# Castle Combe community fights back against drone invasion and Airbnb surge



The idyllic village of Castle Combe, often hailed as one of the "most beautiful villages" in the UK, finds itself at a crossroads due to an escalating tension between its charming tranquillity and the influx of tourism. With a significant portion of its population now comprising second-home owners and short-term rental guests, the local community of around 400 residents faces profound challenges, exacerbated by the disruptive presence of drone enthusiasts.

This picturesque settlement in Wiltshire, known for its honey-coloured stone cottages and historic charm, has become a popular destination for visitors eager to capture its beauty on social media platforms. However, this growing acclaim comes at a cost. Residents report that their daily lives have been altered by the constant whirring of drones overhead, with many calling them a "nuisance." In response to diminishing privacy and an increase in incidents, such as recent burglaries, Castle Combe Parish Council has erected signs discouraging drone use and urging visitors to respect community boundaries.

Nick Botterill, a former district councillor and a resident of the village, has openly expressed his concerns regarding this modern invasion. He described the situation as "one of those things that has grown from nowhere to become a significant nuisance" and highlighted the resultant unease: "You could argue some of them seem to be wanting to know what goes on in people's back gardens." The locals feel increasingly vulnerable as drone operators sometimes get perilously close to residential properties, raising both privacy concerns and safety issues.

Moreover, the changing demographics of Castle Combe have become a focal point of discussion. Many long-standing residents lament the transformation of their village into a transient tourist stop, with a dramatic increase in Airbnbs and holiday rentals. This shift has diluted the village’s sense of community and has even resulted in a decrease in full-time inhabitants. Local voices have echoed that the charm of the village is in jeopardy: "It could be a security risk...they're taking pictures of people's private areas – they're a nuisance on numerous levels."

As residents grapple with the implications of unfettered tourism, they express a longing for a return to the village's close-knit community atmosphere. A notable local resident pointed out the economic discrepancies: "Tourism without any of the benefits... they're just simply making a nuisance of themselves and not adding anything because they spend an hour and then buzz off." This sentiment underscores a community feeling overshadowed by visitors who often fail to recognise Castle Combe as a living environment rather than a mere tourist attraction.

The local councils have attempted to intervene, with initiatives to improve traffic control and manage visitor flow, especially during peak periods. Yet, locals worry that such measures may not be sufficient to sustain their village's character against the wave of tourism. Fred Winup, the chairman of the parish council, shared his apprehensions regarding drone activity potentially breaching privacy laws, stating: "If they've got cameras attached they may well be breaking GDPR rules." Recent incidents have furthered these concerns, with reports of drones capturing footage of children in their private gardens prompting police involvement.

While Castle Combe's stunning vistas continue to draw tourists from near and far, the village’s charm risks being overshadowed by the negative impacts of mass tourism and the erosion of a once-vibrant community. Balancing the appeal of its picturesque beauty with the needs of its residents will require a concerted effort from both local authorities and visitors alike. As the village grapples with these modern dilemmas, the preservation of its unique character and the well-being of its residents remain paramount.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2062454/uk-s-most-beautiful-village-plagued), [[2]](https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/23629643.castle-combe-residents-fume-airbnb-drones-invasion/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.wiltshirelive.co.uk/news/wiltshire-news/beautiful-wiltshire-village-locals-fed-8570390), [[5]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1787473/UK-most-beautiful-village-castle-Combe-Wiltshire-airbnb-drones)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/castle-combe-tourists-furious-villagers-b2369526.html), [[6]](https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1875668/castle-combre-tourism-airbnb-complaints)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2062454/uk-s-most-beautiful-village-plagued), [[7]](https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/24535525.castle-combe-visitors-warned-not-overwhelm-car-park/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/23629643.castle-combe-residents-fume-airbnb-drones-invasion/), [[4]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/castle-combe-tourists-furious-villagers-b2369526.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.wiltshirelive.co.uk/news/wiltshire-news/beautiful-wiltshire-village-locals-fed-8570390), [[5]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1787473/UK-most-beautiful-village-castle-Combe-Wiltshire-airbnb-drones), [[6]](https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1875668/castle-combre-tourism-airbnb-complaints)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2062454/uk-s-most-beautiful-village-plagued> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/23629643.castle-combe-residents-fume-airbnb-drones-invasion/> - Residents of Castle Combe, a picturesque Wiltshire village, have expressed concerns over privacy invasions by tourists using drones and the impact of Airbnbs on the community. Locals report a decline in full-time residents, with many homes being converted into second homes or holiday rentals, leading to a loss of the village's close-knit community feel. The influx of tourists has also resulted in overcrowded public spaces and increased noise levels, prompting calls for measures to protect the village's character and residents' privacy.
3. <https://www.wiltshirelive.co.uk/news/wiltshire-news/beautiful-wiltshire-village-locals-fed-8570390> - Castle Combe, often hailed as one of the UK's most beautiful villages, is facing challenges due to an influx of tourists and the rise of Airbnbs. Residents have reported a decrease in full-time inhabitants, with many properties being purchased as holiday homes or rentals. This shift has altered the village's community dynamics, leading to concerns about the loss of its traditional family-oriented atmosphere and the impact on local businesses and services.
4. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/castle-combe-tourists-furious-villagers-b2369526.html> - Castle Combe, a picturesque village in Wiltshire, is experiencing tensions between residents and tourists. Locals have voiced frustrations over privacy invasions by drone-wielding visitors and the transformation of homes into Airbnbs, which has led to a decline in full-time residents. The village's charm has attracted numerous tourists, but the increased footfall has raised concerns about the sustainability of its community and the preservation of its traditional character.
5. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1787473/UK-most-beautiful-village-castle-Combe-Wiltshire-airbnb-drones> - Castle Combe, located in the Cotswolds, Wiltshire, has earned the title of 'one of the most stunning destinations in the UK' in numerous rankings and surveys. This picturesque village boasts idyllic walking paths and charming historic streets that seem untouched by the passage of time. It has become a popular tourist spot and has even served as a filming location for blockbuster movies like Stephen Spielberg's War Horse. Unsurprisingly, every year, thousands of tourists flock to this beloved destination, but their presence has left the village's residents feeling frustrated and encroached upon.
6. <https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1875668/castle-combre-tourism-airbnb-complaints> - Castle Combe is a quaint and once quiet Cotswolds village in Wiltshire, England with a population of less than 400 people, but its numbers may be dwindling due to its popularity. It is famous for its charming honey-coloured cottages and cobblestone streets as well as its rich medieval history, with the local St Andrew Church dating back to the 13th century. However, residents fear their way of life may be diminishing as the number of people who live in the village permanently has fallen, with many homes being bought as holiday homes or as Airbnbs.
7. <https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/24535525.castle-combe-visitors-warned-not-overwhelm-car-park/> - Visitors to one of Wiltshire’s tourist hotspots have been warned to park responsibly and avoid “overwhelming” the area this Bank Holiday. Wiltshire Council is anticipating that large numbers of people could make their way to Castle Combe during the August Bank Holiday weekend, as they do most years. The village is often named “one of the prettiest in England” and sits within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in the northern part of the county. Both the council and the parish council have warned that the small community can become “overwhelmed by visitors” on peak days.