

Social Diary

By Sally Pavey | If you would like Sally Pavey to attend your social event then please email wsgazettesocial@gmail.com



Celebrate Binsted's 31st annual strawberry fair at the end of July

The ancient village of Binsted, with no particular centre as it consists of dwellings scattered around the parish edged by meadows and farmland as the settlements of Saxon origins may have shaped. This land was once bordered by streams, but now sees itself as an oasis amongst roads.

Carved wood markers still mark the traveller's way to assist today's ramblers and a focal point is the 12th century church of flint stone of St Mary's.

The parish will celebrate the 31st Strawberry Fair on July 22 in the beautiful 19th century threshing barn and fields near Arundel (BN18 0LL).

Like so many traditional rural Sussex village events this fair will be full of local crafts, herbs and shrubs to purchase as well as a range of farming produces and interests to enjoy.

A must to be enjoyed, especially if this weather continues, are the strawberry teas and ice creams. Little ones will enjoy the children's games, sheep and baby chicks.

Over the past three years the event has attracted more than 1,000 people raising £6,000 each year for charity, which has included repairs to the

church roof, Water Aid and the local St Wilfrid's Hospice.

The fair has history in that it started life as the Herb Festival in the churchyard in 1977 to raise money for the church. The first Countryside Fair for charity then followed in 1983 changing in 1988 to its current name organised by the villagers.

A small group of traditional folk musicians play in the entrance to the old flint threshing barn where the cream teas with strawberries are served, cakes and strawberry scones, with the obligatory Pimms tent and other local produce sold. The raffle prizes will be on display till the vicar calls out the winning numbers.

The neighbouring village, and once part of the Binsted parish, Torrington village has similar rural layout to Binsted, with a mix of arable farms and settlements featuring flint stone walls. Sadly both are under threat from the A27 Arundel Bypass preferred route 'option 5A'.

The route would start with a 70mph dual carriageway on a high embankment, perhaps stilts, spoiling the iconic view of Arundel's castle and downs. It would then go through the heart of Torrington and Binsted. This route would enter the fabulous National Park countryside full of

ancient woodlands that can't be replaced, destroying the habitat for thousands of wildlife species.

If the rain forests being removed and the ramifications that this is having on orangutans and climate change horrify you, then look closer to home as we remove the heritage and nature of Sussex to make way for polluting vehicles.

The countryside at Arundel, Tortington and Binsted is a fantastic 'green lung' for towns close by and many local villages. They can currently enjoy the National Park without having to cross the A27 dual carriageway. This access, tranquillity and beauty would be lost if the A5 option goes ahead.

Increasingly we are being told of the healing remedies of getting out in the countryside, enjoying nature and the beauty of the natural world and yet this Summer Fair for Binsted is as much about having fun, as it is about fighting to save a piece of ancient England here in West Sussex.

The areas that would be destroyed are exceptionally diverse, with 14 species of bat, dormouse, water vole, harvest mice, ancient woods and streams as well as residents that are prepared to fight this new road and invite you to help them by attending The Summer Fair is on July 22.



Binsted strawberry fair