

Littlehampton Gazette Readers' Letters 10 April 2015: "Insulting Tosh"

In one letter about the A27 (Gazette, March 26), Derek Waller manages to repeat misinformed tosh and insult a good number of his Arundel neighbours.

Labelling local people who oppose ineffectual, highly damaging and bad value road plans as 'anti-road' lacks imagination. Describing them as 'having their strings pulled', because they listen to a national transport organisation engaged in the Department for Transport (DfT) study group, is plain rude.

Mr Waller has no idea whether people in Arundel who oppose the A27 plans are a minority, because we haven't been consulted on the road in over a generation. Nobody knows – though we are aware that they can at least be counted in hundreds, going by the response to Arundel SCATE's publicity.

There has been no platform to voice opposition to local authority assertions and, it was thought, no need for one, as bypass plans were firmly rejected by government in 2003 on cost and environmental grounds.

He points out that congestion is forecast to get worse. This was also forecast in the 2002 SoCoMMS A27 report, since when traffic has not increased (DfT figures). The DfT's earlier national predictions in the 1990s of massive traffic increases never materialised either. For traffic to increase, it needs increased road capacity – without that, it stabilises. Transport academics point out that, in continuing to predict increases, the DfT is ignoring the evidence.

Mr Waller favours the Tortington Common bypass option, which was accepted in the 1990s as a last resort by the Sussex Wildlife Trust. The trust now completely opposes this route, making clear that this ancient woodland (identified in the Sussex Biodiversity Record and Ancient Woodland Survey endorsed by West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council), in the South Downs National Park, would be destroyed, along with its rare Red Book listed species, and cannot be replaced by simply planting trees elsewhere.

Is he really convinced that the unspecified 'sustainable transport measures' clearly tacked onto a road scheme reminiscent of the 1960s, will amount to anything significant?

And he suggests a new road is needed 'for those who need to drive past Arundel'. Indeed! Onto the next retail park or village, bypassing local businesses?

K. Wagland, Arundel