Minutes of the 27th January 2026 WAS Committee Meeting

Present: Keith, Alan, Sarah, Theresa, Liz, Vicky, John M, Connie, Gill, Jennie, Donna.

Apologies: Amie and Cheryl.

Keith gave Gill a card signed by many WAS folk, and some chocolates, to celebrate her 80th Birthday.

2 Minutes and 3 Matters arising taken as we went.

4. FU update: Sompting: Sarah and Connie had been surveying yesterday. The paddocks are reinstated, there's an electric fence round our area, no access. Mark has preserved our area – no seeding, no horses. Access is to be done. C and S have all the necessary data. Project is to look at the well, the pit under the former spoil heap and into 'Ed's hedge'. There's a half-metre water-pipe trench running due North of our area – a Medieval assemblage of Finds from the backfill – Connie showed them round. The fence round our area is South of the Whitehouse plot. Maybe we could put a fence alongside the water trench? Connie to discuss with Mark – Finds tent? Toilets. Parking will be at the extreme East side of the site.
Clapham and Patching Barrow Big Dig: - not before 2028.
Highdown: James is looking at funding for 2027.There'll be nothing in 2026, except, possibly, Geo-phys. Aim to go back to trenches G and F, also H for burials.
Burpham Highfield: this will be a WAS dig, there's no funding, James will be there as a WAS Member. 22nd August for approx 10 days. Keith is doing the P.D. David Staveley will do Geo-phys – mag. It was suggested that Connie and her small auger go out at some point. 15th Aug – Fieldwalk, led by James, for the Villagers – informal, not organised. Digging will be by hand, there will be a digger to backfill. Keith to ask Mike Allen re sampling. Site code will be BHF26. There is no suggestion of former old field boundaries on the field – possible enclosure – Iron Age? We'll have evaluation trenches. There will be a Finds tent, kit can be kept in a barn on Peppering Farm. Keith to liaise with Karen over the Village Hall. Keith has the HER record.
Knepp: 20th – 29th April. Keith still has no information – it is not a WAS dig. Keith to keep trying – need to know much more before we advertise.

5. Slindon Finds Meetings: 5th and 19th Feb, 5th March, 2nd and 16th April. Always over-subscribed – maybe some of the regulars miss a session?

6. Post-ex: Sompting – 2025 Finds to be finished once Highdown done.
Forge Field: nothing in pot earlier than 13th Century – were the locals re-creating the burh? John M suggested links with Priory Park – Chichester castle was razed in 1217 – time of King John v the Barons.
Highdown: pottery done, paperwork done, have the Trench G prtinout from Connie. The small finds I.D. from Gordon is ready to go. Context Register to be typed and sent to Keith. James collecting Finds and taking to ASE. Is there anything else Gordon could do with us? After Easter? ?Bignor. ?Highfield finds eventually. Connie said that the Surveying data for our sites is never asked for – she and Sarah will do reports, starting with Highdown.

7. Finance: Alan has done his Report, sent round. Last year expensive in buying new equipment – should be less in 2026. The tool shed is full of equipment.

8. GDPR and 9. Trustees. Nothing to report.

10.Membership: 71 Members have paid this year so far. We had 154 paying Members last year. Now there are 24 Hon Members and 13 Life members.

11. Keith is offering Steph and Jane, FLO's, Honorary Membership of WAS. Jane processed the Highdown metal finds over Christmas, at no charge.

12. Newsletter done, very full. To be sent round tomorrow, go to print for those who need it asap.
Excellent Journal. The Committee thanks Cheryl for all her hard work on it.

13. Insurance – Connie asked if we need any changes? Towergate still seems to be our best option. H & S forms are kept in case of any future Insurance claims.

14. Study Days: Bones with Sarah Green on Feb 14th – 9 people signed up so far.
19th March trip to Mike Allen – full.
John Shepherd – Glass – no response – Donna to ask around for his email address. Other possibilities – Experimental Archaeology? Suggestions: Butser, Michaelham Priory, Fishbourne. Donna to see what's on offer in our area.

15. Research Group: Whitehouse done for now, will start up again if a topic comes up.

16. Lectures – discussion about lack of time for questions. Stop coffee etc.?
February James on Highdown. March AGM and Bob on Vikings. April Sue Harrington. In the Autumn, Rebecca Ellis Hacker on wild boars of Sussex, Natalie Cohen on the Bodiam Castle dig. Ask Jane Clark? Stephanie? Carenza?

17. Website: viewing has gone up considerably. 2025 Journal on website. Has been up 10 years in 2026!

18. WHA Museum Day: WAS to have a stall in the Museum Education Room on June 6th as part of the Heritage Festival. 11am – 3pm.

19. Storage in shed: discussed. Connie has a complete set of Currrent Archaeology –from Roy Plummer. They can be stored in shed. Thursday tidy-up inventory sessions resume on March 12th.

20. AOB: AGM – too late to vote Ed Fox in, but co-opt him?
What form should the Malthouse/Whitehouse Report take. Discussion Keith – the definitive Report as a monograph, with a cut-down version for the Journal.

21. Date of next Meeting – May 5th.