

## “Size isn’t Everything” say A27 Campaigners

A packed meeting at Arundel’s Norfolk Arms last Thursday warmly welcomed a local, more integrated approach to the town’s traffic problems than relying on a big new bypass.



Local residents joined speakers from regional and national organisations in questioning the evidence submitted in their current public consultation by the government’s agency for trunk roads, Highways England, to justify their three bypass options.

Said Kay Wagland, Ford Road resident, town councillor and local campaigner with Arundel SCATE (South Coast Alliance on Transport and the Environment), “Bypasses are about speeding drivers past places and that’s the remit of Highways England. Arundel residents need to be able to get in and out of their own town safely and conveniently on foot, bike, bus and, yes, by car. None of this is helped by the bypass ‘choices’ we’re being offered.”

David Johnson, chair of Sussex Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, presented a short new video, *The End of the Road*, based on extensive national studies of the impact of new road schemes. “Research”, said David, “shows that building roads generates more traffic, causes permanent environmental damage and leads to little economic gain. It’s a tired formula that we can’t afford and benefits nobody in the long run.”

Bridget Fox from Campaign for Better Transport agreed, “As the remit of Highways England is limited to managing and improving the trunk road network, it’s no surprise that they show bigger bypasses as their solution but this isn’t going to solve traffic problems in or around Arundel.”

Kay Wagland and fellow SCATE member Simon Rose concluded that the alignment of “Bypass Option 1” from the Highways England consultation was an improvement on both of the other options, positioned closer to the existing route of the A27. But they showed the meeting how a single carriageway, much less expensive design for Option 1, known as the “new purple route” would be far better with far less damage to the environment, while still easing traffic through the current hold-ups. This is explained on the website of the Arundel A27 Forum. There was little support amongst those present for Highways England’s more grandiose Options 3 and 5A raised dual carriageways cutting across the Arun valley, carving through the national park, ancient woodland and the village of Binsted.

The meeting was chaired by the Policy Officer for the South Downs Society, Steve Ankers, who concluded, “Some politicians and many members of the public seem to cling to the idea that the more expensive the solution, the better the outcome. We need to look closely at what the actual problems are that we’re hoping to solve. Even from the evidence that Highways England have put forward the grand bypass options don’t score well. Arundel and the National Park deserve better.”

Ends

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Notes for editors:

- The South Downs Society is the national park society for the South Downs National Park. It campaigns and fundraises for the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the national park and their quiet enjoyment.
- The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (Sussex branch) aims to promote the beauty, tranquility and diversity of the Sussex countryside
- Campaign for Better Transport is a UK advocacy group that promotes better bus and rail services and a more environmentally sustainable approach to transport
- SCATE (South Coast Alliance on Transport and the Environment) is a network of environmental organisations and residents’ groups seeking a more sustainable approach to transport issues along the Sussex coast. Arundel SCATE is a local group operating under that umbrella.

- Highways England, the government's trunk road agency, is consulting until 16 October on options for a new A27 Arundel bypass.
- The New Purple Route is explained on the website of the Arundel A27 Forum here: <http://www.arundela27forum.org/>