# National Trust coach ban at Birling Gap sparks safety and environmental concerns



The National Trust's recent decision to prohibit coaches from dropping off passengers at Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters, a well-known coastal area in East Sussex, has sparked significant controversy. This scenic location draws approximately 600,000 visitors annually, renowned for its striking white cliffs and walking trails.

The organisation's intention behind the ban was to mitigate the environmental damage attributed to the high footfall, particularly the wear and tear on the iconic cliffs. However, local residents contend that the new policy has had unintended consequences. According to reports, tourists have not stopped arriving; instead, coaches are now parking further away from the site, resulting in increased traffic and safety hazards.

Phil Myerson, a 75-year-old resident, voiced his concerns in an interview with MailOnline, stating, "The coach ban hasn't come a moment too soon but it has completely backfired. Tourists are wrecking this place. If anything, they are causing more damage now than they were before." He further highlighted that some coach operators appear to be disregarding safety regulations, depositing passengers onto the roadside and creating blockages for other vehicles. Consequently, this has led to trampling of local flora, turning parts of the area into dust bowls, especially in the heat.

Jon Ledham, a walker who frequents the area, echoed similar concerns, pointing out the dangers associated with coaches dropping off passengers in unsafe locations. "The coach drivers are flouting safety laws by dropping their passengers directly into the road or grass verges," he remarked. He stressed the need for enforcement of safety measures, indicating that the current situation poses significant risks for pedestrians.

The situation at Birling Gap has drawn attention to the complex challenges associated with managing tourism in natural areas, balancing environmental conservation with visitor safety and experience. The National Trust, a prominent conservation body in the UK, faces ongoing scrutiny as it navigates these competing interests. The dilemma reflects broader discussions about sustainable tourism practices across popular destinations.

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

## References

* <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/birling-gap-and-the-seven-sisters/shifting-shores-at-birling-gap-at-the-seven-sisters> - This page discusses the National Trust's efforts to adapt to coastal changes at Birling Gap, including redesigning the car park and removing dedicated coach parking to ensure visitor safety.
* <https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2024/08/25/englands-prettiest-village-may-ban-coaches-amid-overtourism-concerns> - This article highlights similar issues in Bibury, where residents are calling for coach bans due to overtourism, leading to increased traffic and safety hazards.
* <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/birling-gap-and-the-seven-sisters/visiting-birling-gap-safely> - This page provides safety guidelines for visitors to Birling Gap, emphasizing the fragility of the cliffs and the importance of maintaining a safe distance from the cliff edges.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/08/21/national-trust-plans-better-manage-carbon-impact-visits/> - This article discusses the National Trust's plans to reduce car dependency and manage the carbon impact of visits, reflecting broader efforts to promote sustainable tourism practices.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/nov/14/tourists-cars-may-be-banned-from-most-popular-parts-of-lake-district> - This piece covers considerations in the Lake District to ban tourist cars from popular areas to address congestion and environmental concerns, paralleling the National Trust's initiatives.
* <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/birling-gap-and-the-seven-sisters/shifting-shores-at-birling-gap-at-the-seven-sisters> - This page discusses the National Trust's efforts to adapt to coastal changes at Birling Gap, including redesigning the car park and removing dedicated coach parking to ensure visitor safety.
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2051512/chaos-one-uks-best-seaside> - Please view link - unable to able to access data