

March 2017 Supplement to the 2016 Evidence Report by Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee

4.2: Community Action Press Reports: Cancelled Chichester improvement scheme highlights controversy over Arundel Bypass

a) The Arundel scheme overall

Shoreham Herald, 9 March 2017: 'Arundel Bypass threatened after sister plans scrapped?'

Arundel bypass threatened after sister plans scrapped?

Stephen Pickthall and Michael Drummond

Plans for an A27 bypass at Arundel are just as controversial as those for Chichester, campaigners say. The warning comes after Transport Secretary Chris Grayling scrapped the Chichester plans, blaming 'withdrawal of support by local councils' and 'significant local campaigns'.

Despite this, Mr Grayling said 'the A27 Arundel bypass should proceed as planned.'

But Arundel campaigners have warned the division in the Chichester community is very likely to be felt in Arundel too.

One option ('Pink-Blue') was previously cancelled due to the environmental damage it would cause and another route impacts the village of Binsted. Both these options cut through parts of the South Downs National Park.

"It's absurd that the Binsted option is still on the table," said Emma Tristram, secretary of the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee (ABNC).

"The area is a treasure trove of rare and protected wildlife. The village is also well known for its festivals."

"Arundel people love their countryside," said Kay Wagland, secretary of ArundelSCATE, part of South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment.

"We want to see traffic issues resolved, but not by sacrificing our countryside or losing local business for a costly dual carriageway."

Arundel mayor councillor James Stewart said on behalf of Arundel Town Council: "A bypass is needed for Arundel to reduce pollution and allow traffic to move freely."

The council's preferred option is the cancelled pink-blue route: "It is the shortest route requiring the minimum amount of new road. It does not go through any villages and does not go through ancient woodland," Mr Stewart said.

While this is the council's current view, he confirmed a new position might be arrived at once options for the A27 are finalised.

Mr Stewart promised that the options would be subject to public consultation.

A pro-bypass group called OneArundel is in the process of being formed, he added.

Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert said he was 'dismayed' at the Chichester decision but 'reassured' that the Arundel Bypass will proceed as planned.

Are plans for a bypass at Arundel under threat?

West Sussex Gazette, 8 March 2017: 'Campaigners warn Arundel plans are also controversial: fallout after Chichester improvements were scrapped'

Transcription of the article:

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Campaigners warn Arundel's A27 plans are also controversial

Fallout after Chichester A27 improvements were scrapped

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The warning comes after Transport Secretary Chris Grayling scrapped the Chichester plans and blamed his decision on 'the withdrawal of support by local councils for the shortlisted options and significant local campaigns'.

The news came just days before the results of the consultation were published - which showed that 47 per cent of respondents voted for 'No Option', while the most popular of the five options was Option 2, which included major junction changes and a southern 'link road'.

In the report by Highways England, it said that 56 per cent of respondents and 50 per cent of the local authorities and parishes supported a new offline bypass.

When dropping the A27 plans for Chichester Mr Grayling said 'the A27 Arundel bypass should proceed as planned'.

But Arundel campaigners have warned the division in the local community in and around Chichester is very likely to be felt in Arundel too and equally as controversial.

One option ('Pink-Blue') was previously cancelled in 2003 due to the unacceptable environmental damage it would cause and another impacts the historic village of Binsted. Both these options cut through parts of the South Downs National Park.

'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 30 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

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.

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 - 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 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.'

Arundel mayor councillor James Stewart said on behalf of Arundel Town Council: 'a bypass is needed for Arundel to eliminate severance, reduce pollution and allow traffic to move past the town freely.'

The council's preferred option is the pink-blue route: 'It is the shortest route requiring the minimum amount of new road. It does not go through any villages and does not go through ancient woodland.'

Mr Stewart said, 'While this is the council's current view, he confirmed a



new position might be arrived at once options for the A27 are finalised.

Mr Stewart promised that the options would be subject to public consultation to allow residents to have their say.

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

'We know building more roads is not the answer to traffic problems,' said 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.'

Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert said he was 'dismayed' by the scrapping of the Chichester scheme but was 'reassured that the Arundel Bypass will proceed as planned.'

He said: 'Those who campaigned against the improvements to the A27 southern Chichester bypass have inflicted a massive own-goal on West Sussex. By lobbying for an unfeasible northern bypass, and undermining the process,

they have effectively lost £200 million of infrastructure investment in the area, while road users will continue to face appalling congestion around Chichester.'

'I warned that this would happen if the opposition continued and I am very sorry that it has.'

'I will do my best to support my colleague Andrew Tyrie in lobbying for the Government to restore the scheme in future, but I'm afraid that we have learned the hard way that negative political manoeuvring has a serious cost.'

Meanwhile Chichester MP Andrew Tyrie said the Chichester community had 'lost confidence' in Highways England's A27 improvement options.

He said: 'We have to try to persuade the government eventually to return to this. And before we do so, we have to find a solution that can unite the whole community.'

'None of Highways England's schemes could achieve this. So they lost the

confidence of the community.'

'My constituents needed to feel confident that their access to the A27 and to nearby roads would be improved, and that local traffic would not end up diverted into the centre of Chichester, aggravating existing problems.'

'They did not feel confident about either of these. I made these points, and others, vigorously to the Secretary of State on behalf of many constituents.'

'But the appalling congestion in and around Chichester will only get worse.'

'And more than £200 million of public investment earmarked for the area will now be spent in other parts of the country or handed back to the Treasury.'

'I've been fighting for improvements to the A27 for most of my time as an MP. And I will fight on until we find a solution that works for the whole of my constituency.'

Meanwhile, many are asking 'what now?' for Chichester in the wake of the government's decision.

The news came just days before the results of the consultation were published which showed that 47 per cent of respondents voted for 'No Option', while the most popular of the five options was Option 2, which included major junction changes and a southern 'link road'.

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b) The Ancient Woodland of Tortington Common

Worthing Herald, 18 March 2017

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NEWS

A27 bypass to 'sever' ancient woodlands from Arundel?

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Worried residents have raised concerns an A27 bypass at Arundel will sever an area of ancient woodland from the town.

Responding to an article in last week's Gazette about the future of the A27, readers expressed fears that one bypass option will harm a historic community.

The 'pink-blue' route, which Arundel mayor councillor James Stewart says is Arundel Town Council's current preferred option, would go through Tortington Common, an area of woodland west of Arundel.

Mr Stewart said last week: "It is the shortest route requiring the minimum amount of new road. It does not go through any villages and does not go through ancient woodland."

However, John Henderson, 66, who lives in Tortington Lane, has warned that the parish of Tortington lies slipp bang in the path of the route, which will 'sever' it from Arundel.

"Tortington is still very much a part of this ancient landscape and we deserve some acknowledgement," John, a retired prison librarian added.

Julie and Tony Upton, who own a small piece of woodland in the path of the route, sought to clarify that the Common is classified as ancient woodland.

"The value of ancient woodland cannot be underestimated," they said in a statement.

"It is arguably this country's most important natural carbon sink after peat boglands.

"Digging up such a carbon store to create more roads will release tons of stored carbon.



Julie, 62, and Tony Upton, 63, on their woodland in Tortington

not to mention the carbon cost of the construction process itself.

"Surely improvements to an existing road are more cost-effective environmentally as well as financially?" Julie and Tony have invited Mr Stewart to visit them and see the woodland for himself.

Mr Stewart sought to clarify his comment, saying the council's preferred route only goes through replanted ancient woodland.

Golf course closed for renovations

Putting will have to be put on hold while the adventure golf site is closed as part of the council's refurbishment of Norfolk Gardens.

Arun District Council and maintenance company ISS Lifestyle began the works in Norfolk Gardens on March 6.

The adventure golf site in Sea Road will temporarily close, during which time it will be re-carpeted, with new surrounds and features installed. Work is due to finish on Sunday April 7.

The nine-hole, par three golf course will also have a makeover soon, which will include a new entrance, new seating, refreshed drinkers and an adjusted course layout.

The three full-sized and four compact-sized tennis courts in Norfolk Gardens will also be rebounded and repainted ready for the summer season. Work on the courts is due to take place between March 15-18.

Arun District councillor Terence Chappman said it would revitalise the gardens ready for the Easter holidays.

Campaigners highlighted the importance of the Ancient Woodland at Tortington Common, through which the old Preferred Route, Pink-Blue, would go. Though parts are replanted, it is all classified as Ancient Woodland; within that classification it is defined as a PAWS (Plantation on an Ancient Woodland Site), though some areas were never replanted. Many of Tortington Common's planted conifers were destroyed in 1987's hurricane and not replaced. Those areas have regrown as semi-natural woodland. The very varied woodland of Tortington Common is as interesting in its own way as the very different Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland of Binsted Woods.

Together the two areas, adding up to nearly 500 acres (Tortington Common: 180 acres, Binsted Woods: 250 acres), form a fantastic area for recreation and wildlife. When the National Park was created the Countryside Agency's consultants pointed out that this is a better area for recreation than the area immediately north of the A27. This is still true.

The central third of Tortington Common has been sold in small parcels to new owners who are managing their woodland very carefully for wildlife, and also encouraging the use of their woodland for visits by people with health problems and parties of schoolchildren, who can help with the conservation work. Typical of the new owners are Julie and Tony Upson, owners of Noor Wood, in the above news story. Their wood is in the path of the Pink-Blue bypass route.

c) Tortington Village, through which all Bypass routes would pass

The village of Tortington, since it is in the way of all proposed routes, is usually ignored in discussions about routes for the Bypass. Its inhabitants are now speaking up and pointing out that Tortington, mentioned in the Domesday Book like Binsted, is very much part of this ancient landscape.

The remains of the mediaeval Tortington Priory, now being run as a retreat and conference centre, would be cut off from the rest of Tortington by the Pink-Blue route. Parts of the 14th-century chapel of the Priory still exist, built into a fine old barn that is part of the retreat centre.

Another retreat centre at Brooklands Barn, Priory Lane, Tortington would also be north of the Pink-Blue route and severed from the rest of Tortington. The proposed elevated junction of the new bypass with Ford Road would bring lights, noise and disturbance making these centres unusable.

The Binsted Option route would pass through Tortington further south, very close to or destroying houses in the village.

John Henderson's letter to the Littlehampton Gazette (below) asks for as much consideration as other areas from 'those elected officials and officers in whose constituency we reside and pay taxes'.

Worthing Herald, 16 March 2017

Enjoy ancient woodland

The cancellation of the road improvements planned for the A27 at Chichester, in sending a nervous shiver through the Town Hall at Arundel have prompted the mayor, councillor James Stewart (Littlehampton Gazette, March 9), to once again repeat those two old untruths – that there is no ‘village’ and no ‘ancient woodland’ in the path of the ‘pink-blue’ route across the Arun Valley which his council supports – though not unanimously – for an Arundel Bypass.

But I notice councillor Stewart dares not speak the name of Tortington, the community he seeks to sever from the rest of Arundel.

And by repeating, without any qualification whatsoever, the untruth that Tortington Common is not ancient woodland, he and his supporters seek to remove an obstacle to their hoped-for bypass.

What cannot be denied is the existence of a village and a community called Tortington, slap bang in the path of this ‘pink-blue’ route.

It may not conform to councillor Stewart’s Midsomer-esque image of the English village but Tortington, first recorded in Domesday Book, is still very much a part of this ancient landscape largely unchanged since the Norman Conquest and we deserve some acknowledgement of that fact from the elected officials and officers in whose constituency we reside and pay taxes.

The ‘severance’ that they claim to be concerned about clearly does not extend to the residents of Tortington.



A view of Shoreham from Mi

If councillor Stewart does not want to get his feet wet in the fields and woods of Tortington I can only refer him to our nod to modernity, Tortington Local Community website at www.tortington.org.uk or urge him to catch up on the history of this peaceful rural enclave at Wikipedia. He may learn something about the whole of the community that he represents.

On the matter of ancient woodland I can only refer councillor Stewart to the scientific community for an explanation.

The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre published a report in January, 2010, making it very clear that Tortington Common is indeed ancient woodland.

Before the public consultation takes place this summer – Tortington residents were not included in Highways England’s mail-shot in February outlining the timetable – I urge the mayor, the Town Council, Nick Herbert MP and all the others who would deny our existence to take the time to get out in the open air and enjoy the countryside, the woodland and the wildlife here in Tortington.

JOHN HENDERSON

Tortington Lane
Arundel

Grey and white are taking over

Architectural styles have something to say about society. Whether gothic,

d) Arundel SCATE's walk (November 2016) exploring what would be lost if the Pink-Blue route was built

The walk held by Arundel SCATE (South Coast Alliance on Transport and the Environment) in November 2016 showed that many people wanted to know more about what would be lost if the Pink-Blue route for the Bypass was built. 75 people attended the walk.

They walked along the river Arun to see the place where the Bypass would cross the river, as well as exploring Tortington Common, with talks from Julia Robson and Ian Powell of MAVES (Mid Arun Valley Environmental Survey) and Tony Whitbread, Chief Executive of the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Worthing Herald, 3 November 2016

