

Arundel A27

Supplement to the 2016 Evidence Report

by

Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee

(ABNC)

March 2017

**Further Reasons for rejecting Arundel Bypass routes through
Binsted**

Executive Summary

In October 2016 ABNC presented its first ‘Evidence Report’, giving reasons for rejecting the present Binsted Option (and any other route through Binsted) as an option for the Arundel road improvement scheme, and asking for it to be ruled out at the Options Identification stage.

The first Evidence Report showed that the Binsted Option contravenes important planning policies of West Sussex County Council and the South Downs National park, as demonstrated in Chapter 1 of the Report and supported by the evidence in Chapters 2-5.

We now present new evidence which has been gathered in the six months since the first Evidence Report. The new evidence consists mainly of further wildlife surveys, further evidence about new historical discoveries which are part of Binsted’s cultural heritage, and further evidence of community life.

This new evidence gives further support to the main argument of the first Evidence Report, which is: since there are overwhelming planning grounds for rejecting the Binsted Option, it is therefore not viable as an option for the Arundel improvement scheme.

The Binsted Option should therefore be ruled out at the Options Selection stage.

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2. The new ecological evidence

The four surveys in the Supplement were commissioned by ABNC from MAVES, the Mid Arun Valley Environmental Survey group.

2.1 An ecological survey of the Mid Arun Valley and the potential impacts of the A27 Arundel Bypass ‘Binsted Option’, supplement, March 2017, by Jacqueline Thompson

2.2: Binsted Woods Bat Trapping Survey by Daniel Whitby of Animal Ecology and Wildlife Consultants, 2016 and ongoing

2.3: An Entomological Survey within the Parish of Binsted, by Mike Edwards, 2016 and ongoing

2.4: Beetle Survey of Lake Copse and two adjacent hedgerows by Dr Katherine Grove, 2016

3. The new heritage evidence

3.1: ‘Identifying the Hundred meeting place at Binsted near Arundel’, by Emma Tristram, article to be published in 2017 by *Sussex Archaeological Collections*

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4.3: The new Binsted Arts Festival, 8-11 June 2017

1. Introduction: Summary of the new evidence and its relation to the first Evidence Report

1.1 The new evidence in this Supplement

Ecology

The ecological evidence against a Bypass through Binsted is now even stronger than it was in the first Evidence Report. The supplementary overall report by Jackie Thompson makes this clear.

Reports are now completed on surveys of Bats, Beetles and Insects which were conducted in Binsted in 2016. 13 of the 17 known UK bat species were found, a very high number for so short a survey. The beetle survey found 234 species, again a high number for the time spent. The insect survey included 'extremely rare' Lowland Flushed Fen UK BAP Priority habitat and found nationally scarce species.

Heritage

An Anglo-Saxon Moot Mound or meeting place has been discovered at Hundred House Copse in Binsted. The article describing this new discovery, given in section 3 below, will be published this year in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*.

According to Historic England 'all well preserved or historically well documented moot mounds are identified as nationally important' (article on Alstoe Moot Mound). The Moot Mound is well preserved, is documented by place name evidence, and is very near the route of the Binsted Option.¹

The discovery means that Binsted's landscape can now be seen as a 'landscape of governance'. Not just the mound itself, but the tracks leading to it, the steep valley chosen as the site, and the Iron Age earthwork (running north-south throughout the parish and up to the Downs) beside which the Moot Mound was constructed, all form parts of this landscape and should be preserved. All Bypass options through Binsted would disrupt and sever this landscape.

Community

Binsted's first Arts Festival in 2016 was so successful that a second, enlarged Festival is being held in 2017 (8-11 June). This will help more people experience and learn about this lovely stretch of countryside and demonstrates further the community's pride in its heritage, as does the new Waymarker sculpture.

¹ References to the 'Binsted Option' are to the Bypass route through Binsted as defined by the Bullen and Faber Maunsell Reports (2004, 2006) and the A27 Feasibility Study Reports (Report 3, 5.12-16). Any other routes through Binsted are included by implication, though sometimes individual routes are referred to, such as the 'alternative alignment' described in the March 2015 A27 Feasibility Study Reports. See ABNC's first Evidence Report, Chapter 1, p. 5, for a map and a longer definition, also www.arundelbypass.co.uk.

1.2 Binsted and the South Downs National Park: the Inspector's judgement on the boundary now superseded by the new evidence

The initial 'South Downs National Park Area of Search' report in 2001 had stated that the area 'between Walberton and the river Arun', south of the woods, i.e. Binsted and Tortington villages, met the criteria for the National Park.² But the draft and designated boundaries (2002) left out all of Binsted except for the main block of Binsted Woods.

In 2002 the South Coast Multi-Modal Study (SoCoMMS) was newly researching bypass options through Binsted (the 'Green routes' suggested by an Arundel group in 1992). It was influenced to do so by the National Park's draft boundary, stating that such routes 'avoided the National Park' (Halcrow consultants' Progress Note, May 2002).³

It remains possible that the draft boundary, in not including the whole of Binsted, was influenced by the ongoing research into alternative Bypass routes. In its defence of the draft boundary (2002) the Countryside Agency stated that Binsted was 'open' and 'fragmented', neither a very cogent reason. But the final decision on the boundary in 2006 was influenced by a different criterion, the 'importance' of countryside.

The Planning Inspector for the South Downs National Park Public Inquiry, when deciding whether to include the whole of Binsted in the National Park (as LDA's March 2001 report had recommended, and as objectors including CPRE had requested), stated that the countryside of Binsted was 'not ordinary countryside', but he added that he did not see it as 'of especial importance' (Inspector's Report, South Downs National Park Inquiry, 2006). As a result he only added to the National Park the previously omitted areas of Binsted Woods and five more fields (five had already been included).

The new discoveries in ecology and heritage, and the burgeoning Binsted Festival, suggest that he was wrong. This is countryside of 'especial importance' and should not have a bypass through it.

1.3 How this evidence relates to the first Evidence Report

The first Evidence Report (referred to here as ER1), produced by the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee in September 2016, showed in detail that the Binsted Option for the Arundel Bypass contravenes two major sets of planning policies: the 'Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape' (2005) of West Sussex County Council, and the South Downs National Park's planning policies, a) the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment of 2011, and b) the Statutory Purposes and Special Qualities of 2016.

² 'South Downs National Park Area of Search' report by Landscape Design Associates, March 2001, Core Document 36 at the Public Inquiry, 'Coastal Lowlands' section, Section R.

³ After comparing those Binsted routes with the 1993 Preferred Route (the 'Pink-Blue' route), SoCoMMS' final recommendation was to endorse the 1993 Preferred Route. That route was cancelled by the Government in 2003 as being too damaging to the Arundel watermeadows, and research into less environmentally damaging solutions was requested.

i. The Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape

The West Sussex Landscape Strategy, with its detailed vision, objectives, and guidelines, seeks to conserve and enhance historic landscapes such as that of Binsted. An Arundel Bypass through Binsted would be directly contrary to the Strategy.

Not only would it destroy many features which the Strategy sets out to conserve, but it would destroy a landscape which is being researched, conserved and protected by local volunteers through MAVES, the Mid Arun Valley Environmental Survey group, fulfilling many of the objectives and guidelines outlined in the Strategy.

ii. The South Downs National Park's planning policies

The South Downs National Park's important landscape planning policy, the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment, sets out to 'guide change and development so that it does not damage the characteristics or value of the landscape'. An Arundel Bypass through Binsted would be in serious breach, broadly and in detail, of this planning policy.

The Statutory Purposes and the Special Qualities of the National Park give its protection legal status. The Binsted Option for the Bypass is considerably more damaging than the 1993 'Preferred Route' to the seven Special Qualities of the National Park, in spite of the fact that the Preferred Route passes through more of the Park. This comparison is only of the western section of the Bypass.

The new evidence relates to the above planning policies in the following way:

Ecology:

- The WSCC Landscape Strategy (in its 'Landscape Vision' for the whole County) seeks to conserve 'rich diversity of wildlife habitats and the national heritage of woodland, trees and hedges' (ER1, p. 13).
- The South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment seeks to conserve ancient woodland, hedgerows and trees and maintain their 'biodiversity interest' (ER1, p. 28)
- The National Park's Statutory Purpose 1 is to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park' (ER1, p.30).
- The National Park's Special Quality 3 is 'A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and nationally important species' (ER1, p. 33).

Heritage:

- The WSCC Landscape Strategy seeks to conserve 'historic landscape', 'historic landscape features', historic landscapes with 'greater time-depth', and 'archaeological monuments', including earthworks (ER1, pp. 9, 13, 17, 18).
- The National Park's Special Quality 6 is 'well conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage' (ER1, p. 36).

Community:

- The WSCC Landscape Strategy seeks to conserve ‘character and local distinctiveness’ (ER1, p. 10).
- The National Park’s Statutory Purpose 2 is ‘to promote opportunities for understanding and enjoyment’ (ER1, p. 30).
- The National Park’s Special Quality 5 is ‘Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences’ (ER1, p. 35).
- The National Park’s Special Quality 7 is ‘Distinctive towns and villages with real pride in their heritage’ (ER1, p. 37).

The new evidence presented in the Supplement to the Evidence Report shows that Binsted fulfils all these policies even more than was the case when the first Evidence Report was presented.

An Arundel Bypass through this area would be contrary to these planning policies because it would damage or destroy these aspects of the area instead of conserving and enhancing them.

The ‘Binsted Option’ should be rejected at the Options Selection Stage and should not be included as an option in the forthcoming Public Consultation.