Arundel Bypass just as “Controversial”, Minister warned

**Campaigners say Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, is in for a nasty shock if he thinks that plans for an Arundel bypass are any less ‘controversial’ than the Chichester ones.**

Last week, Mr Grayling announced that the Chichester scheme had been cancelled because it was too “controversial,” but added that “the A27 Arundel bypass should proceed as planned”.

However, the routes being considered for a bypass around Arundel are likely to prove equally controversial. One option (‘Pink-Blue’) was previously cancelled in 2003 due to the unacceptable environmental damage it would cause. Another devastates the historic village of Binsted. Both these options cut through parts of the National Park, and both would fragment ancient woodland.

“It’s absurd that the Binsted option is still on the table,” said Emma Tristram, Secretary of the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee (ABNC), which has been campaigning against the Binsted routes for thirty years. “The area is a treasure trove of rare and protected wildlife. The village is also well known for its festivals and cultural heritage. On top of which it’s by far the most expensive option.”

John Henderson, who runs a community website in the neighbouring village of Tortington, says, “Both the Binsted and the ‘Pink-Blue’ option go through Tortington. Our parish would be sliced in two. We also have a beautiful twelfth-century church and amazingly wildlife-rich hedges and woodland which are all at risk.”

Campaigners say road planners should be giving more consideration to the suggestion, by the Arundel A27 Forum, that the existing route should be widened, and a much shorter new bypass section should be built, just from Crossbush to the river.

The South Downs Society is urging Highways England to include the Forum’s suggestion – a 40mph single carriageway bypass route, closer to the current road, eliminating holdup points and smoothing traffic flow - in their public consultation this summer.

“The far-offline options are unacceptably damaging to the National Park,” says South Downs Society’s Steve Ankers.  “Their damage to the Park’s special qualities includes major impact on key views south from the National Park, and also looking up the valley towards Arundel.”

“Arundel people love their countryside,” adds Kay Wagland, secretary of ArundelSCATE, one of the member organisations in the South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment (SCATE).  “We want to see traffic issues resolved, but not by sacrificing our countryside or losing local business for an unnecessary and costly dual carriageway, which Highways England tells us won't even cut traffic or pollution in the town.

“We support the more effective, wide single carriageway road from the Arun bridge to the Crossbush junction, alongside more sustainable access improvements.”

Meanwhile, CPRE Sussex is calling for a complete re-think on congestion:

“We know building more roads is not the answer to traffic problems,” says Director of CPRE Sussex, Kia Trainor. “Online and near-online bypass improvements at Arundel, designed to ease flow at moderate speeds where there are pinch-points, would work best as part of a sustainable transport strategy.  This would be the least costly approach, both financially and in terms of the environment.”

CPRE Sussex’s Chairman, David Johnson agrees, adding, “Highways England need to rethink their rather grandiose and destructive plans; we can do better for less.  The largely online improvement plans coming from community based groups, such as the New Purple Route, would be a smarter way to mitigate traffic problems.”

Julie Upson who looks after Noor Wood, which is directly in the path of the route option through ancient woodland on Tortington Common, says the road would devastate the countryside:

“Woodland owners now manage the woods for conservation,” she says. “It would be devastating to lose this now. Our school parties and other educational groups love it. The woodland is full of wildlife.”

Notes for editors:

**Press release issued by Jane Watson on behalf of the Arundel A27 Forum**[**www.arundela27forum.org.uk**](http://www.arundela27forum.org.uk/)

**More information**

* For a map and details of the New Purple Route, see [www.arundela27forum.org.uk](http://www.arundela27forum.org.uk/)
* Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee ABNC see [www.arundelbypass.co.uk](http://www.arundelbypass.co.uk/)   
  or contact Emma Tristram on [emma.tristram@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:emma.tristram@dsl.pipex.com) 01243 551635    
  - see also [www.facebook.com/arundelbypass](http://www.facebook.com/arundelbypass)
* ArundelSCATE:  Kay Wagland [arundelscate@gmail.com](mailto:arundelscate@gmail.com) 07940 307603
* South Downs Society:  [steve.ankers@southdownssociety.org.uk](mailto:steve.ankers@southdownssociety.org.uk) 01798 875073
* CPRE Sussex:  [kia.trainor@cpresussex.org.uk](mailto:kia.trainor@cpresussex.org.uk) 07964 894333
* The ecology of Arundel’s countryside around Binsted and Tortington see [www.maves.org.uk](http://www.maves.org.uk/) . Also [www.facebook.com/mavesarundel](http://www.facebook.com/mavesarundel)
* Binsted village:  [www.binsted.org](http://www.binsted.org/)
* Tortington village, and its fight for survival against severance by any fully offline option: [www.tortington.org.uk](http://www.tortington.org.uk/)
* Tortington Common: [www.noorwood.co.uk](http://www.noorwood.co.uk/)

**Photos and maps** are available from any of the above. For the New Purple Route map see [www.arundela27forum.org.uk](http://www.arundela27forum.org.uk) ; for what is known about other options under consideration see eg [www.arundelbypass.co.uk](http://www.arundelbypass.co.uk) . Photos of Arundel’s countryside including the threatened areas have begun to appear on the new hashtag   
[www.instagram.com/lovearundelcountryside](http://www.instagram.com/lovearundelcountryside).