# Whitby residents protest Viking rock bar plans fearing party tourism surge



One of Britain’s most picturesque coastal towns is currently embroiled in controversy as plans to convert a historic ironmongers into a Viking-themed rock bar spark outrage among local residents. Whitby, famed for its stunning seafront and connections to Bram Stoker’s Dracula, is facing a potential transformation that some fear could irreversibly alter its atmosphere and community fabric.

Planned by Valhalla Ltd, a company known for its themed ale establishments including a successful venue in York, the proposed bar will occupy a Grade-II listed building on Grape Lane, an area steeped in maritime history. The development plans include not just the bar on the ground floor but also residential accommodations above, which some locals believe could exacerbate existing issues of noise and anti-social behaviour.

Residents fear the new bar will add fuel to a growing trend of rowdy party tourism. “I just hope we don't have to move,” expressed Gillian Blessed, a resident who has lived opposite the site for 25 years. Her concerns echo those of many locals who dread the prospect of late-night stag and hen parties flooding the narrow streets. Blessed’s husband suffers from health issues, and the thought of noise infiltrating their home is a source of significant worry. “It's just not something Whitby needs, is it?” she added, reflecting a sentiment shared by many.

The town's festive charm is increasingly overshadowed by concerns over excessive drinking and its accompanying chaos. With over 40 bars already in existence, residents like Richard Peake question the necessity of yet another establishment. “I don’t understand why the council feels there is a need for another bar or pub in Whitby,” he said, highlighting a growing unease about the proliferation of nightlife at the expense of community stability.

That apprehension is further compounded by recent incidents involving local bars. North Yorkshire Police have taken steps against JK's Bar in Whitby due to reports of crime and disorder associated with its operations, citing a “complete disregard” for local authorities and residents. Although this establishment faced potential licence revocation, a change of ownership has brought some hope for improvement, with new management pledging to address previous issues. Yet, this situation serves as a stark reminder of the challenges the town faces regarding its nightlife landscape.

The transformation of Whitby’s character into one more akin to a party destination is alarming to many long-term residents. David Wharton, an elderly local, articulated his fears of Whitby devolving into a drunken spectacle reminiscent of holiday hotspots like Benidorm, where drunken antics overshadow the town's inherent charm. “It’s becoming a familiar sight,” he lamented, describing encounters with intoxicated individuals and the impact on the community’s quality of life.

In stark contrast to the festive atmosphere promoted by the new bar's concept, many residents long to see families returning to the seaside, drawn by the nostalgic charm of traditional fish-and-chips outings and day trips. Martin Evans, a 66-year-old resident, reflected on the irreversible changes he has witnessed over a decade. “The number of pubs and bars... has rather become part of its identity,” he said, suggesting that this shift has irreparably altered Whitby’s character.

Despite mounting local objections, the council has granted planning permission for the themed bar, which is set to operate with hours stretching late into the night. Proponents of the bar, including the founders of Valhalla York, maintain that they aim to provide a “friendly place with an alternative vibe.” However, the tension between preserving local heritage and accommodating commercial growth continues to brew as locals weigh their love for the town against the realities of modern tourism.

As Whitby grapples with these tensions, the challenge remains: how to balance economic development with maintaining the community's character that has drawn visitors for generations. The future of Whitby hangs in the balance, caught in a struggle between heritage and hedonism.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/crime/jks-bar-whitby-police-call-for-bars-alcohol-licence-to-be-revoked-over-complete-disregard-for-visitors-and-locals-4409427)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219), [[5]](https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/24031252.jks-bar-whitby-announces-closure-sold/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/crime/jks-bar-whitby-police-call-for-bars-alcohol-licence-to-be-revoked-over-complete-disregard-for-visitors-and-locals-4409427)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/24031252.jks-bar-whitby-announces-closure-sold/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/jks-bar-whitby-bar-facing-losing-its-licence-announces-voluntary-closure-until-it-is-sold-4468613)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/crime/jks-bar-whitby-police-call-for-bars-alcohol-licence-to-be-revoked-over-complete-disregard-for-visitors-and-locals-4409427)
* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/crime/jks-bar-whitby-police-call-for-bars-alcohol-licence-to-be-revoked-over-complete-disregard-for-visitors-and-locals-4409427> - North Yorkshire Police has applied to revoke the premises licence of JK's Bar in Whitby, citing a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. The application follows several months of reviews and meetings, during which the council's licensing sub-committee ordered the removal of the bar's designated premises supervisor due to the 'serious undermining' of licensing objectives. Despite these interventions, the police argue that the bar continues to breach its licence conditions, leading to crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour attributed to the establishment.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219> - After facing potential licence revocation, JK's Bar in Whitby has been permitted to reopen under new management. North Yorkshire Police had previously applied for the licence to be revoked, citing numerous complaints and a 'complete disregard' for residents and authorities. Following the sale of the bar to new owners, the police withdrew their application, allowing the establishment to resume operations. The new owners have committed to making improvements and have assured that the premises will remain closed until these changes are implemented.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-67424662> - North Yorkshire Police has called for the revocation of JK's Bar's licence in Whitby, citing a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. Despite previous interventions, including the removal of the bar's designated premises supervisor and additional conditions imposed by the council, the police argue that the bar continues to breach its licence conditions. The application for revocation is currently open for public representations, with a deadline of 11 December.
5. <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/24031252.jks-bar-whitby-announces-closure-sold/> - JK's Bar in Whitby has announced a voluntary closure as it undergoes a sale to new owners. The decision follows an application by North Yorkshire Police to revoke the bar's licence, citing numerous complaints and a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. The closure is intended to allow the sale to proceed, with the new owners committing to making improvements to the establishment before reopening.
6. <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/jks-bar-whitby-bar-facing-losing-its-licence-announces-voluntary-closure-until-it-is-sold-4468613> - Facing potential licence revocation, JK's Bar in Whitby has announced a voluntary closure as it is in the process of being sold to new owners. North Yorkshire Police had applied for the licence to be revoked, citing a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. The closure is intended to facilitate the sale, with the new owners committing to making necessary improvements before reopening the establishment.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-67901335> - JK's Bar in Whitby, facing potential licence revocation, has agreed to close voluntarily until the business is sold. North Yorkshire Police had applied for the licence to be revoked, citing numerous complaints and a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. The decision to close voluntarily is intended to allow the sale to proceed, with the new owners committing to making improvements before reopening the bar.