

Good afternoon, Mr Griffiths

Thank you for the opportunity to share the story of Weyfish and our sister businesses Hatch, Catch and Weyfish Boat Co. Together we form a cornerstone of Weymouth's rich maritime heritage. In the spirit of Visit England and Visit Dorset, we affirm that this region is truly exceptional.

Weyfish, nestled in the historic Old Fish Market, is more than a business; it's a community hub with roots intertwined with the local fishing fleet. Our commitment to sustainability extends from the counters full of the freshest Dorset seafood to the seafood trailer serving Dorchester and Garson Esher. Beyond our shop, customers seek out our delectable street food at The Hatch and relish the fine dining experience at Catch. We are not just a collection of businesses; we embody the very essence of Dorset.

Catch at the Old Fish Market, a pinnacle of our endeavours, offers a unique sea-to-plate dining experience, celebrating the local provenance of our seafood. The historic fish market, meticulously restored by Weyfish and recognised by the civic society, has been the lifeblood of the local fishing industry for over 150 years. It's not just a place of commerce; it's a living testament to our commitment to preserving our heritage.

Our collaboration with local establishments and those further afield goes beyond business; it's a commitment to sustainable practices and a meaningful investment in the Weymouth fishing community. The ripple effect of our efforts is felt daily as we strive to maintain the delicate balance between economic prosperity and environmental responsibility. We land fish from 30 local inshore day boats operating in the waters off Portland Bill and Weymouth Bay. We employ 25 local people in full time meaningful careers.

Sustainability isn't just a buzzword for us; it's a way of life. Initiatives like air source heat pumps and solar panels together with an electric vehicle fleet, underscore our dedication to reducing our carbon footprint. We are proud to say we measure our food miles in feet and inches with catches pulled 10 meters from the harbour wall to our back door. We are not just a business; we are stewards of our environment, guardians of the sea, and champions of responsible business practices. We wear our sustainability credentials so proudly that we are pleased to share that we recently spent a day filming with David Attenborough, not just to showcase our businesses but to underline the broader message – the delicate balance between progress and preservation. Our commitment to sustainable practices isn't just a brand or green washing; it's a way of life.

Turning our attention to the matter at hand, we vehemently oppose Powerfuel's proposal for an enormous waste incinerator on our pristine coastline.

The grounds for our objection and opposition to this proposal are

1. Sustainability

The claim that somehow this development contributes to the community on sustainability and environmental grounds is not correct. The environmental impact of transporting waste and burning waste to produce electricity for cruise ships is fundamentally flawed. Portland port could produce huge amounts of renewable power if they installed solar on the roofs of the many large buildings they operate from or invested in small scale wind turbines or investigated tidal power. This is greenwashing at best.

2. Environmental and climate impact

The IPCC states that for every tonne of waste incinerated 1 tonne of CO₂ is released. Thus 202,000 tonnes of waste going in will emit 202,000 tonnes of CO₂ every year for the life of the proposed building. We suspect the impact of this CO₂ and ash particle discharge on the pristine waters that we rely heavily on will be significant and adversely effected. Nobody can tell us what the long-term impact on fish landing volumes will be. We worry about waste being shipped here. We worry about the risk of broken bales and waste being blown into the sea. We worry about ash as a by product being transferred onto ships and some escaping into the surrounding waters and we seek protection of the marine environment we rely so heavily on.

3. Financial case

Far from the production of dirty power attracting more visitors via cruise ships we believe it will do the exact opposite and therefore dramatically impact the financial prosperity of the area. The cruise ships will come anyway and more would come if the ground power was produced by solar. The visual eyesore of the chimney, the clogging of our roads with waste lorries, the reputational harm to the area will all put visitors off from coming to Weymouth and Portland. Being a coastal community, most businesses rely on a seasonal lift. Any negative impact to this will affect the viability of businesses to trade through the winter months. Just look at the train strikes this summer and the negative effect this has had on seasonal takings.

We implore you, Mr. Griffiths, to consider the broader impact on our community, beyond the narrow focus of a single industry. Powerfuels case has no merit other than one of financial benefit to the owners and operators of the plant.

Weyfish, alongside 139 other local businesses, aligns against this proposal. Our objections are not fuelled by self-interest; they are rooted in a genuine concern for the well-being of our community. As we raise our voice in opposition, we stand not as isolated entities but as guardians of a way of life that is under threat.

Our four businesses in Weymouth – Weyfish Boat Company Ltd, Weyfish, Hatch on the Harbour, and Catch at the Old Fish Market – are not just businesses; they are pillars of sustainability, ambassadors of local pride, and engines of employment for our community.

The objection to the incinerator isn't a mere formality; it's a plea to protect the very soul of Weymouth and Portland.

In conclusion, we urge you Mr. Griffiths and this inquiry to protect our local businesses, to reject this appeal, and to safeguard the unique charm of Weymouth. The battle we fight isn't just about an incinerator; it's about the soul of our town, the livelihoods of our people, and the legacy we leave for the generations to come.

Thank you.