THE WORTHING SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & LCAS:

John Head	Planning Consultant; (LCAS) Trustee
Jessica Gill	Publicity & Artwork
Susan Head	Member (LCAS)
Nevil Hopkins	Member (LCAS)
Ruth Selo	Member (LCAS)
Brenda Whitmell	Committee Member
Natalie Cropper	Trustee

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NEWSLETTER COMPILER:
Sandra Malone

FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 28 APRIL 2026

Notice is hereby given that the 43rd Annual General Meeting of The Worthing Society will take place on Tuesday, 28 April 2026 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 **14 April 2026**. 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 at Worthing Museum on “The Updated Story of Highdown Hill”

Our Challenge – Safeguarding our Seafront Heritage

MEMBERSHIP – AN APPRECIATION AND UPDATE

Our Membership Secretary, Brenda Whitmell, is retiring after nine years in this important role. On behalf of our President and the Committee, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for her hard work and dedication. I know how much Brenda has enjoyed the role and helping our members. As recognition of her contribution in supporting the Society, we have awarded Brenda a Life Membership. I am, however, very pleased to say that Brenda will be remaining on the Executive Committee to support our work and welcome members at our forthcoming events.

We are very pleased indeed to welcome Christine Wood who will be joining the Committee as our new Membership Secretary, as from 17th February 2026. Christine's contact details are on the front cover of this Newsletter, so please do contact her direct for renewals or if you have any queries regarding your membership details. Our Website and leaflets will also be amended. I know Christine is looking forward to meeting and helping our members.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our members for their loyal support and to welcome new members who have recently joined us. Our membership subscription renewal is due from 1st April and I am very pleased to tell you that we shall not be increasing our fees. Our membership Renewal Form is enclosed with this Newsletter. We hope to increase our membership so if you have any like-minded friends, please do let them know about the Society's conservation work.

We hope that you have enjoyed our programme of Events and will renew your membership. The Committee look forward to seeing you at the meetings.

Sue Belton
Chairman

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There has never been more need for a Conservation Society to give our heritage a voice in the uncertain lead up to the planned Local Government Reorganisation. The Worthing Society will be striving to highlight the value of our built heritage and social history.

We are concerned at the loss of Worthing Borough Council and the historic status this has given to the town. Going forward we need to know who will be making decisions for Worthing regarding our heritage and green infrastructure as well as future development. It is important therefore that these future 'decision makers' and Planning Committees are aware of the town's unique qualities and aspirations.

We are determined that Worthing will not become a 'Cinderella' within the proposed new Unitary Authority.

Our Heritage Team are 'Planning Consultees', a position which has taken many years to achieve and which enables us to make a real contribution to protecting our heritage. Again, we are not sure if this position will remain. The Blue Plaque Committee led by the Society is also important to supporting the Blue Plaque Trail, making our heritage visibly accessible to all. Will this valuable Committee continue following Local Government Reorganisation?

The Heritage Team will be meeting with the MP Dr Beccy Cooper to raise this important detail at an early stage before LGR takes place. During this Meeting, we will also question whether the integrity of Worthing's recently adopted Local Plan will be retained. The question of the town's unrealistic Housing Targets, given the coastal land constraints, will also be raised. In addition, we are also intending to lobby a Full Council Meeting for the retention of a Town Council and flag up our concerns.

Another serious challenge is that 'Worthing's Portfolio' of heritage buildings is rapidly reaching a centenary, with St Paul's and Beach House passing a bi-centenary. There will be significant challenges ahead in terms of funding the ongoing maintenance issues when budgets are severely constrained with very few grants. This presents a new conservation challenge which is particularly evident in respect of The Pier (1865) and the Lido dating from 1925. The Society has responded to a Government Consultation: 'The Future Protection of Our Heritage', to look at the possibility of reinstating grants or loans and reducing VAT on repair costs. At the time of writing a response is a still awaited!

On a lighter note part of our strategy is for our Publicity Team to continue our successful Calendar of Heritage Walks and Talks to shine a light on our heritage and how it can contribute to our town's local and visitor economy. I am delighted to announce that, in April, we shall be launching our inter-active Exhibition 'Pioneers of Worthing' at the Colonnade (*See Publicity Officer's note*). The Exhibition has been made possible by the very generous donations from both our Publicity Officer, David Clark and our Life Member, Wendy Greene, who raised considerable funds by the sale of her series of books 'What's in a Name' – a fascinating history of local street names. This year's events will form part of our 2026 Membership Drive. We have recently welcomed several new members. Increasing our membership helps to increase our presence and influence in the town. The Society will also be taking part in the June Heritage Festival with Worthing Heritage Alliance.

In conclusion, I hope these measures will shine a light on Worthing and its valuable place within West Sussex. I must also pay tribute to the expertise of the Committee and to you our members for your ongoing support. We are all Guardians of our town's heritage and have a part to play particularly in these uncertain times.

Sue Belton

Worthing Society Chair

SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE DONE ABOUT IT…….!

Forest Barn – on the Local List

Your Committee are often approached by Worthing Society members and others who may be concerned about specific issues, such as buildings falling into disrepair or sites becoming untidy or unsightly graffiti appearing on walls and buildings. Unfortunately, trying to deal with these matters is often not straightforward and the Council's powers to deal with them are limited.

Our Heritage Committee (LCAS) discussed recently the subject of graffiti with the Council's Conservation Officer. It was agreed that the Council could take enforcement action if the graffiti is on a Listed Building or in a Conservation Area. Otherwise it would be for The Worthing Society to make a direct approach to the owner of the affected building and hope that they are interested enough (and can afford) to have the graffiti removed.

If a building is Listed, the Council has rather more control. It is a criminal offence to alter a Listed Building in a way that affects its character, unless Listed Building Consent has been granted. Fines are unlimited, and imprisonment can be for up to 2 years.

The Council can issue a Listed Building Enforcement Notice requiring the owner to reverse the changes and restore the building to its original state.

It is, of course, up to the Planning Officer to decide whether any alterations have adversely affected the character of the building, and if taking action would be justified. As recognised planning consultees, the Society's views should have some weight in that assessment.

Power to deal with buildings without statutory protection (including those that are on the Local List) is not as straightforward. Nevertheless, if any work or alterations would have required planning permission, a retrospective planning application can be requested and/or enforcement action can be taken.

The Government's proposals for revision to the National Planning Policy Framework have indicated that all planning authorities will be expected to have a Local List (for buildings that are important locally but may not meet the criteria for statutory listing). This should highlight the importance of these buildings. Fortunately, the Local List for Worthing is already being updated, with the assistance of The Worthing Society and, in particular, our LCAS member Nevil Hopkins.

In case of the situations mentioned at the beginning of this article, the Council would otherwise have to rely on Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning act 1990. This Section deals with "Land Adversely Affecting Amenity of Neighbourhood" and gives the Council "power to require proper maintenance of land". It is worth quoting in full:

"(1) If it appears to the local planning authority that the amenity of a part of their area, or of an adjoining area, is adversely affected by the condition of land in their area, they may serve on the owner and occupier of the land a notice under this section.

(2) The notice shall require such steps for remedying the condition of the land as may be specified in the notice to be taken within such period as may be so specified.

3) Subject to the following provisions of this Chapter, the notice shall take effect at the end of such period as may be specified in the notice.

(4) That period shall not be less than 28 days after the service of the notice".

The following Section 219 gives the Council power to enter the land and do any necessary works themselves, and to recover the expenses from the owner. Failure to comply with the Section 215 Notice is a criminal offence dealt with in the Magistrates' Court. Importantly, the definition of "land" in the 1990 Act includes buildings.

Whilst this seems, on the face of it, to be the answer to the problems, the first difficulty is the definition of "amenity". The Government has issued Best Practice Guidance relating to Section 215 and this confirms that "amenity" is not formally defined in the legislation and is a matter of fact, degree and common sense. It advises that "what would not be considered amenity in one part of a local planning authority's area might well be considered so in another."

It seems, therefore, that whether there is harm to amenity or not is a matter of judgment and it is for the Planning Officer to decide if action would be justified in any particular case. If the complainant, or indeed The Worthing Society, disagrees with the Planning Officer's assessment there is very little that can be done.

The Heritage Team are intending to arrange a meeting with the Head of Planning and the Council's Enforcement Team in order to discuss their approach to the Best Practice Guidance and to get some clarity on what the Council is able or prepared to do about the matters that might be reported to us. However, I suspect that funding and resources will also be an issue, even where powers might be available.

John Head

Heritage Team Lead

THE FUTURE OF WORTHING LIDO

There has been much speculation regarding the Lido so I thought it would be helpful to give some background details about this historic Grade ll Listed Building. Perhaps the most important point, which does not seem to be generally known, is that it was built as a Band Enclosure and Multi-Entertainment Centre, not as a Lido.

Designed in the Art Deco style by the noted architects Adshead & Ramsay in 1925, the spacious band enclosure replaced the earlier Victorian Birdcage bandstand. The enclosure was erected on steel piling extending some 150ft over the beach. Initially, there was a rectangular bandstand erected at the back of the enclosure which was replaced in 1935 by the domed bandstand we know today. Enclosed by shelters on either side, it could seat 800 people!

When the popularity of bands waned, an open-air pool was constructed in the enclosure in 1959 and renamed The Lido. With the advent of popular foreign holidays, the pool closed in 1982 and was covered over. The band enclosure continued as the entertainment centre and was popular for outdoor concerts.

Our Heritage Team was invited to join the Lido Stakeholder Group led by Dr Beccy Cooper together with Tom Rutland MP, local community groups and business representatives. We also attend regular liaison meetings, as Stakeholders, with the Council and Historic England. There is great enthusiasm to restore the building, which holds many memories for local residents, and is integral to the character of Worthing seafront.

The Worthing Lido is a key 'heritage asset' and is a prime location in Sussex Bay and is not being used to its full potential due to its vulnerable state and parts of the structure being closed. There is a danger that without intervention, and bearing in mind the worsening climate conditions, more parts of the building may need to be closed.

The Council, together with Historic England, are awaiting further engineering reports on the sub-structure. This is Phase 1 and once these reports are available, we hope it will be possible to give greater clarity and a suggested route forward. I am expecting to attend a meeting in March to hear the outcome of the engineering tests and report. The Society is supportive of regenerating and preserving this important Art Deco building. We are pleased to be involved and will update members as soon as possible.

Susan Belton

A NOTE ON PUBLICITY

I hope members are pleased with the Schedule of Events for this year which was e-mailed out recently. The date of our visit to Shoreham Fort has now been agreed as Thursday, 18th June at 11.00am.

I am thrilled to announce that we will be holding our Pioneers exhibition at The Colonnade between Tuesday 7th April and Saturday 11th April using both the downstairs galleries that face onto Warwick Street. This location is very appropriate as The Colonnade was built by Edward "King" Ogle, an early pioneer. As part of the programme for the week, John Head will be leading a walk which will include some of the buildings our pioneers were responsible for. All members are welcome and more information to follow nearer the time including booking details for the walk. I am most grateful to The Community Chest for giving us a grant to purchase some information boards for use at this exhibition.

The Blue Plaque committee has agreed that, this year, we should progress a Blue Plaque for James Gurney Denton with the unveiling to take place in May. This has nearly been finalised with the location, plaque design and funding close to being agreed. Most of you will be aware of the contribution Denton made as 4 times mayor of Worthing and his legacy lives on in the form of The Assembly Hall, Denton Gardens and The Pavilion Atrium (previously the Denton Lounge).

David Clark

PUBLICITY OFFICER

LALLA ROOKH 175 REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Local community groups involved in the Remembrance at Broadwater Church on 23 November 2025, made it a resounding success, enabling descendants of the 31 Worthing fishermen involved in the rescue to honour their forebears and highlighting what the sacrifice of the Brave 11 achieved – the setting up of Worthing Lifeboat Station:-

Worthing RNA provided the Standard Bearers guard-of-honour for: His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex, Lady Emma Barnard, escorted by Armed Forces Champion, Lieutenant Commander Councillor Noel Atkins; followed by the Mayor, Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies escorted by past Mayor, Lionel Harman.

The acoustics of the ancient church suited Lancing's Brass Royal Legion Band well and Secret Shore sea-shanty choir set the period atmosphere.

Susan Belton gave an Introduction and later a Concluding address illustrated with pictures of Worthing Lifeboat Memorial Garden, as well as movie clips of the original 1898 film of Worthing Lifeboat, the very first film of a lifeboat in action, commissioned by royal command of the Prince of Wales who, three years later became King Edward VII. The early film pioneer, William Kennedy Dickson, was ordered to Worthing specifically to shoot the film and achieved such clarity that many of the lifeboat crew and other Worthing people could easily be identified.

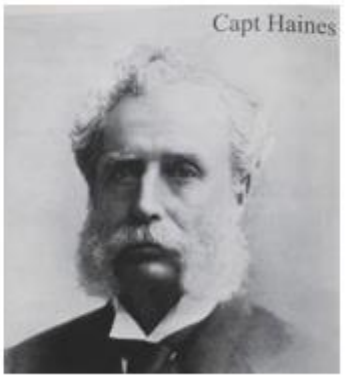
Homefield Primary School choir of 10-year-olds performed in the 'Honouring of the 11 Souls Ceremony' with posies and candles, before singing 'The Brave Eleven' so beautifully.

Shoreham RNLI collectors were on hand and more than £1,200 was raised by the event.

The unstinting support of Susan Belton in preparations throughout the year should not go unrecorded.

Rob Blann
Worthing Lifeboat Historian

Lalla Rookh, Worthing 175. 1850 to 2025.
Alex Vincent.



PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

Dear Members

Some members would have attended the AGM held on 24th February 2026 and listened to the Talk given by Martin Hayes on "An Alternative History of 19th Century Worthing 1852-1899, which I hope they found very interesting.

I would like to add a few words about Martin Hayes's work as a prominent local historian and former County Local Studies Librarian for West Sussex. I have known Martin for many years when doing my own research at Worthing Library and was recently introduced by my Son (via a channel on TV) to Martin's on-line research mainly concerning Worthing in the mid to late 1900s. Martin used photographs and film taken over a period of time showing things like the demolition of the Old Town Hall, cars and buses travelling along Warwick Street and Montague Street, photographs of well-known buildings many of which are still with us today, and the shops and businesses there at that time and, of course, the fashion of those times. All very interesting for my Son as those were the days I was growing up and I was able to discuss all manner of things with him.

Once again, thank you all for your continued support.

Tony Malone
President

CHAIR'S APPRECIATION

The Newsletter gives me the opportunity to express my thanks to the Committee for their ongoing work in conserving and protecting our heritage. I am also delighted to have welcomed new members following our programme of local heritage walks and talks.

Our forthcoming 'Pioneers of Worthing' Exhibition at the Colonnade, Warwick Street, will be a big step forward in promoting the Society's work and, hopefully, recruiting new members. My sincere thanks to Life Member, Wendy Greene and our Publicity Officer, David Clark, for their most generous donations to make this possible.

A special acknowledgement to the expertise of our Heritage Team, led by John Head. This is the 'engine room' of our core conservation work – protecting and commenting on planning applications affecting our heritage buildings and infrastructure. Regular meetings are held with the Conservation Officer to raise concerns.

The Worthing Society is, as you know, a Registered Charity. As such, the key, daily administrative and technical roles are very important to underscoring our work. My sincere thanks to Sandra Malone for her professional secretarial work and formatting our Newsletter; Louise Hodson, our Web Manager, for maintaining our excellent Website and our Treasurer, Leonia Crozier for her expertise in maintaining our accounts.

Susan Belton

THE WORTHING SOCIETY MEETINGS FOR 2025

2026

FEB **TUESDAY 24th at 7.00pm – QUARTERLY MEETING AT WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE**

Doors open at 7.00pm for complimentary Coffee / Tea and biscuits.

Followed by: A talk from **Guest Speaker, MARTIN HAYES** on Part Two **of "An Alternative History of 19th century Worthing 1852 -1899** - The town's recovery from the chaotic days of the Town Commissioners and the emergence of a major new industry, apart from tourism, as witnessed by the local Duffield family.

APRIL **TUESDAY 28th at 7.00pm – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE**

Doors open at 6.45pm for AGM at 7.00pm, after which there will be a short break for complimentary Coffee / Tea and biscuits.

Followed by: A talk from **Guest Speaker, JAMES SAINSBURY**, Curator of Archaeology at Worthing Museum on **"The Updated Story of Highdown Hill".**

SEPT **TUESDAY 29th at 7.00pm – QUARTERLY MEETING AT WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE**

Doors open at 7.00pm for complimentary Coffee / Tea and biscuits.

Followed by: A talk from **Guest Speaker, MALCOLM LINFIELD** on **"The Glasshouses of Worthing"**

NOV **TUESDAY 24th at 7.00pm – MEMBERS QUARTERLY CHRISTMAS MEETING AT WORTHING LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE**

Doors open at 7.00pm for complimentary Coffee / Tea and biscuits.

Followed by a talk by **Guest Speaker, CHRIS HARE** on **"Worthing During World War II"**

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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

For membership enquiries please contact our Membership Secretary Christine Wood by Email: ctcwood2@hotmail.co.uk