Worthing Archaeological Society

Registered Charity Number 2911431

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held in Worthing Library Lecture Theatre on Tuesday March 11th 2025

John Mills (President) chaired the meeting.

1. Apologies: Andy Bates, Kim Emson, Judie English, Amie Friend, Maria Gardiner, Amanda Graham, Peter Hardy, Vicky Lillywhite, John Lonergan, Sioned & Peter Vos, Jennie Williamson.

2. Minutes of the 2024 AGM – were accepted. Proposer Patricia Leming, Seconder Sarah Brewer. No matters arising.

3. Chairman's Annual Report – 2024 was another busy year for the Society with several activities taking place inside and out.
   Lectures – the 2024 lecture season has seen a great set of Speakers arranged by Theresa Griffiths. Con Ainsworth Memorial lecture – Doctor Geoff Mead on 'Coast at Work: Continuity and Change'. John Pull Lecture by James Sainsbury, Curator at Worthing Museum, on the recent Community-centred Excavations at Burpham. Other Speakers have been Sarah Green on 'Crete:Myths of the Minotaur – Archaeology of the Minoans. Dr Lawrence Shaw on 'The Study of the Nation's Forests'. James Sainsbury on 'The Story of Highdown Hill.
   If you hear about anyone (directly or indirectly) with a Lecture idea, let a Committee member know.
   Study Days – Thanks to Donna Wiltshire for organising these. Luke Barber on 'Early and Late Post-Medieval Pottery' and on 'Medieval Pottery'. Simon Stevens on 'Post-Medieval Sussex.'
   Training – many thanks to Amie Friend for training on the use of Dropbox.
   Other events – during 2024 there were other events: WAS Autumn Social at the Black Horse, Findon; Guided walk around Lewes led by Simon Stevens; Visit to the BHAS excavation at Rocky Clump.
   Journal – another excellent Journal was produced under the Editorship of Cheryl Hutchins.
   Website – Many thanks to Richard and Theresa Griffiths for maintaining the WAS website .
   Members – President. The Committee would like to thank John Mills for continuing to be our President, and I would like to go on record to give my own personal thanks especially around John's knowledge and guidance, particularly around subjects that do not necessarily get the spotlight.
   Committee Members – Patricia Leming leaves the Committee this time. Thank you to Patricia for sterling work as Treasurer and for the seamless handover to Alan for the past year.
   Members – currently 146 Members, including Hon and Life Members.
   In Memoriam - The past 12 months has seen the passing of four Members of the Society. Andy Bell in April, Alan King in the autumn, and more recently, Doreen

Locke and Chris Lane.
Andy had been an active member of the Field Unit from its early days, and the flint team, and was active until a few years ago.
Alan was a Member of the Finds Team and Research Group and we had been in communication only a week before his passing regarding Sullington and its history. Our 2024 Journal was in tribute to him.
I first met Doreen back in 1995 at Fishbourne on a training excavation. Doreen was a Member of the Committee and one of her roles was to count the numbers (usually over 100) at lectures – not an easy task with people drifting in and out.
Finally, Chris. A key member of the Field Unit and the Surveying Team. There was no task too onerous or complicated that Chris couldn't address with his phlegmatic and composed approach to problem-solving.
All are very much missed.
Acceptance of Chairman's Report was proposed by Bob Turner and seconded by Donna Wiltshire.

4. Treasurer's Report – Alan thanked the Committee, especially Patricia, and said he's happy to continue as Treasurer. He thanked Bob for auditing. WAS is in profit largely because of the work done for Mike Tristram on the Sompting Fieldwalk in 2024. Alan presented his accounts. (Copies were available in the Lecture Hall) Acceptance was proposed by Gill Turner and seconded by Clare Richardson.

5. Election of the Independent Examiner – Bob Turner will continue in the role. Acceptance proposed by Robin Bennett and seconded by Jacqui Lake.

6. Field Unit Report – The summer was extremely busy for WAS with projects running from April through to the end of August, and geophysics in the Autumn.
Fieldwork Projects. Sullington Warren. This was a joint project undertaken with the National Trust on their estate at Sullington. It involved 2 trial trenches located over linear crop marks. At the end of the dig, and even now, I'm none the wiser as to what we actually found and its interpretation. We are now undertaking a period of research to see if there is anything in various archives that will help establish the function of this post-Medieval structure. There doesn't seem to be anything in the records – nor of any Roman structure, though we had Roman finds.
Sompting Paddocks (White House). The summer excavation took place over 2 weeks in July with efforts concentrated on the SW corner of the field. Ad-hoc excavations are being undertaken now on Fridays – please contact Connie for further information. The Research Group continues in its endeavours to find further evidence of the building and its function.
Burpham Big Dig. Over two weeks in August, a series of 32 test pits and 3 trenches were excavated by WAS and the local community. This Community Project, directed by James Sainsbury, involved over 60 people and went entirely to plan. For those whose first taste of archaeology was at Burpham, please be assured that not all excavations include indoor facilities, daily home-made cakes and a slap-up lunch at the end of it!
Bignor Roman Villa. In the Autumn of 2024, a further geophysical survey, led by David Staveley, was undertaken in the paddock to the North of the scheduled area. Many thanks to the small team who assisted on what was a glorious Autumn day. Nothing came up, maybe look elsewhere?

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 and thereby allowing an increase in the number of attendees.
Worthing Museum Flint Collection. Since the start of 2024 the Finds Team have been undertaking fortnightly sessions at Worthing Museum to look at, and record in detail, the flint in the Museum's Archive. This is a long-term project, probably taking 2 years or more. The work will be at abeyance whilst major building work is undertaken on the Museum. We hope to be back there before the end of 2025.
Looking forward. 2025 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 are returning to Burpham at the end of April to continue investigating the ditch around the burh in Forge Field. A major excavation is scheduled at Highdown Hill on the National Trust land. This is taking place in the last 2 weeks of July and is being managed by the National Trust and Worthing Museum. A calling notice will go out at the end of March to get an idea of numbers.

7. GDPR – from Donna. The Society only uses data for Newsletters and events. Please give any change of details to Liz. WAS is compliant with GDPR. Data protection and privacy notices are on our website.

8. Election – The Officers and Committee members are standing for re-election.

President	John Mills
Chairman	Keith Bolton
Hon Secretary	Elizabeth 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), Alan Beazley (Hon Treasurer, Charity Commission), Liz Lane (Hon Secretary, Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor), Theresa Griffiths (Lecture Organiser & Website Lead), Amie Friend (Schools Liaison), Vicky Lillywhite (Assistant Field Unit lead) and Jennie Williamson (Assistant Finds Officer), Donna Wiltshire (Study Days), Sarah Brewer
Proposed that they be re-elected en masse – Proposer Bob Turner, Seconder Sue Howe. Carried.

9. AOB – none.

John Mills declared the Meeting closed, and it was followed by a Lecture on The Neanderthal People of the English Channel: Adaptations, Encounters and Extinctions Dr Matt Pope, archaeologist based at UCL Institute of Archaeology.

Keith Bolton. 16th March 2025