Worthing Archaeological Society

Registered Charity Number 2911431

Minutes of the **Annual General meeting**

Held in Worthing Library Lecture Theatre on March 12th 2024

John Mills (President) chaired the Meeting.

1. Apologies: Eileen Colwell, Kim Emson, Maggie Gale, Maria Gardiner, Vicky Lillywhite, John Lonergan, Nigel Rumble, James Sainsbury, Juliet Starmer-Smith, Mike Tristram, Sioned & Peter Vos, Liz Walker, Heather & Chris Wild.

2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM were accepted. Proposed by Susan Howe, seconded by Donna Wiltshire. There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Annual Report: Keith started by saying that 2023 was a busy year for the Society with several activities taking place inside and out. He mentioned that the Worthing Society is installing a plaque to commemorate John Pull's achievements. This will be installed on the South Wall of the Museum on Thursday 16th May. Lectures – the 2023 Lecture season, back in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre, has had a great set of Speakers, arranged by Theresa. The Con Ainsworth Memorial Lecture was given by Mike Allen on the latest thinking of the construction date of the Cerne Abbas Giant, and the John Pull Lecture by Dr Richard Nevell on investigations at Knepp Castle. Other Speakers have been David Millum on the Bridge Farm Roman Settlement, our very own President, John Mills, on Old Atherington and the lost villages of West Sussex, and Dr Judie English on early European jewellery. If there is anyone you hear of, directly or indirectly, who could lecture to WAS please let a Committee Member know. Training and Study Days - Many thanks to Donna for organising these days. A very special thanks to Connie for organising and running the geophysics training, looking to pass on the baton to the next generation of field workers. Also to Connie for training on the art and science of using the total station. And to Bob Turner for another batch of excavators to undertake planning and section drawing on our forthcoming excavations. Study Days throughout 2023: Barbara McNee on Prehistoric pottery, myself and Gill Turner on the Excavation process, and, more recently a well-attended and excellent Study Day on Medieval towns in Sussex, given by Simon Stevens. Looking forward to others being scheduled later in 2024, especially John's on Desktop Research. Whilst not strictly a Study Day, I would like to thank Donna for arranging the WAS Members Open Day at the Museum in the Autumn, which was well attended, and whilst I still have a few actions to complete, it was a very productive day. Other events: During 2023 there were other events, namely: Walks at Slindon (Bignor Hill) and Bramber Green (EPIC) led by Connie. As well as the New Year's walk from Lambley's Lane to Cissbury via Park Brow, again led by Connie. Visits to other excavations, at Chichester Priory Park in May and The Culver Archaeology Project at Bridge Farm. Autumn Social hosted by the Black Horse at Findon, for an evening of quizzing and skittles. Again, thanks to Donna for organising this. Journal: another excellent Journal was produced under the Editorship of Cheryl Hutchins, containing interesting and informative articles, especially the report on Slindon Stable Yard. Website: Over the past year our website has had several changes: there is a new section detailing the organisation and function of the society and field unit. A section showing details of future field work projects and an area for showing research. Acceptance of the Chairman's Report was proposed by Liz Lane and seconded by Gill Turner.

4. Treasurer's Report: (Detailed Statement submitted) 2023 was a busy year for the Society as WAS Members participated in the activities provided for them, e.g. Finds sessions, digs, evening Lectures, walks, study days, training etc. Annual Accounts: Balance sheet. Our equipment is fully depreciated so no adjustment is required for this year – valued as £4 for fixed assets. It is likely we will need to update some of the equipment in the coming year. The Charities Deposit Fund and HSBC Savings Accounts, together with HSBC Current Account was £9267 for 2023 compared with £9869 for 2022, showing a deficit of £602. Profit & Loss Account: Income for 2023 was £3973 compared to £5211 for 2022. (More income in 2022 due to an increase in general donations for the Society's Centenary Booklet and also a gift left to the Society.) Expenditure amounted to £4575 for 2023, compared to £5211 for 2022. Hence a deficit for 2023 of £602. A brief explanation: Membership Subscriptions decreased to £2265 in 2023, compared with £2685 in 2022. General Donations were £238 in 2023 compared with £659 in 2022 (2022 donations were inflated due to donations being given to help fund the Society's Centenary Booklet.) Bank Interest increased from £30 in 2022 to £168 in 2023. Miscellaneous receipts: Gift Aid monies increased to £532 for 2023, £352 before. Day Schools and Courses – there were fewer in 2023, with income at £725 compared to £1070 in 2022. Some extra income for our training course.

Expenditure (summarised) Hire of rooms for Lectures and Meetings increased from £570 in 2022 to £806 in 2023. Next to Insurance this is our current biggest expenditure. Regular high attendance necessitates appropriate venues. WAS has been fortunate in keeping expenses as low as possible, but anticipates future increases. Public Liability and Trustee Insurance remained more or less stable, but it is anticipated that the cost will rise in 2024. This is another of our highest costs at £1000. Day Schools and Courses: costs of £868 for Study Days have mostly been covered by income of £725 for 2023. Field Unit Expenditure supported the Society's main field activities. There were 61 people who had at least one day at Sompting Malthouse dig in 2023. Field unit costs 2023 Total £1322, 2022 £2054. Special Funds WAS has funds to support those who wish to take part in its activities but don't have the means to do so. Please apply to a Member of the Committee if this is the case, and your request will be considered. Patricia thanked the National Trust for the use of the Slindon shed, Sompting Estate for the use of the Malthouse fields, and occasional use of the Barn, Worthing Museum and staff for their support and use of the Education Room, our Independent Examiner of Accounts for his support, all Members and Trustees who contribute in both time and money thus enabling the Society to prosper. Patricia stands down now, but remains on the Committee. Alan Beazley is now taking up the gauntlet.
Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Jennie Williamson and seconded by Connie Shirley.

5. Proposal to raise subs in 2025: The Society last increased Members' subscriptions in January 2016, from £20 t0 £25. Due to general increases in costs (mostly explained above), the Society feels that subscriptions should be increased to £30 from January 2005. Acceptance of this proposal was from Bob Turner, seconded by Alan Beazley.
N.B. all Standing Orders from Jan 1st 2025 should be increased to £30.

6. Election of the Independent Examiner; Bob Turner agreed to continue in the role. This was proposed by Patricia Leming and seconded by Alex Vincent.

7. Field Unit Report: Keith said that the summer was extremely busy for WAS, with projects running from June through to the end of August, and geophysics in the Autumn. Sompting Paddocks (White House) – the summer excavation took place over 2 weeks in July with efforts concentrated on the SW corner of the field. It is known that cottages were present on the West side of Church Lane. This site has yielded a large quantity of oyster shell and clay pipe fragment, as well as imported stone-ware pottery, which indicates occupation between 1550 and 1650, and is a possible form of hostelry. The Research Group continues in its endeavours to find further evidence of the building and its function. Lancing Preparatory School: Directed by Sarah Welsh, a teacher at the school, the Field Unit assisted with an excavation on the playing fields in June 2023. Barn Field, Sompting Field walk: A field walk, under Connie's direction, was undertaken at Barn Field in October 2023, the results of which are currently being finalised. With many thanks to Gill and Bob Turner for the Flint Report. Climping: Monitoring on the coast line at Climping beach has continued over the Autumn and Winter months, with more features being discovered. In October, Bill Watkins recovered a complete ceramic funeral urn, probably from the later Iron Age/early Romano-British period. This urn and its contents are currently going through the post-excavation process. Many thanks to all who have helped with this, especially to Bill who has made a substantial contribution to cover the costs of this work. Earlier this year Bill had located further remains of well foundations, which have been recorded by John Mills, but more detailed recording is needed. There are questions about parking there now. The Landowner is looking to have a new car park/cafe area – a planning application is going in soon. The best time to visit, provided the tides are right, is 7am! (This from John Mills, who also told us that the Black Horse is re-opening as a pub.) Bignor Roman Villa: In the Autumn of 2023, two geophysical surveys, lead by Dave Staveley, were undertaken in the camping field to the south of the scheduled area and in part of the car park south of the 2022 excavations. Unfortunately the surveys (GPR and magnetometry) did not locate any features or anomalies worth investigating further. Hopefully in the Autumn we will be undertaking a further round of surveys, this time to the North of the scheduled area. Finds Team: The Finds team continued to meet throughout the year, and whilst post-Covid restrictions have limited the numbers involved, better weather may mean working outside, allowing an increase in numbers. Worthing Museum Flint Collections: Since the start of this year, the Finds Team has been undertaking fortnightly sessions at Worthing Museum to look at and record in detail the flint in the Museum's collection. This is a long-term project, probably taking 2 years or more. I would like to give a 'shout out' to those undertaking the recording, namely Liz Walker, Liz Lane, Sioned Vos, Maggie Gale, Patricia Leming, Donna Wiltshire and Cheryl Hutchins. As well as to the Flint Identification Team, led by Bob Turner. Looking Forward: 2024 is looking to be a very busy year for the Field Unit and everyone is welcome to take part, or assist in any way. We have excavations at Sullington Warren, with the National Trust, in May, a return to the White House at Sompting in July/August, and a 'big dig' at Burpham, in conjunction with Worthing Museum, in August. As well as continuing to monitor the beach at Climping. Acceptance of this Report was proposed by Chris Lane and seconded by Liz Lane.

8. GDPR: has been updated by Donna, report on the website – the information is up-to-date, but let Donna know if there are any changes. WAS is compliant with this. There are also Data Protection and Privacy Notices on the website.

9. Election of Officers and Committee Members: Bob Turner proposed the re-election of the existing team, seconded by Donna Wiltshire. Sarah Brewer was proposed as a new Committee Member by Liz Lane, seconded by Gill Turner. Alan Beazley was proposed as Treasurer by Jenny Williamson, seconded by Connie Shirley.
   So: President John Mills, Chairman Keith Bolton, Hon Sec. and Membership Secretary Liz Lane. Committee Members: Roy Plummer (Life Vice-President), Connie Shirley (Life Vice-President and Excavations), Gill Turner (Life-Vice-President and Finds Officer), Cheryl Hutchins (Life Vice-President and Journal Editor), Theresa Griffiths (Lecture Organiser and Website Lead), Alan Beazley (Treasurer), Patricia Leming, Amie Friend (Schools Liaison), Vicky Lillywhite (Assistant Excavations Lead), Jennie Williamson (Assistant Finds Officer), Donna Wiltshire (Study Days) and Sarah Brewer.

10. Any Other Business: None arose.

John Mills declared the meeting closed. A Lecture on the WAS dig at EPIC was then given by Connie Shirley and Bob Turner.