

Archers plot takes cruel twist in Sussex village

A tiny Sussex community is calling for its own “happy ending” after a series of uncanny real life parallels with a gripping Archers storyline.

Just like the famous fictional village of Ambridge, the rural idyll of Binsted near Arundel is under threat from a bypass route which would cut its community in two. However, whilst the fictional Ambridge “B Route” was dropped, the real life village of Binsted has not been so lucky. The “Option B” Arundel Bypass is still on the table and the community is up in arms.

“I was born on the farm in Binsted village,” says local landowner and farmer, Luke Wishart. “The farm and the village have been my family’s home for nearly a century - it would all be destroyed by any Binsted route. The bypass is needed but it shouldn’t be through Binsted.”

Binsted shepherd Matt Teear agrees: “I do all kinds of shepherding work, like shearing and lambing, for large and small flock owners. This spring I delivered 350 lambs from my ewes at Binsted, in the Strawberry Fair Field and Barnyard. In exchange I help with the Strawberry Fair and that. It’s not easy for a young shepherd with a growing flock to get land with facilities like this – but the Binsted road route would go straight through it all.”

However, while the Archers scriptwriters judged Ambridge’s fictional rural community too special to destroy, the A27 planners have not yet ruled out a Binsted route. Landlord of the local Black Horse pub, Clive Smith says there is a lot at stake: “People come from far and near to our pub to enjoy the views and the quietness: a bypass near the pub would spoil all that,” he says. “They should just go for a common sense solution, such as online then a short bypass from the Arun to Crossbush, and get on with it quickly.”

The community of Binsted is united in opposition to the new road. Local smallholder, Lynda Browning says the village is a very special place: “My husband Steve and I have rare breed sheep and hens, wonderful wildlife and a traditional orchard in which we involve special needs children. The Binsted route they are looking at would demolish our orchard – and our home.”

Another local resident, Mike Tristram agrees. “My family’s herb nursery has been here nearly 40 years”, he says. “We employ 60 or so people on various sites, but our young plants are still grown here first – either next to or right under the Binsted route. We were also looking at a holiday lets diversification but that’s been put on hold because of the road [threat](#). They ought to drop the Binsted Option now. That would make it a straight choice between the old preferred route and a shorter bypass.”

Darren Mills owns BB Kennels which would be right next to the route. His family have been running the business for two generations. “Our kennels business has been here over 30 years. We want to pass it on to the next generation and carry on providing a service to the local community,” he says. “All this would go if they put the A27 through Binsted. They should drop it now and make a sensible choice between shorter bypass options which don’t destroy the village and its businesses.”

Secretary of the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee, Emma Tristram, also lives in Binsted, and has been helping organize its Arts Weekend this month. "Highways England has dropped the route furthest out into the countryside at Chichester and Worthing, either side of Arundel along the A27," she says. "It makes no sense to drive a route over the beautiful countryside of Binsted. They should drop the Binsted Option now, too. Then real life people can celebrate, not just the Archers."

Notes for editors:

Press release issued by Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee (ABNC)
For more information in general contact ABNC Secretary Emma Tristram
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A selection of photographs is available on this Dropbox link:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xvs2616vpk2ktde/AAB6qxn6nY_LR-lvmFBQjhsa?dl=0

All of those quoted in the press release are happy to be contacted directly for more of their bypass blight story:

- Farmer Luke Wishart 01243 551279
- Shepherd Matt Tear 07702 158307
- Landlord Clive Smith 01243 553325
- Smallholders Steve and Lynda Browning 01243 553992
- Herb nurseryman Mike Tristram 01243 551635
- Kennels owner Darren Mills 07907 768488

More information

- For more information about Binsted village see www.binsted.org
- For more information about the Arundel Bypass threat see www.arundelbypass.co.uk
 - Also www.facebook.com/arundelbypass
- For more information about the environment of Binsted see www.maves.org.uk
 - Also www.facebook.com/mavesarundel

Forthcoming Binsted stories:

10 – 12 June Binsted Arts Weekend www.binsted.org/arts-weekend

- The Arts and Binsted's Landscape, talks walks and events
- A press release will be issued; journalists welcome to attend FOC.

24 July 14.00 – 16.30 Binsted Strawberry Fair www.binsted.org/strawberryfair

- 29th year of this traditional country fair, to which 1000 people come in an afternoon, now under threat from the Binsted Option for the A27 Arundel Bypass
- A press release will be issued; journalists welcome to attend FOC



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