

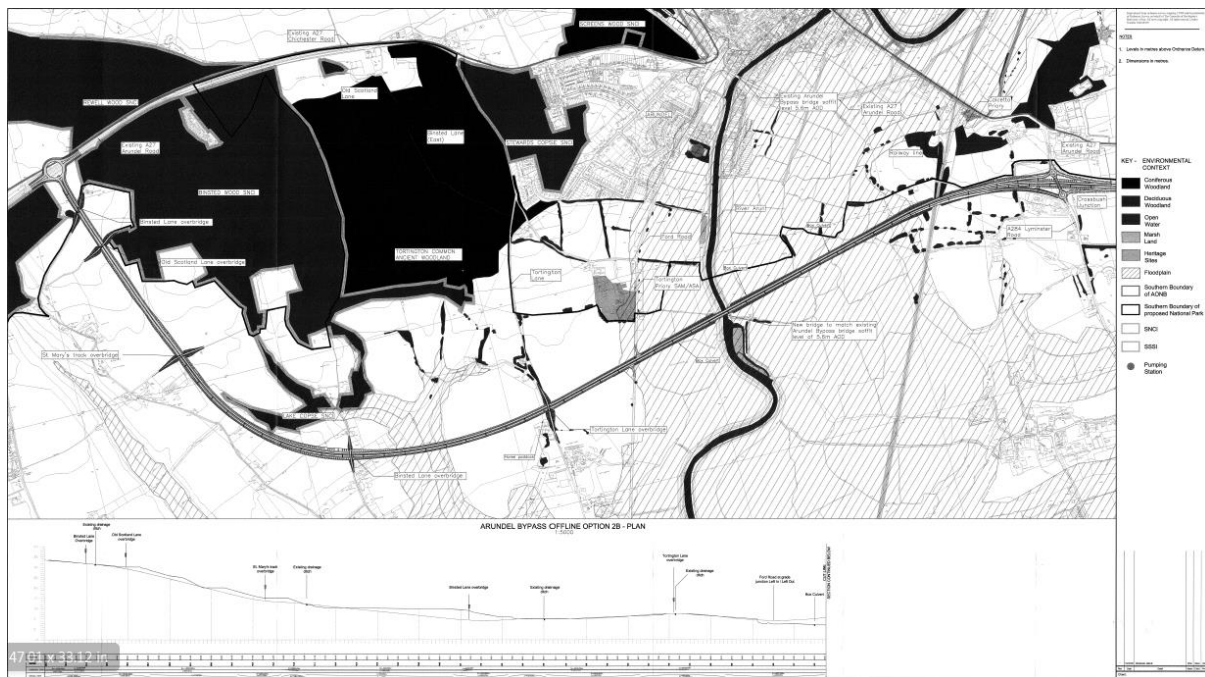
ABNC newsletter 16 May 16

2006 map of Binsted Route for the Arundel Bypass found

The latest Arundel Bypass news is that ABNC has acquired, through Freedom of Information requests, maps of an unpublished route through Binsted for the Arundel Bypass, that is very likely to be the 'Binsted Option' at present being studied by Highways England.

After crossing the watermeadows, it dips southwards to go round the outside of the National Park boundary. It passes first through Tortington, then through Binsted, first crossing the southern part of Binsted where most houses are, then turning northwards through the central fields, close to the 12th-century church and listed buildings, and dividing the woods from most of the village. It joins the present A27 with a roundabout just west of the junction of Binsted Lane with the A27.

The map first appeared in the unpublished Bullen Report, 2004. This was a long, meticulous report commissioned to look for less environmentally damaging routes after the old 'Preferred Route' across Tortington Common was cancelled in 2003. We also have a more detailed version of the map from a 2006 report by Faber Maunsell – though we do not yet have that report. Here is the Faber Maunsell map:



This is likely to be Option B of the Feasibility Study

This route is very likely to be the 'Option B' of the A27 Feasibility Study reports of March 2015 – called there in all tables and analyses 'longer to avoid the National Park'. No map was given there, and the verbal description (Report 3, 5.2.12-16) was garbled, but with certain corrections fits this route.

That report also gave an 'alternative alignment' for the northern part of the Binsted route, to allow for a different junction: a grade separated junction at Avisford. A junction there would mean an alternative route crossing the Binsted valley either south or north of the church. In other words, the 'Binsted Option' is very like route 5 of ABNC's December 2015 map (see www.arundelbypass.co.uk).

Damage from the route

Such a route would be terribly damaging to Binsted village, for Walberton Parish, and for all who know and love Binsted and visit it to walk, ride and cycle on its lanes and footpaths. It would divide Binsted – since 10 of its 38 houses are within the National Park woodland and would be split from the rest. It would ruin Binsted's unique 'tree-entwined' landscape. It would mean the annual Strawberry Fair, which raises money for repairing Binsted Church, could not continue. It would mean the death of the village and the disappearance of a historic landscape and a beautiful place.

What is ABNC going to do?

The Bullen report of 2004 did not choose a route, but it recommended this Binsted route for further study, along with 5 versions of the Purple, mainly online route, and a reduced-height version of the old Preferred Route. However, it did report that its statutory environmental consultees, including the Countryside Agency, while 'strongly preferring' an online solution, thought that the Binsted route was 'marginally' less damaging than the Preferred Route across Tortington Common.

Since then, the National Park has been created, and there is much more planning advice on this sensitive area, and on historic landscapes in Sussex. ABNC is preparing an Evidence Report to show that such a route through Binsted is not acceptable, according to the latest planning guidance, and should be dropped from the Bypass options at the Options Identification Stage.

The Northern Bypass at Chichester, along the edge of the National Park, has been dropped (in March), and the offline route through the National Park at Worthing has also been dropped. Less damaging solutions to congestion are being sought, mostly online. Dualling at Worthing is now not necessarily going ahead, and the possibility of a non-dualled solution at Arundel at last seems more likely.

Walberton Parish Council's letter

ABNC presented to Walberton Parish Council's full council meeting in March reasons for asking for the Binsted option to be removed from the options at the Options Identification Stage. The Council has now written to Highways England asking for this, citing its Neighbourhood Plan policy, and giving as further reasons the precedent at Worthing and Chichester of cancelling damaging bypasses far out in the countryside; their support for an efficient process of improvement for the A27; and evidence of the impact such a route would have in terms of recent planning policy.

The new Stakeholder Reference Group meeting

The new Stakeholder meeting held by Highways England on 12 May was not very useful – see the ABNC blog on www.arundelbypass.co.uk for a report. However, they have some good 'objectives' which include

- Recognising that any improvement would have a significant impact on the SDNP, and have regard to the purposes and special qualities of the National Park that the SDNP authority is seeking to preserve in designing and evaluating improvement options.'

Our case against the option through Binsted relies partly on those Special Qualities of the National park – which Binsted has in abundance.

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