



THE WORTHING SOCIETY

President: Anthony Malone

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN/WINTER 2020 SOUVENIR EDITION

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SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS (LCAS):

Listing & Conservation Areas:

Sue Belton (Chair) David Clark
Natalie Cropper John Head
Tony Malone - by invitation

Publicity:

David Clark (Chair) Jessica Gill
Barry Richards
Tony Malone - by invitation

NEWSLETTER COMPILER:

Sandra Malone



BEACH HOUSE 1820-2020 BICENTENARY



Grade II* Listed Building
Designed by Architect
John Biagio Rebecca



CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

This year Worthing proudly celebrates the bicentenary of historic Beach House. Dating from 1820 and designed by the noted architect, John Biagio Rebecca, the house is an outstanding example of Regency architecture and is a Grade II* listed building.

As the Blue Plaques illustrate, the house has a fascinating social history with connections to Edward VII, the dramatist Edward Knobloch and the refugee children from the Spanish Civil War.

Beach House is also synonymous with the Society, having been saved from demolition following a campaign by pioneer conservationist, Mrs Pat Baring, founder of the Worthing Civic Society (later The Worthing Society). This was a significant victory for conservation in Worthing. Before the Society was formed many historic buildings were destroyed in the rush to modernise the town.

Saving Beach House highlighted the ongoing need for a conservation society to act as a 'watchdog'. Today this elegant Regency house stands proudly at the 'eastern gateway' to Worthing, a 'beacon' to the conservation movement and the importance of preserving our heritage for future generations.

To find further details about the house go to www.worthingsociety.org.uk (See 'Heritage Leaflet 1')

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Since our last Quarterly Meeting in February we have all experienced a very unusual and difficult time. The Committee extend their very best wishes to all our members. We hope you are well and able to keep in touch with our news via the website and our monthly articles in the Worthing Journal. Our Membership Secretary, Brenda Whitmell would like me to pass on a special thank you to all our members who have renewed this year and a big welcome to new members who have recently joined. The Committee really values your support, particularly during these challenging times.

Recent months have been defined by some significant planning proposals in the town, even during lockdown and policy issues such as the Planning White Paper consultation - see *below*.

UPDATE ON CURRENT PLANNING ISSUES: Here are some applications we have commented on:

- **Teville Gate:** the plans were approved despite our objection to the significant height, size, mass and poor design of the majority of the buildings. Work has yet to start.
- **Union Place:** whilst we accept development of the site is needed we objected to the overbearing height and design which does not complement the character of the surrounding area or the town.
- **Draft Local Plan:** possibly due for inspection later this year. Full comments made on future designs and the protection of our built environment and green spaces.

CONSERVATION AREAS:

- I am pleased to advise you that our Campaign to upgrade the South Street Conservation Area has achieved positive results with several more buildings being upgraded during recent weeks. We plan future liaison with the Planning Enforcement Team for continued improvements to parking bays in Bedford Row and bin storage facilities generally.
- Marine Gardens and Environs: I have recently submitted a paper to the Conservation Officer to apply for this area to be given extra protection and designated as Worthing's next Conservation Area. We aim to be proactive in identifying additional areas for our 'heritage map'.

POLICY ISSUE - THE PLANNING WHITE PAPER:

This is a major consultative document. Your Committee will be examining the detail very closely in preparation for lobbying our MPs where necessary. We are particularly keen to ensure the ongoing protection of Worthing's heritage assets. My thanks to Executive Committee member, David Sawers, who has contributed an article giving a preliminary assessment of this White Paper on page 6.

GORING GAP (SOUTHERN SECTION):

Excellent news here: I have been advised by the Goring and Ilex Conservation Group that this area has officially been designated as a 'Local Wildlife Site' because of its importance to birds. (This does not apply to the Northern Section).

BREAKING NEWS – GORING GAP NORTH/CHATSMORE FARM:

Serious concerns here unfortunately! - The Committee is extremely disappointed to learn that the developer, Persimmon, is pursuing development plans for this area. This is surprising given the widespread opposition from residents following the 2019 Consultation. Local residents and the wider community greatly value this **green space** forming a natural **gap** between Worthing and Ferring, complementing the proximate South Downs National Park:

- 1) Importantly, the area is now included and supported by Worthing Borough Council in the Draft Local Plan as 'Local Green Space' and a 'Local Green Gap'.
- 2) The Worthing Society will be joining with the Goring Gap Action Group to oppose these plans.
- 3) These new plans are for 475 dwellings (including access and internal roads). Have your say and take the opportunity to view these plans at Worthing's Planning Website quoting application reference number: AWDM/1264/20 at: planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk

MEMBERS MEETINGS AND AGM:

Sadly, due to the Covid-19 emergency, it has not been possible to hold our regular meetings. We hope to convene our next meeting in November, providing Government guidance permits (*Please see back page for details*). As it was necessary to cancel our Annual General Meeting due in April 2020, I have included an 'Interim Supplementary Report' in this Newsletter together with a copy of our annual accounts.

CONCLUSION:

There are, inevitably, many important issues ahead, particularly as regards defending Goring Gap (north) but we have a talented, experienced Committee so I am confident we can rise to the challenge. One of our priorities next year will be to continue our Membership Drive. By increasing our membership we can increase our presence and contribution to the future development of the town.

On a positive note, I am pleased to report some very good news: The Worthing Society has been chosen as one of the Mayoral Charities for 2020/21 by the new Mayor, Councillor Lionel Harman. We hope this will be a boost for the Society at the present time and, importantly, help to raise the profile of our conservation work in Worthing, plus highlighting our Blue Plaque Heritage Trail which unlocks the town's social history.

This honour also coincides with the Bicentenary of Beach House, built circa 1820. The saving of Beach House from destruction really shone a light on the importance of conserving the built environment. We are proud to continue the tradition of safeguarding our heritage by acting as a 'watchdog' to monitor the quality of design for new buildings and remain alert to any early signs of deterioration or inappropriate development. I am grateful to the dedication of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Sub-Committee who take action in this area when required. We are also continuing our South Street Conservation Area Campaign where, very recently, two more heritage buildings have been redecorated. There are positive signs here for the future and I acknowledge, as always, the expertise of the Committee and support of our members in continuing our conservation work.

Susan Belton

INTERIM SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT IN LIEU OF AGM

During these unprecedented times, I regret it has not been possible to hold our Annual General Meeting (AGM), planned for April 2020. Although things are gradually improving the Committee have decided to be cautious and postpone the AGM until April 2021. Our President, Tony Malone is fully supportive of this decision. Importantly, we have confirmed with the Charity Commission that this is an acceptable course of action.

I also want to reassure members that our experienced Committee have agreed to serve in their current posts until the next AGM. This will certainly stabilise the situation enabling the Society to carry on our important work during these challenging times. The list of Officers and Executive Committee members together with contact details, is shown on the front cover of your Newsletter, should you have any queries or concerns. My Chairman's Annual Report has, I hope, given a thorough review of our work.

In addition, I have included within this 'Interim Report' a statement of The Worthing Society's Annual Accounts, normally distributed at the AGM. The accounts clearly show our financial affairs are in good order. I can also confirm our Annual Return was submitted on schedule to the Charity Commission. My thanks to our Treasurer, Mascha Richards for her hard work in preparing these documents.

We are in a strong position to move forward next year and I hope this Interim Report clarifies matters for you. Details of our next AGM will be confirmed as soon as Government guidelines permit.

Susan Belton

WORTHING SOCIETY CHAIR

The Worthing Society <small>(Reg. Charity No. 286999)</small>		
Income and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31st March 2020		
<u>Income</u>	2020	2019
Subs. & Visitor's Fees	1,599.00	1,249.00
Interest	4.54	2.97
Profit from Events	129.00	44.14
Speaking Engagements	195.00	185.00
Donations	555.00	2,245.00
Adjustment for written off outdated cheques	66.00	54.99
	2,548.54	3,781.10
	=====	=====
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Newsletters / Printing	219.20	314.35
Hiring of Lecture Theatre	263.00	206.50
Speakers Fees	250.00	205.00
Postage, Stationery & Telephone	209.22	157.87
Exhibitions	44.00	0.00
Land Registry Documents	0.00	53.00
Meetings	240.50	70.50
Insurance	258.00	258.00
Publicity	67.49	42.99
Annual Subscriptions		
Open Spaces Society	45.00	45.00
Victorian Society	65.00	62.00
South Downs Society	25.00	25.00
C.P.R.E.	36.00	36.00
Worthing Heritage Alliance	10.00	10.00
Web Site	106.41	48.95
Digital Equipment	48.99	49.00
Plaques	449.60	353.40
Bank Charges	60.00	60.00
Lifeboat Memorial	1,933.20	0.00
Sundries	66.00	5.80
	4,396.61	2,003.36
	=====	=====
Excess of Expenditure over Income	1,848.07	
Balance as at 31 March 2019	6,154.90	
Minus Excess Expenditure over Income as at 31 March 2020	-1,848.07	
	4,306.83	
	=====	
Represented by CAF Gold A/C	3,022.21	
CAF Cash A/C	1,284.62	
	4,306.83	
	=====	

We approve the financial statement which is a summary of all transactions for the year ended 31 March 2020 and consider that it reflects fairly the results and financial position of the Society at that date.

S Belton
Susan Belton, Chair

Mascha Richards
Mascha Richards, Hon. Treasurer

15 April 2020

15 APR. 2020

LISTING AND CONSERVATION AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Members: Susan Belton (Chair), Natalie Cropper, David Clark, John Head
and, by invitation, Tony Malone

Conservation Areas exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interests of a place – in other words the features that make it unique.

There are 26 Conservation Areas in Worthing and 10,000 Conservation Areas in England.

Our Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Sub-Committee (LCAS) has been working hard during the lockdown period carrying out our core work of monitoring the Weekly Planning Lists to identify planning applications which may have a potentially harmful effect on our heritage assets. On average, the LCAS case workers make 2-3 representations per week and have built up considerable technical expertise. For example representations were made in respect of 5 Montague Place, a Victorian building, where refusal was given for an inappropriate conversion to a house of multi-occupancy. LCAS also objected to the demolition of The Wheatsheaf, Richmond Road and to plans for a block of flats on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site. Following refusal, the case is now the subject of an appeal by the developer and we have made further responses.

We aim to be pro-active in identifying more of Worthing's heritage assets, particularly those of a later period. I have therefore submitted an application for 'Marine Gardens and Environs' to be designated as a new conservation area for Worthing. The unique gardens and street layout with many Art Deco and Inter-War buildings mark the beginning of the development of Worthing's west parade and, in our view, deserve further recognition.

I am pleased to report that our liaison with the Planning Enforcement Team has continued so as to progress our Campaign upgrading the South Street Conservation Area. Heritage buildings in good order can contribute to our 'visitor economy'. Adding to our successes in Bedford Row and the Montague Street area, I am pleased to report that two heritage buildings in South Street have been redecorated - the 'Grape Tree' (a Victorian building occupying a landmark corner site) and the redecoration, after several years, of the sushi bar with the pirate figure atop in the crow's-nest.



Issa Sushi, 31 South Street, Worthing



Grape Tree, 56 South Street, Worthing

LCAS are also invited to comment on Planning Consultations where we can give informed, constructive views at an early stage to possibly bring about an improved design. My colleagues also have a constructive liaison with the Conservation Officer and the Council's Conservation Areas Advisory Committee. Our next challenge will be to examine the new Planning White Paper and the possible effect on our heritage assets. Busy times ahead but I have every confidence in our dedicated team.

Sue Belton

LCAS Chair

GOVERNMENT'S NEW PLANNING RULES

The Planning White Paper

The new White Paper on planning is not quite as radical a document as some Ministerial and press comments have suggested. Its draft proposals are a curious mixture of good and bad.

The bad features are related to the government's objective of getting more houses built. The housing targets for each planning authority would distribute the government's target of 300,000 houses a year between districts. This distribution would take account of the constraints on development and the affordability of houses in each area. Districts like Arun and Horsham would therefore be allocated more houses than districts like Worthing and Brighton, where development is constrained. Local Plans would have to allocate enough land for development in 'Growth' areas, in which any proposed development which met the rules set in the Plan would automatically receive outline planning permission. The rest of a district would be divided into 'Renewal' areas, where the rules would resemble those now applying in a built-up area, and 'Protected' areas, where development would be restricted. Full planning permission would be required before the developments in the 'Growth' areas could be built.

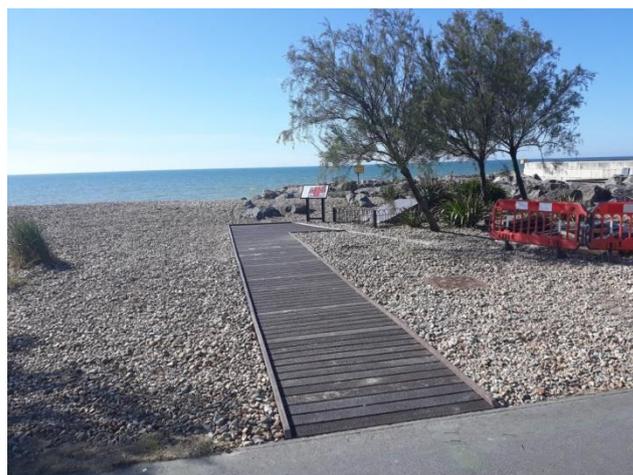
The good features are an emphasis on raising the quality of design, by preparing Design Guides for each district that would influence decisions to grant full planning permission; and by involving the local population in the production of these guides. We shall object to the bad features but take any opportunities to influence the plans.

David Sawers

MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A NOTE ON PUBLICITY

One of our major successes during lockdown has been a joint project with Worthing Borough Council (WBC) for the construction of a beach walkway to allow the public to better access the Lifeboat Memorial Stone and the Information Board we installed last Summer. The pathway is made of recycled plastic and looks superb. It was installed in May with a small official opening ceremony taking place on the 8th June (with strict social distancing!). We are most grateful to Judy Fox from WBC for making this happen! If you haven't yet seen the walkway it is well worth a trip to the seafront opposite Coast Café to take a look.



We continue to be a key consultee on all major planning applications with varying degrees of publicity in the local press. We use our monthly column in The Worthing Journal and letters to The Herald to further publicise our views. It is a great pity we were unable to generate enough opposition to the Teville Gate planning application which represents a major over-development of this gateway site (witness the new HMRC building). It has brought home to me the need for us to increase our digital footprint – in the short to medium term the days of paper-based petitions and setting up a table and chairs in town to raise awareness of poor planning applications are going to be difficult. Online petitions and the use of social media are going to be increasingly important – watch this space.

Lockdown has meant the postponement of all the talks Sue and I had planned, both 'Lost and Saved' and our more recent presentation which is entitled 'A walk along Worthing Seafront' designed for a younger audience. However we should be busy next year!

David Clark

PUBLICITY OFFICER

SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

During these strange times many of us may feel that we are living in an unreal world. Wearing face masks; social distancing and constantly using hand gel all add to that feeling. Many of us will have frequently used (or heard) the phrases 'when things get back to normal' or 'things will never be the same again'. I have come to the conclusion that both phrases are really expressing the same sentiment, i.e. that what people really seem to want is to be able to hang on to the 'mental comfort' of one day being able to revert back to how things were 'pre-coronavirus', forgetting that life was not necessarily ideal back then. None of us can be sure if that will be possible anyway.

Meanwhile, the Worthing Society can take heart that the good news is that we can be optimistic, as we do have the power to raise the perceived standard of 'normal' to a higher level. Similarly, we can change the practical meaning of 'things will never be the same again' into a positive outlook by doing our best to raise the quality and effectiveness of what we achieve.

A good place to start is to remind ourselves what our Constitution states regarding our purpose. It is:-

- i) to stimulate public interest in the Borough.
- ii) to promote and encourage high standards of planning, development and architecture in the Borough.
- iii) to secure the preservation, protection and improvement of buildings and features of historic or public interest in the Borough.

We already have the infrastructure in place to fulfil all these aspirations, i.e. (*using the numbering above*):-

- i) We organise talks for members and the public on relevant and interesting topics such as local interest historic events, characters or architecture. We submit articles of local interest to the monthly Worthing Journal. We produce Newsletters with articles of interest from the President, the Chairman; Officers and Members of the Executive Committee. When funds allow we are active in placing the popular and educational blue plaques and the production of Blue Plaque Trail leaflets.
- ii) We scrutinise the weekly Planning Lists, concentrating on the applications that would be most likely to have a beneficial or detrimental effect on a Conservation Area or a Listed (or Locally Listed) Building and submit effective letters of support or objection to Planning Office.
- iii) We continue to hold regular LCAS (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Sub-Committee) meetings to monitor the well-being of the town's Listed Buildings; Locally Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and 'flag up' any necessary warnings to the appropriate officer or Department within WBC.

We can take heart that, by focussing our attentions on our main purposes and resisting too many temptations to divert onto too many side issues, we can fulfil our roles with pride.

Tony Malone

President

THE WORTHING SOCIETY EVENTS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR 2020/21

2020

SEP – Tuesday 22nd – QUARTERLY MEETING - **CANCELLED**

NOV - Tuesday 24th at 7:30pm. QUARTERLY MEETING at The Ardington Hotel, Steyne Gardens, Worthing.

Speaker: Andy Thomas on 'LEWES and BONFIRE NIGHT'

Doors open at 7pm for Coffee / Tea and Mince PiesCost £1.50

(Please note that a raffle will not take place this year)

DEC - CHRISTMAS LUNCH at the Arundel Restaurant, Northbrook College, Littlehampton Road, Worthing.....Date and Cost: TBA

2021

FEB - Tuesday 23rd at 7.30pm. QUARTERLY MEETING at The Ardington Hotel, Steyne Gardens, Worthing.

Speaker – Sue Standing on 'A GLIMPSE OF HIDDEN HEENE'

Doors open at 7pm for Coffee / Tea and BiscuitsCost £1.50

It is with grateful thanks to Simon Margaroli of The Ardington Hotel for accommodating us.

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

Don't forget to look at our website for the latest news
www.worthingsociety.org.uk

and if you wish to email the Executive Committee, our email address is
worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk

For membership enquiries please contact our Membership Secretary
Brenda Whitmell (tel: 01903 905922)
