

Draft minutes of a meeting of Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee on 9 Dec 2014 at Binsted Church at 7 pm. About 20 people came including Peter Grace, UKIP candidate for the Arundel and South Downs constituency.

Luke Wishart (Chairman) welcomed everyone and described Nick Herbert MP's 'letter to Walberton residents' about the Arundel bypass. He agreed with most of it but pointed out that the phrase 'between Binsted and Walberton' was wrong – Option B was 'in' Binsted, and 'through Binsted and Walberton' would be more correct. B would be ruinous for Binsted and Walberton. He also quoted Julia Plumstead's note about the roads announcement that it was now up to local people to fight for an acceptable route. There would be a Public Inquiry at which we could give our views.

Emma Tristram (Secretary) thanked everyone for all their email lobbying against Option B. We had had some success – Nick Herbert had at first refused to discuss it but was now openly 'not supporting it'. The roads announcement did not mention Option B.

The announcement about the Roads Investment Strategy included the words 'A new dual carriageway bypass... The starting point will be the previous Preferred Route, subject to consultation with the National Park Authority, local government and the public on this, and alternative options'. The 'alternative options' might include online or near-online options, though the wording was ambiguous. ABNC are seeking clarification of this ambiguous statement.

In addition to the Public Inquiry there would first be a public consultation with an exhibition about the options and an opportunity to give our point of view. Now that the Study was finished, there would be a quiet period with few if any updates from the Department for Transport, but ABNC will keep everyone up to date with a monthly email bulletin.

Bill Treves then gave an illustrated talk on all the consultants' 'Options'.

1. The map made by the CPRE delegate at the 27 August meeting of the Feasibility Study Stakeholder Reference Group was shown with options A, B, C, D and E. A is the old Pink/Blue route, B is through Binsted and Walberton, C is probably a section of new road south of the station, D is widening with a tunnel, and E is junction improvements and possible additional lanes.
2. An aerial photo with first Option B1, then Option B2, then Option A, superimposed showed what the actual width of the new road would be (26m, or wider with embankments or cuttings). A was more curved than B and slightly shorter.
3. Option B was a better prospect from an engineering point of view. He viewed it as a real threat. His 'indicative' Option B was not quite the same as that drawn by the CPRE delegate but there was little room for variation if the road was to avoid the National Park.
4. Option A divides Tortington village. It is also close to Torton Hill, and Havenwood where 70 people live in mobile homes – about the same number as live in Binsted. The usual map of

'Pink/Blue' that is given e.g. in the local plan is too simplistic – like a child's drawing. It does not show junctions or the real width of the road.

5. Bill has found that York University have the archaeological assessment on Pink/Blue (Option A) done for West Sussex County Council in 1993. It includes more detailed maps of the route which he showed, with the grade-separated junctions at Havenwood, Ford Road and Crossbush. However the junctions would now be bigger as road building standards have changed. Also, the maps show the bypass as on an embankment across the Arun valley, but it is now thought that the Environment Agency has said it would have to be on stilts to allow for flood water.
6. The access at the junction of the A27 and the B2132 at Avisford would probably be reduced to left in, left out – so traffic coming from the west could only get into Yapton Lane by going on to the new junction at Havenwood, onto the flyover, round both roundabouts, and back along the A27. Traffic would be unwilling to do this and there would be much more traffic using West Walberton Lane and the Street.
7. Binsted Lane East would cross over the new road on a flyover.
8. The work done at the time includes the results of test pits, bore holes, a heritage assessment, an environmental assessment and an assessment of the effect on the watermeadows. He hopes we can get these documents to see the details.
9. He has also asked the HA for information on the work done in the 1990s. They have an archive at Dorking, not digitised, and are happy for someone to come and look at it.

Questions and comments followed.

Q. Darren Mills said that the bypass may not be feasible. The stilts would have to rest on something. [I think the Bognor Bypass has a rail bridge where the components are 'floating' – is this a possible way they could build the bypass?]

Q. Paula Tinker asked if the new South Downs National Park had made a difference. Bill replied that it had, but Nick Herbert was trying to belittle it. Nick Herbert also belittled Tortington Common as 'replanted' woodland. The archaeological study Bill has uncovered shows Tortington Common is ancient woodland, i.e. wooded since 1600 – it includes references to maps at Arundel Castle.

Paula thought the designation would not stop development going ahead, for instance the NP did not seem to be fighting the holiday park in Houghton Forest. Bill replied that the NP may not accept Option A through the Park, so B is a real danger, and the online options may have to be looked at.

Q. Luke Wishart pointed out that the Ford Road junction – the five-way roundabout – is an important problem which the bypass would address. He also reminded us that in talks about the woodland with ministers in the past, when Option A was chosen as the Preferred Route, he had been told that Binsted Woods were SSSI standard (though actually only designated SNCI), and were better than Tortington Common. This was still the case.

Bill reminded us that Option A was rejected in 2003 by Alistair Darling, then Minister of Transport, because of the effect on the watermeadows which he described as 'of outstanding beauty'. Bill has

written to Alastair Darling for the evidence reports behind his decision to cancel the Pink/Blue route in 2003. The decision to cancel was due to environmental damage to the water meadows and not Tortington Common.

Bill added that we need more time and better information in order to decide what to do, apart from opposing Option B and asking for all the options, including online ones, to be taken forward (as in our resolutions at the previous meeting).

Q. Someone asked if the Hilton had been contacted. Luke had seen the assistant manager but they were not very interested even though Option B would destroy their business.

Q. Camilla Lambert asked 'What are we?' i.e. what is our main aim.

Tricia Wales replied that we should support 'No new road'. Everyone knew that new roads just caused more traffic. Even though there was a massive pro-road lobby we should not allow the government to wreck our lives.

Mike Tristram pointed out that in asking for all options to be explored we were already in principle at the last meeting supporting sustainable transport and alternative options. Arundel SCATE's list had been circulated and printouts of it had been distributed at this meeting. He asked was everyone happy, rather than trying to duplicate the work Arundel SCATE had done, to say that we in ABNC would like to see Arundel SCATE's list of alternative options costed and taken forward as part of any future consultation on what should be done to improve the A27 at Arundel? This was supported by Julia Plumstead. Everyone agreed to support the Arundel SCATE list in this way.

Bill replied that there was a General Election coming up and we should talk to our candidates.

Emma Tristram pointed out that both UKIP and the Green Party were against the bypass. Peter Grace (UKIP candidate) was present.

She also said we could continue our present aims of objecting to Option B and asking for online as well as offline options to be in the public consultation.

Camilla asked if there was a timetable for what happened next. Bill replied that probably nothing would happen until after the election next year.

Q. Mike Tristram said that the next few months should not be too 'quiet'. We should keep writing to our democratic representatives (details on www.arundelneighbourhood.com) and also to the local press. Those addresses will be added to the website. We could ask for a proper consultation on the online options as well as the full bypass options.

Luke thanked everyone for coming and the meeting closed.