THE WORTHING SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

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Vacant (but covered by the Committee)

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & LCAS:

John Head	Planning Consultant; (LCAS) Trustee
David Sawers	Policy Advisor
Jessica Gill	Publicity & Artwork
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Nevil Hopkins	Member (LCAS)
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Sandra Malone

FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 25 APRIL 2025

Notice is hereby given that the 42nd Annual General Meeting of The Worthing Society will take place on Tuesday, 29 April 2025 at 7.00pm in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.

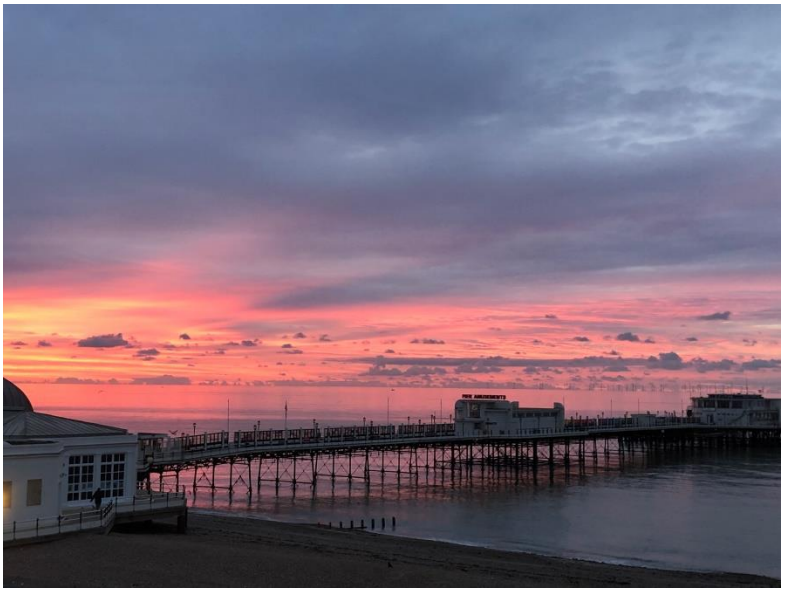
Nominations are invited for the following posts:-

- Chairman
- Vice-Chairman
- Honorary Secretary
- Honorary Treasurer
- Honorary Membership Secretary
- Honorary Social Secretary
- Honorary Publicity Officer
- Honorary Legal Consultant
- Six Members of the Executive Committee

All nominations, supported by a seconder, and with the approval of the nominee should be sent/notified, to Susan Belton, Chairman, not later than **15th April 2025**. Nominations close two weeks before the AGM.

Doors will open at 6.45pm and the AGM will commence at 7.00pm after which there will be a short tea/coffee break followed by a talk from Guest Speaker : James Sainsbury, Curator of Archaeology, Worthing Museum – "New Discoveries of Burpham 2014 to 2024.

OUR PRECIOUS HERITAGE



HISTORIC PIER AT LONG TERM RISK?

OBITUARY - EDWARD KENNARD

The Worthing Society has announced with great sadness the death aged 94 of its former Vice-Chairman, Edward Kennard, affectionately known as Ted.

Mr Kennard's family was long-established in Worthing and he cared deeply about the town's heritage. He became a member of the society following his retirement from a long and successful career as a chartered surveyor in Uganda and Hong Kong. Mr Kennard worked tirelessly to protect Worthing's heritage and will especially be remembered for leading the society's campaign to save the Desert Quartet for the town. These iconic sculptures by the late Dame Elizabeth Frink are of national importance and Grade **II*** listed.

In addition, Mr Kennard founded the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas sub-committee, devoted to protecting Worthing's heritage and monitoring new developments. Many colleagues appreciated his technical knowledge and guidance as a mentor. Society President, Tony Malone, and Chair, Sue Belton, said Mr Kennard was a true conservationist and a man of integrity and principle. They said: "He leaves a very fine legacy and it is an honour to pay tribute to his work for the Society and, in turn, the town."

Mr Kennard was born in Broadwater and spent his childhood in Upper High Street where his father was a grocer and fruiterer. When the Second World War broke out the family became involved in scrap metal dealing, with a yard next door to the terraced house where he lived.

Mr Kennard attended Worthing High School for Boys and began work at a firm of Worthing architects before serving for two years with the Royal Engineers during the Korean War. On his return he married Pamela Tucker at St George's Church, St George's Road. They had two children, Susan and Simon, with Susan being born in Uganda, where the family spent four years before returning to the UK in 1960, when Simon was born. Mr Kennard worked for the Government in Uganda, helping to build the country's infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and roads. Within weeks of Simon being born the family set sail for Hong Kong, where Mr Kennard continued as a chartered surveyor.

His work possibly saved many lives for, after helping to dig bodies from a landslip near his home which killed 67 people, he drafted a report which recommended stricter building standards to stop similar tragedies happening in the future. This earned him promotion and a successful career in Government before setting up his own consultancy business in the early 1980s.

He remarried during this time and welcomed his second son, Trevor. In 2000 Mr Kennard retired at the age of 70 and came back to the UK, living with his sister in the house

where he was brought up. He became involved in competition standard ballroom dancing, was a mentor for the Prince's Trust and also helped people with special needs. But daughter Susan said the Worthing Society was his joy. He leaves a daughter, two sons, five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Mr Kennard's funeral took place at St George's Church, Worthing.

With thanks to Paul Holden, Editor of the Worthing Journal for publishing this Obituary in honour of Edward Kennard.

Susan Belton
Worthing Society Chair

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Dear Members

The Committee would like to thank all our members for their ongoing support and interest in the Society, its conservation work, meetings and activities I am pleased to report that largely as a result on our community talks and heritage walks we are delighted to have welcomed many new members.

We also take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to those who have made generous donations in support of our work. A special thank you to our Life Member, Wendy Greene and her daughter Chrissie who will, again, be donating (after expenses) the proceeds of the sale of Wendy's third book "What's in a Name? The Streets of Worthing Villages - Part Two" to the Society.

It's that time again! May I please remind you that renewal of your Annual Membership Subscription is due from 1 April 2025 and all details are included on your renewal form attached to the Newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you at our Quarterly Members Meeting on 25.2.2025

Brenda Whitmell
Membership Secretary

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am very pleased to report that during the late Summer and Autumn we have been most successful in continuing to promote the work of the Worthing Society and to give our town's heritage a 'voice'. Our articles featured in the Worthing Journal and Inside Worthing Magazine have, together with our heritage talks and walks, contributed to a welcome increase in our membership. One of our main priorities this year will be to continue our Membership Campaign starting in the Spring with our 'Calendar of Events' and by reaching out into the community at local events and Farmers Markets. We have made a good start and our Presidents Note on page 7 has provided the Committee with some useful suggestions.

The Society will also be taking part in this year's Heritage Festival in June contributing a Blue Plaque Trail Walk and a talk at Worthing Library Lecture Theatre: 'Pioneers of Worthing'. My colleague, David Clark, is Chair of the town's Blue Plaque Committee and, this year, we are supporting a Blue Plaque in honour of Marian Frost, founder of Worthing Library in 1909 and the first female Head Librarian. The dedication will

coincide with the Centenary of West Sussex Libraries and the event should provide some welcome publicity for the Society. I hope these events will be enjoyable, create interest and by highlighting the unique social history of our town, illustrate the need to protect our historic buildings.

We continue to have a very full in-tray for the coming year. As Planning Consultees, our Heritage Team will be taking every opportunity to monitor applications affecting our listed buildings and conservation areas. Led by John Head, the Heritage Team are in regular contact with the Planning Enforcement Officers to monitor the condition of buildings in the town centre and make referrals for intervention to try and arrest any possible decline in the appearance of the town centre.

Our biggest challenge will indeed be the ongoing protection of our built heritage and how this can be funded. We are seriously worried about the extensive deterioration of some of Worthing's heritage buildings and maintain our own heritage At Risk Register. This includes significant landmark structures such as the Pier and Lido, both important to the tourist economy and integral to the character of our seaside town. Many historic buildings forming our 'Heritage Portfolio' are more than 100 years old or, in some cases, even older. The Society monitors buildings at risk and concludes that a turning point has been reached where owners of listed buildings urgently need funding support if our heritage is to survive for this and future generations. For at least 10 years the Council has been unable to issue repairs or improvement grants – thus removing a vital 'financial safety net'. Insurances, materials and expert craftsmen are all more expensive for heritage buildings. These grants were a lifeline and could arrest problems at an early stage.

I am pleased therefore that the Society was invited to contribute to the Governments 'Call for Evidence Consultation: Future Protection of Our Heritage Buildings' and we shall be meeting the MP Tom Rutland who is reporting to the Select Committee. The Heritage Team will suggest the reinstatement of grants, low cost tailor-made loans and the removal of VAT for labour and materials. We are also contributing to an initiative from Patrick Hurley MP to discuss initiatives for the future protection of our Piers, a vital issue for Worthing. It is the centenary of the Lido this year and restoration is becoming urgent. I am in touch with the Councillor for Regeneration and the Council who are exploring various sources to obtain financial support. Our heritage buildings are a precious and irreplaceable resource.

Our remit also extends to the protection of our open green spaces. The recent Covid emergency highlighted the value of the accessing of green areas for mental and physical well-being. The pressure for more housing continues to provide challenges and we fully understand the need for more affordable homes. However, Worthing is located between the sea and the South Downs so we are limited in what we can provide. We are hoping to arrange a meeting with Dr Beccy Cooper, MP and very much hope that the new Government will recognise that, for Worthing, applying the standard methodology for centrally driven housing targets is not appropriate.

Inquiry in respect of Chatsmore Farm, Goring Gap - We hope the Inspector will not allow the construction of 475 dwellings which would put an intolerable strain on the surrounding infrastructure. This historic, natural gap prevents coalescence between Worthing and Ferring.

In conclusion, I must thank our President for his advice, pay tribute to the expertise of our Committee and extend my thanks to our members for their ongoing support. We are all 'Guardians of our Heritage' and have a part to play.

Sue Belton

Worthing Society Chair

LISTING AND CONSERVATION AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE (LCAS) REPORT

MEMBERS: Sue Belton (Chair), John Head, Susan Head, Nevil Hopkins and, by invitation, Tony Malone

The Sub-Committee has met twice since the last Newsletter and continues to deal with a full agenda of planning and heritage matters. The meetings are attended by the Council's Conservation Architect, Richard Small, who is able to advise and update on progress. This is increasingly important in the absence of a Conservation Areas Advisory Committee. Some of the items covered at the last meeting (on 12 December 2024) were:

Gospel Hall, Bedford Row – This interesting small building continues to be neglected by its owner (a property developer), who wants to demolish it and No.14 and replace with a block of flats. Planning permission was refused for the latest proposal and there is an appeal. We have written to the Planning Inspectorate with our objection.

Montague Place Alterations – Whilst we are supportive of creating a garden in Montague Place, we are concerned that the Council are not disclosing any details of the proposed scheme, apart from the general illustrations produced following the first consultation meeting. These do not show, amongst other things, important matters such as the paving materials and street furniture to be used. We expected these matters to be part of the public consultation. We have met with the Council Officer concerned and asked for detailed plans, but these have not been forthcoming despite repeated requests. It seems that the original "consultation" has been mainly a publicity exercise and it was not followed up by the further meetings we had been led to expect. We are considering making a freedom of information request, although it is doubtful that the Council will change its mind about whatever has been decided upon.

The Colonnade – We were able to get the Council to tidy up the area in front of No.5 High Street. There has been nothing heard recently relating to the future of Colonnade House and Nos.5-7.

The Thatched Cottage, Pond Lane – As there seems to be no progress on the rebuilding of this Grade II Listed cottage, we have written to the Head of Planning asking the Council to take action to make the remains of the building wind and watertight and to consider compulsory purchase of the site.

The Thatched Cottage, Pond Lane, Durrington, after the fire.

Properties on east side of South Street- We have pressed for the Council to deal with the poor state of the upper floors of some of the shops and are pleased that the Planning Enforcement Team are now dealing with this.

Nelson Passage – This historic footpath (which is a public highway), next to the former Nelson Inn and linking South Street and Marine Place, was the subject of a 12-month temporary closure to allow development at its east end. However, it was never re-opened. We have reported this to WSCC Highways, who have assured us that it will be re-opened as soon as street lighting has been sorted out by the developer. The continued closure is unlawful, and Sue Belton is keeping in contact with WSCC as things seem not to be progressing as quickly as they should.

Buzz Bingo (former Plaza Cinema), Rowlands Road – Sue Belton and John Head were able to inspect the interior of the building to assess its condition and to see if any details from the cinema remained. Apart from some fragments of art deco inspired plasterwork and small light fittings, there appeared to be little of interest. It is still possible to get an idea of the size of the cinema from the former balcony area, looking towards the location of the screen, although a ceiling has been constructed across the space to accommodate the ground floor bingo club. The developer has agreed to retain any items of cinema interest that might be found. We do not object to the proposed demolition to create flats as the building is in poor structural condition and the art deco frontage to Rowlands Road would be well replicated in the new scheme. However, we have written objecting to the houses proposed in the car park area to the rear, which would constitute a severe overdevelopment of the limited site area, with insufficient manoeuvring space for vehicles and harm to the living conditions of adjoining residents.

Local List Review – The "Local List" is for buildings that are considered of architectural or historic importance but are not nationally significant enough to qualify for statutory listing. It comprises part of the information used by the Council when assessing proposals for planning permission. The existing List is seriously out-of-date, but the Planning Department does not have the resources or funding to update it. We have agreed to undertake some of this work and have had a generous donation towards expenses. Nevil Hopkins has made a start on the review, which is likely to take some time.

Holy Trinity Church, Shelley Road – This Listed church has been vacant for some time and is not being properly maintained by the Chichester Diocese. It has been the subject of unsuitable development proposals and there has been vandalism. There has also been a fire. We are in touch with Planning Enforcement and have written to the Diocesan Authorities and the Council's Conservation Architect. Sue Belton has also been in contact with Paul Holden for publicity in The Worthing Journal.

The Beach Project (Telecommunications Masts) – We have objected to the location of three of the masts that have recently been installed by WSCC at various sites in Worthing. These harm the setting and appearance of Steyne Gardens, St Paul's Church and Heene Terrace. Unfortunately, WSCC are sticking to their view that the masts are "permitted development" even though we consider that the law has been applied wrongly. The Environmental Law Foundation's barrister agrees with our interpretation of the law (The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015) and has written to WSCC pointing out their error. However, WSCC lawyers are not prepared to consider changing their position on the matter. This stalemate is unlikely to be resolved without a judicial review, which would incur significant legal fees that The Worthing Society cannot afford. Nevertheless, Sue Belton is to write to the Ombudsman explaining the situation so far and to see if any pressure can be brought to bear on WSCC to change their position.

John Head BSc(Econ), DipTP, MRTPI (Retd).
PLANNING CONSULTANT TO THE WORTHING SOCIETY

A NOTE ON PUBLICITY

Members may have noticed an increase in our profile across local newsprint in recent weeks with an article in Inside Worthing and columns and letters in The Worthing Journal. We are most grateful to the editors Liana Naylor and Paul Holden for their continued support. Sue Belton also featured in a major piece in The Herald which covered recent changes to our Conservation Areas. Sue was of course instrumental in securing these enhancements.

I am pleased to report that we have had well over 10 new members since the start of the year. Several reported that The Worthing Society had been recommended to them by a friend so many thanks to you all for continuing to spread the word. There will be an 'advert' in The Worthing Journal' next month so hopefully this will provide a further boost.

I hope members have been pleased with the increased number of events we are running for 2025 including the two local village walks. We are hoping to add in a trip to Castle Goring with a cream tea for September, but this is under discussions with Lady Campbell.

The Blue Plaque for this year will be Marian Frost who was head librarian at Worthing Library where she worked for 39 years from 1897 to 1936. She was responsible for securing the funding for Worthing's first purpose-built library in the Southern wing of the museum which opened in 1908 (she also became curator of the museum). Marion became a pioneer for library services across Sussex and beyond. The Blue Plaque will be located on the outside of the current library in Richmond Road and the unveiling event will take place in May. We are most grateful to the West Sussex Library Service for funding the plaque. This year coincides with the centenary of the West Sussex Library Service, so a Blue Plaque for Marion is fitting celebration.

David Clark

PUBLICITY OFFICER

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

I hear from our Chairman that 4 new members have recently joined us, which makes 10 since the beginning of this year. That's always good news. So I thought now might be a good time to review our process for membership drives. Here are some suggestions which I've broken down into logical portions:-

Giving talks

Giving talks to other clubs, societies etc. This is a very good way to reach out to potential new members. Chairman Sue Belton and David Clark regularly give talks from a Portfolio they have built upon these subjects: Worthing Buildings Lost & Saved; The History of Beach House; A Heritage Walk Along Worthing Seafront; Jane Austen and the Worthing Connection and Pioneers of Worthing. If you know of a group who would like one of these Talks, please contact us at: contact@worthingsociety.org.uk

Advertising

- Create posters to attract new members.
- List of locations to place our posters, e.g.
  Superstores such as Tesco's at Durrington, Morrisons, Waitrose etc.
  Local libraries e.g.:- Richmond Road; Broadwater; Salvington; Goring; Durrington; Ferring and Findon.
  There are probably plenty of other locations.

Word of mouth

Take every opportunity to ask family and friends:-

- Have you heard of The Worthing Society?
- Do you know what the aims of The Worthing Society are?
- Would you like to have the opportunity to have your say in what goes on in our town?

Is Worthing in decline?

Worthing is a large town with a population of over 100,000. Even so, there are many signs of its decline in the town centre, such as many empty shops. Well known shops are being replaced by charity shops; coffee shops etc, or residential units.

What can be done to halt this decline? Some say that Worthing is in danger of losing its character. Do you agree? Some of us 'of a certain age' will remember Worthing's cinemas such as The Odeon and The Rivoli; popular dance venues such as The Plaza and The Mexican Hat and Coffee Bars playing music on the juke box. Sadly, these are all gone but, fortunately, we still do have Venues for 'big name' concerts such as the Assembly Hall and the Pier Pavilion and the Dome Cinema and the Connaught for film shows, so do continue to support them or we could lose them as well!

Tony Malone

PRESIDENT

STOP PRESS: Devolution Announcement

Dear Members

The Government have just announced that County Council elections in West Sussex due this May are postponed and there is a plan for a Combined Strategic Mayoral Authority for West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Initially, this will operate alongside existing Councils, who will send two members to be part of the new authority. Later there will be new Unitary Authorities within the Sussex area - but no detailed proposals as yet.

We shall be closely monitoring the situation to ensure that we continue to maintain our contacts to give Worthing's heritage a voice within the town both in the current and future administrations. Our Heritage Team will soon be meeting with Tom Rutland MP to discuss the future protection of our built heritage so this will be a good opportunity to discuss how our role will be affected by the Local Government changes.

For more information please see the WSCC website:

Future of local government in Sussex - West Sussex County at Council:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/Future-of-local-government-in-Sussex#3>

Sue Belton
CHAIRMAN

APPRECIATION

I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal thanks and those of the Committee to Sandra Malone for her hard work and expertise in compiling our Newsletters. These are so important in keeping our members updated on current issues and events. This is very precise and skilled work.

Sandra has also supported both myself and our Sub-Committee in the professional presentation of our Planning Consultations and the Society's correspondence to Councillors and associated groups.

A very big thank you to her and to Louise Hodson, our Website Manager for her technical expertise in maintaining a most interesting website for our members.

Susan Belton
Chairman

THE WORTHING SOCIETY MEETINGS FOR 2025

FEB **TUESDAY 25th at 7.30pm - QUARTERLY MEETING at WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE. Followed by talk from:**

GUEST SPEAKER: Chris Hare, Worthing Historian. "Folksongs – an Unexpected Source for Historians"

Doors open at 7.00pm for Coffee / Tea & Biscuits ……..Cost £1.50

APR **TUESDAY 29th at 7.00pm - AGM AT WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE.**
Doors open at 6.45pm for AGM at 7.00pm.
After which there will be a short break for Coffee/Tea & Biscuits ……..Cost £1.50

Followed by talk from:

GUEST SPEAKER: James Sainsbury, Curator of Archaeology, Worthing Museum – "New Discoveries of Burpham 2014 to 2024.

SEPT **TUESDAY 30th at 7.00pm - QUARTERLY MEETING AT WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATHRE.**

Followed by talk from:

GUEST SPEAKER: Gary Baines, Chairman of the Friends of Shoreham Fort Group on the "History of Shoreham Fort".

Doors open at 7.00pm for Coffee / Tea & Biscuits ……....Cost £1.50

NOV **TUESDAY 25th at 7.00pm - QUARTERLY MEETING AT WORTING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE. Followed by talk from:**

GUEST SPEAKER: Martin Hayes: "An Alternative History of Worthing Part ll as viewed by the Duffield family.

Doors open at 7.00pm for Coffee / Tea & Mince Pies ……..……....Cost £1.50

Our Christmas Raffle will be held during the evening

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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
contact@worthingsociety.org.uk