities and providers**. The visitor economy is Weymouth and Portland's main source of income and many livelihoods have been built around servicing and supplying tourism in the area.

The **risk for inadvertent pollution of sea water** is of concern in an area renowned for and dependent on its water sports, fishing and important marine habitats. The first day of the enquiry identified that there had **not been an adequate assessment of the impact on users of coastal waters**.

For most visitors, Portland and Weymouth are part of **the World Heritage Coast**, so placing an incinerator in the middle of it, whatever the maps and waste plans say, "seems crazy".

The relatively unspoilt countryside that we are fortunate to have as our home is what draws people to the area - we should preserve this asset and oppose corporate interests that would see it degraded with a commercial, for profit, waste incinerator.

Quote from Weymouth Sea front B&B owner:

"The majority of money coming into Weymouth and Portland comes from tourism. It's essential to remember why it is that people choose to visit this part of the country: beautiful unspoilt countryside and coastline. Choosing to undermine that is madness."

(I have been able to listen to some of the appeal hearing and have been shocked by the intimidating way those providing information have been treated by the appellants barrister. I am sure the inspector will not lose sight of the big picture when making his report and recommendations to the Secretary of State to dismiss this appeal please.)

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There is an imbalance in power at this enquiry that I would like noted.

Having listened to some of the inquiry, I have been shocked by the intimidating way those providing information have been treated by the appellants barrister.

On one side a team of men (not from the area) representing the commercial interests of business – considerable money is being spent to coerce us into accepting a waste incinerator that has not been asked for. We local taxpayers would end up paying for something that, according to a previous planning decision, is neither needed nor wanted. We are all here today because Powerfuel would not accept a rejection of their planning proposal.

I have witnessed the deployment of “nit-picking”, intimidating, bully boy tactics – no one is on trial here and such behaviour is unjustified.

On the other side of the room we are represented by predominantly women with men in lead roles (people who do live and work in the area). We are all part of a community that includes Portland Town Council, Weymouth Town Council & Dorset Council that had previously agreed that a waste Incinerator on Portland was not required because on balance the resulting harms would outweigh the benefits. This community is small and relatively poor – it has less resources to defend itself against a large commercial company’s ambitions.

I am sure the inspector will not lose sight of this power imbalance when making his report and recommendations to the Secretary of State to dismiss this appeal please.

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