

# Campaigners demand a 'better, not bigger' bypass

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Campaigners held a rally on Thursday to demonstrate against the proposed Arundel A27 bypass route.

Bearing banners saying 'A27: better not bigger' and 'save Binsted's countryside', protesters gathered at the South Downs Centre ahead of an emergency meeting about the potential bypass.

Brenda Pollack, South East campaigner at Friends of the Earth, said: "The rally showed how much people care about our beautiful countryside.

"We need 21st century solutions to tackle traffic in this area. There should be a thorough assessment and funded plans for better public transport, walking and cycling facilities.

"These changes are what will encourage a shift away from unnecessary car use."

Earlier this month Highways England announced that it had selected a slightly altered version of Option 5A as its preferred route for the A27 at Arundel.

The route would start with a new dual-carriageway from Crossbush junction and cross the River Arun south of the existing A27.

Binsted residents and environmental campaigners

have long said the route would cause significant harm to the area near the countryside village.

Reacting to the route announcement earlier this month, Nick Herbert, MP for Arundel and South Downs, said: "I'm delighted that the bypass is now in sight, in just two years' time according to the current timetable.

"I would have preferred Option 3 because that would have had less of an impact on Binsted and Walberton but there was this issue of the woodland, which was an obstacle.

"I think the overwhelming majority of my constituents, in my judgement, are in favour of a bypass and they want a full offline bypass."

Addressing concerns from campaigners earlier this month, Arun District Council leader Gillian Brown said: "I understand their concerns - of course I do - but life changes.

"We have so much more traffic than we had in years past, and the environmental impact of this increasing would do as much damage as the bypass.

"In Arun, we have 20,000 homes we need to build in 20 years; you can imagine how much more traffic that will cause."

What do you think? Email your views to ws.letters@jpress.co.uk.



Campaigners gathered outside the South Downs Centre to protest against Highways England's decision

## Sadness at closure of day centre

'Heartbreaking' plans to close a Chichester day centre for adults with learning disabilities have been opposed by families of users.

West Sussex County Council is currently consulting on the future of its in-house adult social care services.

As part of the proposals the Wrenford Centre, in Terminus Road, a day centre for adults with learning disabilities, could close. Users would access services at Chestnuts in Bognor Regis and Judith Adams in Chichester, both day centres for the elderly, instead.

The county council said it understands this can be an unsettling time for users, their families and carers, but plans 'will not see any reductions in levels of service'. Julie Barker-Muzzell's sister

Jackie, 54, from West Wittering, who has profound learning disabilities, has used the Wrenford Centre for more than 30 years. Julie described the proposals as 'heartbreaking', adding: "It just seems madness to contemplate closing when they have these amazing facilities."

These include a sensory room, dining hall, computer room, cookery room and 'Starburst' arts studio. She praised the dedicated staff but raised concerns about users being unsettled by changes, the accessibility of other locations, and called for the Wrenford Centre to be kept open and invested in.

She added: "It simply makes no sense to close Wrenford, which we must remember was built specifically for the needs for adults with learning disabilities. It functions

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