# THE WORTHING SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

## AUTUMN/WINTER 2023

**PRESIDENT:**
Tony Malone
Tel: 01903 246486
E: goringmalones1@gmail.com

**OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY**

**CHAIR/TRUSTEE:**
Susan Belton
1 Church Cottages
Selden Lane, Worthing
BN11 2BN Tel: 01903 203141
E: susanna@belton77.plus.com

**VICE-CHAIR:**
Vacant

**HON.SECRETARY:**
Vacant

**HON.TREASURER:**
Leonia Crozier
E: worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk

**HON.SOCIAL SECRETARY:**
Karen Harman
Mob: 07496 414920
E: karenharman01@outlook.com

**HON.MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:**
Brenda Whitmell
12 Brook Way
Lancing, BN15 8DQ
Tel: 01903 920713
E: worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk

**HON.PUBLICITY OFFICER/WEBSITE MANAGER/TRUSTEE**
David Clark
Mob: 07713 925153
E: clarkhodson@btinternet.com

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND LCAS:**
**(LISTED BUILDINGS & CONSERVATION AREAS)**

| | |
|---|---|
| John Head | Planning Consultant; LCAS,Trustee |
| David Sawers | Advisor on Policy |
| David Clark | Publicity; LCAS; Website;Trustee |
| Jessica Gill | Publicity & Artwork |
| Susan Head | Publicity |

**WEBSITE MANAGERS:**
David Clark & Susan Belton
E: worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk

**NEWSLETTER COMPILER:**
Sandra Malone

## CHATSMORE FARM
## ANOTHER PUBLIC INQUIRY

Looking south down Highdown Rise to Chatsmore Farm (Goring Gap)

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

One of the most challenging issues highlighted this year is the protection of our green infrastructure. The Covid 19 emergency illustrated how important our green spaces are to both our physical and mental well-being. Our landscapes form part of our heritage and will be a legacy to future generations. Therefore, we were delighted when, after a long, hard-fought Campaign, the Appeal by Persimmon against the refusal of their planning application to build 475 dwellings at Chatsmore Farm was dismissed. This judgement was welcomed by the many local groups including the Society who had joined together as the Pro-Gaps Group to safeguard this historic 'green lung' between Goring and Ferring.

Persimmon had said, after the Court of Appeal judgement on 30.6.23 that they would not be making any more appeals. We are dismayed to learn that they have now gone back on that statement. Although Worthing Borough Council (WBC) asked them to withdraw their application, they have declined. Persimmon do have the right to have their Appeal re-determined by the Secretary of State and there will be a new Public

Inquiry but in about two months! The key point in our favour is that the Local Plan has now been adopted. It clearly designates Chatsmore Farm as a Green Gap between settlements, which offers the site protection. WBC has issued a strong statement in favour of protecting this land.

Your Society will fight on to defend Chatsmore Farm from development and I will speak at the Public Inquiry.

Land proximate to Chatsmore Farm and adjoining the Littlehampton Road remains vulnerable to development. A recent application to build 70 dwellings on the Lansdowne Nursery site was refused by Arun Council but the developer has appealed. A development here would also 'harm' the views to the National Park looking north. We are also keen to avoid the coalescence between Goring and Ferring and have made representations to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Appeal.

Highdown Hill looking north to the South Downs National Park from Littlehampton Road
(the proposed redevelopment site (Lansdowne Nursery) on left of photo)

The Society is also making efforts to safeguard our green spaces within the town. I have submitted applications to the Council for a new Conservation Area to protect Marine Gardens and to extend the Steyne Gardens Conservation Area. We propose that this extension, if approved, should include Denton Gardens, Beach House Grounds and Beach House Park. The decision of the Heritage Consultant is expected shortly.

**PLANNING POLICY AND REPRESENTATIONS**

Planning matters and concerns are the core part of the Society's work. Our Constitution therefore permits us to 'act as a watchdog' to:

***'Promote and encourage high standards of planning, development and architecture in the borough.'***

My colleague David Sawers, who advises on policy issues, will therefore be monitoring the Government's ongoing policy regarding the housing crisis and the Levelling Up Bill. We shall be making comments as the policies progress. (**Please see his excellent article on pages 5&6).** I am also pleased to confirm that due to the diligent work of our Heritage Sub-Committee, the Society has now been acknowledged as Planning Consultees by the local Council. We regularly comment on applications affecting our heritage buildings and conservation areas as well as larger developments. We can't 'mothball' the town but new development must sit well with its heritage neighbours. The challenge is how we can balance change in the heritage environment to retain and enhance Worthing's traditional character. This can be achieved by good design, care taken with size and mass, and the use of high quality materials reflecting the seaside location. We shall be carefully scrutinising the quality of the larger developments at Teville Gate and Union Place when plans are submitted.

I was recently invited by the Worthing Chamber of Commerce to join the panel of The Worthing Development Forum, which includes the Principal Planning Officer (Adur and Worthing), a local developer and building contractor. The subject of the debate was primarily how the heritage environment can be enhanced, sustained and protected going forward. I welcomed this as a very positive opportunity to introduce the Worthing Society and 'to give heritage a voice' to show how it can contribute to our 'sense of place' and the tourist economy. I hope to attend future sessions.

On a lighter note, our heritage is here to be enjoyed and appreciated. Now that the Covid emergency is behind us we are hoping to introduce our 'Local Heritage Walks and Visits' starting with the 'Tarring Heritage Walk' on 5th October. I know our Social Secretary, Karen Harman, is keen to organise other walks and events. Please also keep in touch with our excellent Website run by our Publicity Officer, David Clark, for updates.

I must conclude by thanking our President, Tony Malone and the Committee for their unstinting support and hard work. My sincere appreciation, also, to our valued members.

Susan Belton
Worthing Society Chair

---

**MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Dear Members
Following our participation in the first Worthing Heritage Festival in June and our recent Community Group Talks, we are pleased to welcome many new members to our Society. We look forward to meeting you at one of our Quarterly Members Meetings. The details of these are in the enclosed Newsletter. Our talks are free for members and only £3 for visitors. By increasing our membership, we are able to increase our presence in the town. If you have friends or relatives interested in protecting Worthing's heritage please do suggest they come along to the meeting.

Thank you to those of you who have already renewed your membership and we thank you for your continued support. If you have yet to renew, you can either send to me or do so at the forthcoming Members Meeting at the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 26th September at 7.30pm. For new members who may not be aware, the venue is accessed down the front slope of the library.

We must again thank those members who have been so generous in giving us a donation. The Committee members are working hard and really appreciate your generosity. As always, thank you all for your support and we look forward to seeing many of you at the talk. Our Committee members will be available to discuss current issues affecting the town.

We always welcome volunteers to support our work in protecting Worthing's unique heritage. Some Committee members have recently retired so, if you have some free time and would be interested in helping the Committee please do get in touch. There are several areas where we would welcome some assistance. If this appeals to you and you would like to get involved please contact our Chairman, Susan Belton on 01903 203141 to have a chat or email: susanna@belton77.plus.com.

Brenda Whitmell
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

---

## LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE (LCAS) REPORT

**MEMBERS: Sue Belton ( Chair), John Head, David Clark and Tony Malone by Invitation**

Our dedicated Heritage Team continue to act as our 'watchdog' for anything affecting Worthing's Listed or Local Interest Buildings and Conservation Areas fulfilling the main aims of our Constitution ie ***'to protect and conserve the architectural assets of Worthing'.*** The work of the Sub-Committee is the 'engine room' of the Society, covering our core work. In fact, this represents a 'Rolling Campaign' to safeguard our built heritage and green infrastructure. Our Heritage Team was instrumental in contributing to the Campaign to save the green gap at Chatsmore Farm which is a landmark result for our area.

Already this year we have commented on over 48 planning applications including the regeneration of the Debenhams building where we are broadly supportive. We have objected to the demolition of the heritage beach shelter opposite West Buildings and opposed the construction of a two-storey building actually on the beach. In our opinion this will have a negative impact on the traditional sea views and conservation areas, setting a precedent which will harm our 'blue infrastructure'.

The Team are also monitoring heritage buildings considered to be 'at risk' from dilapidation and deterioration and liaise regularly with the Conservation Officer. These include the Grade II Listed Lido and the Gospel Hall in Bedford Row which is included on the Local Heritage Interest List.

**Gospel Hall, Bedford Row - circa 1854 by the architect Charles Hyde.**

On a more positive note, our Case Officer and Planning Consultant, John Head, has been working on our response to the Public Consultation for the future, permanent changes to Montague Place and removal of the uncharacteristic white lines. We advised the Council that the Society would like to see the return of the historic central garden with perhaps a 'living green wall' to soften the extensive Woolworth brick wall. We also sent our comments together with some proposed images to the Local Councillors. I am pleased to say we have been listened to! Here is the Councils initial proposal:-

**Montague Place with the pathways**

In its latest announcement, the Council has also said :-

**"the proposal would make Montague Place a 'green oasis in the heart of Worthing town centre"**

We would like to see more greening and plans for a 'living wall' which would make a really interesting feature of the Woolworth wall. Nevertheless, it is a positive step forward for this landmark area. Our Team will remain with the Consultation process to request more detailed discussion.

We have a far reaching 'radar' but if you are concerned about a particular building about which we may be unaware, please do get in touch - early intervention can sometimes make a difference. **"We are all, in our way, 'Guardians of our heritage which is an irreplaceable resource' ".**

Sue Belton
Sub-Committee Chair

John Head BSc(Econ), Dip TP, MRTPI (Retd).
Planning Consultant to the Worthing Society

## A NOTE ON PUBLICITY

Our participation in The Worthing Festival provided some much welcome publicity and continued the process of building our profile with a wider audience. Our three events were well attended with the Blue Plaque trail walk particularly popular.

I am very pleased to announce that we have a new monthly article in The Worthing Journal. This is called 'Building of the Month' and will focus on some of the lesser-known heritage buildings in Worthing. We are most grateful to Paul Holden for supporting this project and to Worthing Society member David Pateman for doing all the hard work researching and writing each article.

The proposed new Blue Plaque for 2023 remains a challenge. I am hopeful that a plaque for John Henry Pull (Archaeologist) will be unveiled in the Autumn, but we await confirmation of the location (either the southern wall of the Museum or Post Office building in Chapel Road where he worked).

We continue to promote The Worthing Society through our various talks. I am developing a new talk called 'Founders of Worthing' which will focus on the key figures who made Worthing what it is today, tying together the buildings they impacted and our social history.

David Clark

**PUBLICITY OFFICER**

---

## PARADOXES IN PLANNING POLICY

The planning policies of government and opposition have been virtually transposed this year. The government has entered the conservationists' camp with its refusal to allow Marks and Spencer to demolish and rebuild its store near Marble Arch, and its earlier acceptance of weakened central control over planning policy; while the Labour party has become the developers' friend with its support for strong central control over planning policy and ambitious targets for housebuilding.

Michael Gove's decision to preserve the M&S store has angered developers, who see it as representing a change in policy – inspired by a desire to reduce carbon emissions – which threatens their business model, which is based on the wasteful demolition and replacement of buildings. Renovation and re-use are more appropriate in a warming world.

The amendment to the Levelling Up bill that was accepted last winter, that will reduce government control over housebuilding targets, is also unpopular with developers. They have found the present system very helpful in their quest for planning permission on greenfield sites. The government has not hastened to apply the new policy - a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published last December

for consultation, but the final version has yet to appear. The Levelling Up bill itself has not yet returned from the Lords to the Commons, so its final form remains uncertain – apart from the strengthening of local plans for housebuilding.

Sir Keir Starmer has seen an opportunity to pose as the friend of the would-be house buyer, and advocate a return to the old system of centrally-set targets for development in local plans. This is the policy favoured by the development industry, and we can only hope that Sir Keir and his colleagues are not so naïve as to believe that developers will build more houses if they get more planning permissions on greenfield sites. There is little relationship between the number of planning permissions granted and the number of houses built; the most likely effect is to increase the proportion of houses built on greenfield sites.

The amount of building can be expected to fall in the near future, because higher interest rates are causing house prices to fall. The main issue for governments will be how to limit this fall.

David Sawers
**ADVISOR ON POLICY**

---

# PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

## THE SOCIETY'S WORKLOAD

### Consultations

You may find it useful to refer back to my President's Thoughts' in the previous Newsletter as I hope to enlarge upon what I wrote.

Our Chairman, Susan, together with the Heritage Committee has quite a heavy workload. Much time is spent dealing with Consultation Requests sent to Susan by WBC Planning Office. These planning applications usually fall into one or more of the following categories – 1) It is often complex in nature; 2) In a Conservation Area, 3) a Listed building or a Local List building.

At the moment it falls mainly to Susan and available Heritage Committee Members to deal with these as, for one reason or another Committee members with the relevant experience in one or more of these areas are thin on the ground and currently there is no-one available to train up as a suitable candidate.

These consultation requests from Planning Office are for our opinion on whether we judge that an application should be supported or an objection raised. Most importantly, we support our recommendations with the reasons for our decision having checked the plans, materials to be used, and often visit the area where the building is situated etc. These recommendations/observations are then passed to Sandra, our WS volunteer Secretary, for incorporation into a template with all the necessary planning application details added. We feel that the finished product 'adds value' to our recommendation, giving it a professional finish, and it is then sent back to the relevant Planning Officer.

We are told that the Planning Office do value our detailed recommendations as it makes their job easier when giving their guidance to the Planning Committee when they meet to discuss planning applications. We have also recently been asked to join other Planning forums and all-in-all we have noticed that our 'standing' appears to have risen within WBC.

### WBC Planning meetings

Susan also regularly attends WBC Planning Committee meetings at which she is often required to speak on behalf of the Society regarding Planning-related matters. John Head's experience as aa retired Planning Inspector is invaluable to LCAS and he has represented us, together with Susan, at various Consultations presented by local developers.

Tony Malone
**President**

## AN APPRECIATION

I am sorry to report that two of our much valued and long-standing Worthing Society members, Wendy Hobden and Ian Steedman, have sadly passed away this year. We extend our sincere condolences to their families and friends at this difficult time.

Susan and the Worthing Society Committee.

---

# COASTAL PATROL

By

Mark Postlethwaite GaVa

The scene depicts a Westland Lysander from 225 Squadron based at Odiham in Hants in the summer of 1940 during the Battle of Britain preparing to disrupt the planned invasion of the Southern Counties.

The Germans under 'Operation Sealion' intended to invade using barges along the south coast securing suitable landing sites and airfields to occupy the Southern Counties.

The plan was eventually abandoned as the Luftwaffe (German Airforce) was unable to defeat the Royal Air Force thanks to what Winston Churchill called "the few".

Originally designed as an Army co-operation/Air Sea Rescue aircraft, the Lysander was pressed into service carrying bombs in panniers affixed to the undercarriage coverings.

The Lysander went on to find fame dropping Agents and supplies into occupied Europe later in the war.

You will note that part of the pier has been blown up to deny invading forces a sheltered landing site. If you look at the pier today, you can clearly see where the repair has been carried out.

A copy of this picture resides at the back of Worthing's Town Hall 'Reception' in Chapel Road.

Our thanks to Mark Postlethwaite for information on his painting.

David Pateman

Worthing Society Member

---

## A NOTE FROM OUR SOCIAL SECRETARY

Dear Members,

I have now been the Social Secretary for the Worthing Society for a few months and am enjoying it very much. As you may be aware, I have been involved and documenting the events which the Worthing Society has been recently involved with, including the Worthing Heritage Festival. These events have successfully increased our membership, whilst highlighting the wonderful heritage of our town. This has also given me the opportunity to get to know some of our members and hopefully more of them as we go forward. I hope that by doing this we can illustrate to the townspeople of Worthing how fragile our heritage is and that it's our responsibility to ensure that no more of Worthing's unique heritage is lost.

Working with our Chairman and Committee, I plan to organise more local events, which will allow our members to socialise with each other and subsequently learn more about Worthing both now and in the past. If any of you have any ideas about future events, visits or walks, please contact me.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Mascha Richards, our former Social Secretary, for her long service and her help and advice.

Karen Harman

Email: karenharman01@outlook.com
Mob: 07496 414920

---

## THE WORTHING SOCIETY'S MEMORIAL TREE, BEACH HOUSE PARK

Members may recall that following a generous donation, the Committee were honoured to plant a Memorial Tree in honour of HM Queen Elizabeth II on 20 December 2022 in Beach House Park. The tree is an English Crab Apple tree, (Malus Sylvestris) which flowers in the Spring. Our tree has been registered for Worthing as part of the Late Queen's Green Canopy initiative and we have been awarded a Green Plaque!

I am delighted to let you know that following a second generous donation from a Worthing Society member we shall soon be able to dedicate an engraved Memorial Stone at the plot. Our members' extremely generous donation will cover the engraving and siting of the memorial.

The York Stone itself has been gifted to the Society by Mr Graham Baker, Monumental Stone Mason. I am hoping that we shall be able to hold an event to unveil the Memorial in the Autumn, possibly late October. Both Sir Peter Bottomley and His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Jon Roser, have expressed interest in joining us. I will keep in touch to advise you of the date and time once the arrangements are in place

With our sincere thanks,

Susan Belton and the Committee.

# THE WORTHING SOCIETY MEETINGS FOR 2023

**SEP - Tuesday 26th at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING at WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE, RICHMOND ROAD followed by a talk from:**

**Speaker: James Sainsbury, Curator – Archaeology, Worthing Museum on "John Pull & Worthing's Stoneage Revolution"**

**Doors open at 7pm for Coffee / Tea and Biscuits ……Cost £1.50**

**OCT - Thursday, 5th at 2pm. "TARRING HERITAGE WALK AND CREAM TEA".**

**Guided walk by Susan Belton.**
**Assemble at the George & Dragon, High Street, Tarring……Cost £12.50 pp**

**To book, please contact Susan Belton on 01903 203141 or by email on susanna@belton77.plus.com. Early booking is adviseable as numbers are limited. Please also leave your contact details.**

**NOV - Tuesday 28th at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING at the WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE followed by a talk from:**

**Speaker: Martin Hayes on "An Alternative History of Worthing".**

**Doors open at 7pm for Coffee / Tea and Mince Pies ……...Cost £1.50**

**At this meeting our Christmas raffle will take place. Donation of raffle prizes will be very much appreciated on the night.**

## 2024

**FEB – Tuesday, 27th at 7pm. QUARTERLY MEETING at WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE, RICHMOND ROAD followed by a talk from:**

**Speaker: Chris Hare, Worthing's Historian on "Worthing's Customs, Traditions and Superstitions during Victorian Times".**

**-----ooo0ooo-----**

**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.**

**Visitors / Guests are welcome to attend the lectures – fee £3.00**

**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 920713)

We look forward to welcoming you at the meetings