



THE WORTHING SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2008

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FORTHCOMING LECTURES

Tuesday 23rd September at 7:30 p.m. in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Tony Pratt will be speaking about '**Horsham to Littlehampton in 100 Years – The River Arun & It's History**'. We expect great interest in this talk.

Tuesday 25th November at 7:30 p.m. in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Michael Rowan, ARIBA, WSCC Conservation Architect will be speaking about '**Back from the Brink – Rescuing Listed Buildings**'.

Michael Rowan is a formidable speaker who illustrates his lecture with on the spot drawings!

At this meeting mince pies and mulled fruit punch or coffee will be served. Cost £1. p.p. Also a pre-Christmas raffle will take place. Donations of raffle prizes will be very much appreciated on the night!

Tuesday 24th February at 7:30 p.m. in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Alan Redman of the WSCC Records Office will be speaking about '**West Sussex on Film – Images from the Film Archives**'.

Alan Redman and his films from the WSCC archives is a winning combination.

Please remember that prior to quarterly meetings Committee Members will be available from 7 p.m. to talk to members wishing to discuss matters of interest or concern.

A Reminder from your Membership Secretary

Subscriptions for the year 2008-9 (Single £7, Joint £10) were due on April 1st. Members who may not yet have renewed their **annual** membership please send a cheque made payable to The Worthing Society and send to Mrs. S. Miller, Membership Secretary, 92 Lyndhurst Road, Worthing, BN11 2DW, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope, please.

Many thanks to those members who attended the 'Wine & Cheese Party' at Beach House in July and who helped to make it such a success once again. We were very lucky with the weather and had one of the few fine days this summer!

Mascha / Editor

An Update On The Core Business Of The Worthing Society

This is my usual opportunity to keep you abreast of what we have been doing on your behalf since the last Newsletter.

By the way, please do remember to keep us aware of your feelings on **any** Worthing Society matters of concern. The newsletter and our website (www.worthingsociety.org.uk) contain contact details.

28 to 30 Marine Drive

This planning application for the demolition of three substantial sea-front family homes to make way for a controversial block of flats is in a very prominent site at Goring. Disappointingly, we have had serious problems with the way in which WBC's Development Control Committee handled this planning application. We decided to take this matter further and that process is underway. We cannot allow 'the establishment' to ride roughshod over us.

Lemo development , North Street

We supported this innovative application mainly because North Street has, for many years, been a neglected part of Worthing and Lemo UK are prepared to expand their 'clean' hi-tech industry on-site with the welcome additional benefits of expanded employment opportunities for local people. We applaud the fact that Lemo went to great pains to include 'neighbours' and amenity groups such as ours in the discussions leading up to the planning application. When the revised planning application was lodged we did make it clear that we were not enamoured with the design but that we do support their aims. Lemo UK were gracious enough to acknowledge our views!

Splash Point Regeneration project

WBC went to great pains to say that the townsfolk were consulted widely on this. I really cannot agree! Nevertheless, a choice has been made. Apparently, 'Suncloud' has been chosen by Worthing as the piece of public art to grace Splash Point.. Have you seen the proposals? Were you consulted?

West Durrington development/Titnore Lane

The West Durrington developers and their Agent, together with Head of Planning James Appleton, invited us to participate in a briefing on the imminent revised planning application for this important site.

The developers appear to have gone to some lengths to accommodate most of the observations that were lodged following their previous application. The developers and Mr Appleton were also pleased to tell me that there are now no plans to straighten Titnore Lane or to fell more than the bare minimum number of trees. When the new plans are submitted we shall look at the proposals in more detail.

Castle Goring

The future of this precious Grade I listed building is still in the balance. Let us hope that talks between the owner, Worthing Borough Council and English Heritage can, at last, secure a settled future for this unique building.

Planning User Group (PUG)

We continue to be represented at PUG each Quarter where we learn about wider planning issues and have the opportunity to debate any concerns within our remit.

Homes For The Elderly

We do feel that that we should resist the town becoming over-run with homes for the elderly and we continue to put forward a balanced view on this delicate subject.

Local History

Paul Holden of the Argus and the Sentinel has kept us informed of his plans for the unveiling of a plaque in Cranmer Road which he hopes will be followed by a street party. Pencil in a diary date for around lunch time on 27th September and keep an eye on the local media for details. The plaque and festivities are in recognition of a past resident of Cranmer Road who was a survivor of Rorke's Drift (remember the film Zulu?). Paul Holden has managed to secure funding for refreshments from WSCC and it promises to be a 'fun day'.

Tony Malone

Vice Chairman/Publicity Officer

CHAIRMAN' REPORT

"The Worse the State the More Laws It Has" Cornelius Tacitus c.AD55-116

I considered writing a diatribe about the way things are in Worthing but instead will tell about a recent meeting of the Development Control Committee, which I attended. Two applications the Society had objected to were being determined. Both proposals had raised a groundswell of anger and local residents organised strong campaigns to fight the schemes. The Hayling Rise proposal, a grotesque back garden development, was again refused. The proposal to demolish 15 & 17 Bulkington Avenue, two fine family houses built in the twenties, and replace with a mixed 14 dwelling scheme was potentially more damaging. When residents contacted me they were already galvanised and well organised and by the time the committee report was prepared over 177 representations had been received together with a masterly analysis of a survey prepared by the campaign organisers. Press coverage and local councillors were enlisted to support the objectors. The DCC was unanimous in refusing the application and the Chairman and members were fulsome in their praise for the quality and organisation of the objectors campaign. Several Councillors opined that this kind of site should not be in play and hoped a policy could be put in place to prevent further demolition of good housing stock in Worthing. Your Society has voiced concerns about this destruction for many years. But the chilling fact was revealed in the report by the Officers of the Planning Services which stated "Loss of houses is regrettable but as they are not listed or of local interest or in a Conservation area no objection is raised". In other words they could be demolished for an acceptable scheme and nothing local officers, councillors or residents said or did would be effective. Power to the people and their representatives! Not likely! But there are consultations looking to get you involved. More than ever, despite the efforts of government, regional agencies and local bureaucracies to emasculate our representatives and us, strong organised public opinion can change policies. I like to think your Worthing Society plays an important role in town affairs.



And who owns No.5 High Street? Yes – that decaying, scruffy, boarded up, nasty coloured, unloved building at the southern end of High Street. Members may be surprised to know the owner is West Sussex County Council and it is retained because of a long- standing scheme from about 40 years ago to widen High Street. Until this unlikely plan is rescinded and replaced by another the building cannot be disposed of to someone who would care for it. Meanwhile, the WSCC Highways Authority, WBC and Masterplan consultants scratch their heads for ideas - Business rates are being paid on the empty premises!

Many of us have long voiced misgivings that value would not be delivered by the merger/amalgamation of some services by Worthing and Adur Councils. Martin King, the former Leader of Adur Council, wrote recently about the lack of evidence to justify the move saying "The only winners of this financial nightmare look to be the chief executive, directors and third tier officers who have all received "spot salary" pay rises way above market levels". Others have taken pleasing early retirement packages. Whoever floated the idea of a merger?

My thanks to members who support and give comment and encouragement and to fellow committee members who give so freely of their time. I look forward to meeting you all soon. Meanwhile our campaigns go on.

The Executive Committee is still looking for a Minute Secretary to attend our meetings every three weeks. If you are interested, please contact Tony Malone or myself to discuss.

WORTHING AND THE SOUTH EAST PLAN

The preparation of the South East Plan, which will provide the main planning policies for the region up to 2026, has reached the final stage with the publication of the government's proposed changes to the draft. As the central government is the final authority, its version is likely to be the definitive draft – although the public is now invited to comment. The original draft, prepared by the South East Regional Assembly, had been published in March 2008, and its contents had been reviewed by a panel of planning inspectors in an Examination in Public in the winter of 2006-2007. The panel's report on the plan was published a year ago. It accepted much of the plan, but proposed that the total provision of housing should be increased from 28,900 a year to 32,000 a year. In the Sussex coastal region, they proposed that the provision should be increased from 2,700 a year to 2,970 a year – but left Worthing to build 200 a year, as in the original plan.

The government now proposes that the total number of dwellings to be provided in the region should be increased to 33,125 a year, and says that this figure is a minimum that will be subject to review. On the Sussex coast, it increases the inspectors' proposal to 3,565 dwellings annually. Nearly all the increase compared with the inspectors' report comes from the suggestion that the redevelopment of Shoreham harbour could provide 10,000 dwellings over the 20 years of the plan. Worthing is again left to provide 200 dwellings a year.

This low requirement from Worthing is surprising, because the draft Core Strategy, withdrawn after a planning inspector had savaged it in his initial assessment, proposed that more than 400 dwellings a year should be provided up to 2018 and showed that the South East Plan's requirement of 4,000 dwellings by 2026 would have been met by 2015. The government has said that its requirement from each local authority has been revised in the light of the available evidence: as it is well aware of the contents of the draft Core Strategy, we can only assume that it does not consider the figures it contains are credible enough to be adopted for the South East Plan. But it is also surprising that Worthing should have prepared a strategy that provided twice as many dwellings as the draft regional plan required it to supply. Worthing council is now engaged in rewriting the strategy, so we shall have to wait until next year to discover whether the next version is any less ambitious in its proposals for housebuilding in Worthing.

The government's version of the South East Plan contains one provision that is very relevant to Worthing: it deletes the policy on "strategic gaps". There have long been provisions in local and county plans which prevent most development in areas which have been designated as "strategic gaps", because they prevent the coalescence of adjoining settlements. There are "gaps" on either side of Worthing, of which the most important is that between Goring and Ferring. The government proposes that these "gaps" should only be protected by the policies that apply to all open country; and the tenor of its remarks suggest that local authorities will not be permitted to include policies establishing local "gaps" in their local strategies.

The tone of the government's proposals is generally authoritarian, and many policies of the original draft have been swept away where they do not conform to the government's wishes. Opposition to the expansion of Heathrow and Gatwick has, for example, been changed to support. The government's proposed changes to the South East Plan can be read in local libraries, or on the GOSE website, and comments should be sent to the RSS Team, GOSE, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4GA by October 24th.

David Sawers, Committee Member

SOCIAL OUTINGS - a great success!

Worthing Society's outings this year have been a huge success, enjoyed by all who participated. We experienced a fascinating glimpse of the lesser known parts of Horsham, and learnt intriguing aspects about Arundel and nearby Burpham through our excellent historian/guide and Society Committee member, Chris Hare, among others. Cowdray, one of Southern England's most important early Tudor Houses, visited by King Henry VII & Queen Elizabeth 1, sadly partially destroyed by fire in 1793, proved to be a stunning landscape to explore in Midhurst. Included in the tour price was the hire of our own personal audio. Afterwards, our group enjoyed a delicious tea at the oldest tea room in the town!

Our most recent visit was to Finchcocks, situated close to the village of Goudhurst, Kent, where we were treated to two hour's of exceptional music played on some of Finchcocks' renowned Musical Museum's magnificent keyboard collection.... 106 antiques in all!

One of our members, Anne May, a former music teacher, was thrilled to be able to play selected pieces on these fabulous keyboards. Later, we enjoyed a tour of the house and a walk through the walled gardens, ending of with a superb cream tea.

Among the special places we are planning for future visits are The Red House (National Trust) on November 1, 2008 and The Royal Holloway, University of London - date to be finalised around March/early April.

Bookings can be made for all outings at Tel 01903 700 325 or e-mail:
travel_editor@btinternet.com

Payment should be made in advance, with cheques made out and mailed to The Worthing Society,
c/o 24 Marine Crescent, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing BN12 4JF.

Christine Roberts

Social Secretary