

SPOTLIGHT ARGUS

A27 will destroy

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"WHEN we first moved here, I couldn't sleep because it was so quiet."

Retiree Mike Evans moved with wife Diane to the quiet village of Binsted in March with the intention of spending the rest of his life in "heaven".

But now he has another reason for sleepless nights.

After Highways England unveiled its six routes for the A27 Bypass, Mike was horrified to find one plan would go straight through his back garden.

The apple orchard, lake, and ancient forest in his property would be replaced with four lanes of traffic.

That route, codenamed Magenta, has been backed by Arundel MP Nick Herbert and both West Sussex and Arun councils.

Having uprooted his life in Bedfordshire to live in his dream home, the former serviceman has not exactly found the peace he was looking for.

"We moved here to retire in heaven," he said.

"My wife and I used to have tinnitus, but it's gone away because of how peaceful it is.

"But one time I was speaking to a youth group in Chichester who said they would love to come here to

“
Kate finds me sitting down crying my eyes out
”

camp in our apple orchard.

"I would love to have them, but with the bypass I don't know if it will be there anymore."

But it is not just the nature that Mike and Diane have enjoyed in Binsted.

"The people here are so hospitable," he said.

"Coming from the Armed Forces I was quite suspicious of that, but now it's home to me.

"I was wondering one day how my hedges were cut. I never realised one man from the village did it off his own back."

Others have been part of the tight-knit community for much longer.

Maggie Moore-Alexander moved to Binsted with husband Christopher in 2003.

They live in Meadow Lodge, a listed building where 70-year-old Maggie intends to spend the rest of her life caring for her 83-year-old husband.

"It's heaven," she said.

"It was my plan to take care of him forever here.

"It's like this house is what's keeping him going.

"We're a truly marvellous com-



Villagers in Binsted are not happy about plans to build a dual carriageway through the village

munity here. We have what most neighbourhoods across the country wish for:

"I don't want that to be destroyed. I don't know what we'll do without the house."

Just down the road are Darren and Kate Mills, owners of a dog kennel passed down through their family.

They built their home in the village 23 years ago and have lived there ever since.

But metres away from their

house are signs showing where the bypass could be built, a daily reminder they sometimes struggle to cope with.

"It's so stressful sometimes," said Darren, 49.

"One moment I'm thinking we can beat this, the next Kate finds me sitting down crying my eyes out.

"There are so many days where I think 'What's the point?'"

"I'm always thinking of improvements to make to the house, but when the future's uncertain I some-

times just don't bother."

Darren and Kate's dream was to pass down their kennel to daughter Lucy.

But if Highways England chooses the magenta route, it is quite possible the family business will have to close.

"I lived in Mile Oak when I was growing up and I saw the Brighton Bypass destroy my house when I was 17," he said.

"I don't want that to happen again.

"What annoys me the most is there's not much communication.

"One family only found out they would be affected because they went to a consultation and saw a road where their house was.

"The councillors aren't listening either. We don't know who to go to."

Matilda Tristram's family has lived in Binsted for five generations.

"When I was a teenager my friends would come to Binsted," said the 37-year-old.

our 'heaven'



Mike Evans, a owl and the

BINSTED VILLAGE

WHICH HIGHWAYS ENGLAND APPEARS TO BE TRYING TO HIDE. THIS REPRESENTS THE EXTENSIVE DESTRUCTION OF A COMMUNITY WHICH WOULD BE CAUSED BY THREE OF THE OFF LINE ROUTES.

THE GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS

- QUINCE COTTAGE
- CHURCH FARM
- ST. MARY'S CHURCH
- MARSH FARM
- THE GLEBE HOUSE
- THE THATCHED COTTAGE
- MOALEY'S CROFT
- MEADOW LODGE

PROPOSED ROUTES

- GREY
- MAGENTA
- AMBER

Scale: 100 M

"We'd be out all day skimming stones at the Madonna Pond.

"Then at night we'd lie on the grass and look at the stars.

"Binsted is home to five generations of my family and it's impossible to imagine a future without it."

In spring the preferred route will be announced.

It is likely magenta could be chosen.

While the public consultation for the bypass ends today, the villagers' real fight is just beginning.