**‘Secret’ plans for Arundel Bypass show “death” of ancient Sussex village**

**A Freedom of Information Request has revealed a ‘secret’ A27 route option which would devastate the village of Binsted and divide or destroy National Park woodlands.**

Until now Highways England has been cagey about the exact routes it was considering for a new bypass around Arundel, giving only verbal descriptions in its A27 Feasibility Study Reports. However, a Freedom of Information Request made by the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee (ABNC) has revealed two unpublished reports showing maps of a route option which would cut into the National Park and devastate the tiny rural community of Binsted.

The Feasibility Study Reports describe this option, adding an ‘alternative alignment’ for the north end with a flyover junction.   See [www.arundelbypass.co.uk](http://www.arundelbypass.co.uk) for a map of the options – the newly revealed map confirms ABNC’s Route 4.

“Both versions of the route would destroy a beautiful, historic landscape,” says villager and committee member, Emma Tristram. “Both would damage Binsted Woods – one by cutting them in two, the other by destruction of some of the best parts of the woods near the junction.  All of Binsted’s woodland is in the National Park.”

The ‘secret’ route option passes through Tortington, south of woodlands southwest of Arundel, before turning north through the centre of Binsted village. The new road would then join the A27 near the present ‘Binsted’ turn-off.   Villagers believe the route option was chosen in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid the National Park.   As well as this ‘secret’ route there are two well-known options in the running: the old ‘Preferred Route’ and the Purple Route which is partly online.

Walberton Parish Council has now written to Highways England asking for this route to be removed from the options for consideration:

“This route would mean the death of Binsted village,” says Emma. “The annual Strawberry Fair, which raises funds for looking after Binsted’s 12th-century church, could not continue.  Long and damaging new bypasses through or near the National Park have been rejected at Chichester and Worthing.   The same should happen at Arundel.

“The route would seriously affect businesses in Binsted such as Church Farm, the Black Horse pub, the Hilton’s golf course, Bee Bee Kennels, the archery and nature craft courses in Binsted Woods, the healing centre at Mill Ball, and Binsted Nursery’s propagation site.”

ABNC is highlighting the unsuitability of this option in its ‘Evidence Report’ prepared for Highways England. The report draws attention to new planning guidance which makes it clear that this route  would be unacceptable in planning terms:

“One new policy is the South Downs National Park’s ‘Special Qualities’, which must be preserved,” states  ABNC. “Part of Binsted is within the National Park and Binsted as a whole strongly demonstrates the Park’s ‘Special Qualities’.”

The current ‘Options Identification Stage’ is due to end in November 2016, and the chosen ‘Options’ will be presented at a ‘Public Consultation’ in Spring 2017.