Minutes of the Worthing Archaeological Society AGM

Registered Charity Number 2911431

Held on March 10th 2026 in Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.

John Mills (President) chaired the Meeting. John thanked everyone who was here.

1. Apologies: Andy Bates, John Crane, Cheryl Hutchins, John Lonergan, Sally Mountstephen, David Rudling, Sioned & Peter Vos, Caroline Wells, Jennie Williamson.

2. Minutes of the 2025 AGM were accepted: Proposer: Gill Turner. Seconder: Donna Wiltshire

3. Chairman's Annual Report: Again, 2025 was a busy year for the Society with several activities taking place both inside and outside.
   Lectures: The 2025 lecture season has seen a great set of Speakers arranged by Theresa Griffiths. Con Ainsworth Memorial lecture – Simon Stevens on 'Fall in Ghosts' Archaeological Investigations at the site of the WW1 Training camp at Cooden' John Pull Lecture by James Sainsbury, Curator of Worthing Museum, on the 2025 Big Dig Excavation at Highdown.
   Other Speakers have been Dr Mike Allen on Land Use History of the Southern Chalklands, Connie Shirley and John Mills on Sompting Malthouse Fields, Dr David Rudling on 'The Threats to our Archaeological Heritage', Amie Friend on 'Smugglers of the South-east'. Dr Matt Pope on 'The Neanderthal People of the English Channel: Adaptations, Encounters and Extinctions'.
   If there is anyone any of us know, directly or indirectly, who may be suitable to present a WAS Lecture, then please let a Committee Member know.
   Study Days: Many thanks to Donna Wiltshire for organising two Study Days on Animal Bones by Sarah Green.
   Training: Many thanks to Connie for further training on GIS/QGIS in October.
   Other Events: BBQ at Slindon in August, WAS Autumn Social at the Black Horse in Findon, 2026 New Year walk in Storrington led by Sarah Brewer.
   Journal and Newsletter: Another excellent Journal was produced under the Editorship of Cheryl Hutchins. I would like to go on record for the sterling work done to produce the regular Newsletters. These contain information on forthcoming events as well as details on what has just taken place. Thanks to Liz Lane and Alan Beazley for collating and producing the Newsletter.
   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 personal thanks especially around John's knowledge and guidance, particularly around subjects that do not necessarily get the spot-light. John is a great asset to the Society, and his participation goes way beyond that normally expected of a President.
   There is one change to the Committee, namely, Ed Fox has agreed to join.
   Membership currently stands at 192, including Hon and Life memberships.
   Honorary Members: The following have been offered and have accepted Honorary

membership of WAS over the past 12 months: For contribution to the Highdown Big Dig - Mike Allen, Sue Harrington, Hayley Forsyth-Magee, Andrew Reynolds and Gary Baines. For processing Finds in their own time, our FLOs, Jane Clark and Stephanie Smith. For contribution to WAS and WAS Field Unit, Bob Turner.
In Memoriam: This is to note the passing of John Funnell of BHAS as well as CBA SE. A fount of knowledge, always available to offer advice and a gossip at various conferences.
Forty-Year Membership. It gives me great pleasure to note that Alex Vincent has been a WAS Member for 40 years this month.
Acceptance of Chairman's Report proposed by Richard Griffiths, seconded by Sarah Brewer.

4. Treasurer's Report: Alan put copies of his Report on the deskfor people to see.
There were 154 paying members in 2025 – a 50% increase on 2024.
2025 was a very busy year, especially with the Highdown Big Dig.
We purchased new and replacement dig equipment which had a knock-on effect on Finds processing where we needed to replenish stocks of finds and pens.
One of our major outgoings in Insurance which is a little over £1000, fortunately the premiums remain similar to previous years.
We received £1755 and spent £7183, leaving a deficit of only £28, pretty good considering the year we had.
Finally a couple of thankyous – firstly to the Committee for their continued support, and to Bob Turner who once again audited our accounts.
Acceptance of Treasurer's Report proposed by Connie Shirley, seconded by Julian Bishop.

5. Election of Independent Examiner: Bob Turner, who was full of praise for our Treasurer. Bob was thanked for his examining. Acceptance of Bob as Examiner proposed by Robin Bennett, seconded by Amie Friend.

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.
Burpham Forge Field. Following the Big Dig in 2024, WAS Field Unit returned to Burpham to excavate 2 trenches in Forge Field. These revealed a 12-metre wide, flat-bottomed "quarry ditch" around the Burh, and, following a suggestion by John Mills, it appears that this large excavation removed all but the very bottom of the original Burh ditch. From an initial analysis of the pottery by Luke Barber, none of the pottery from the trenches through this "quarry ditch" pre-dated the 13th century, so that a fresh context for the activity might be the last years of the reign of King John (1199-1216) and first years (1216 and 1217) of the reign of his son Henry III, when the French Prince Louis and his rebel English baronial allies, had threatened or captured castles in Surrey and Sussex. The adjoining Burh rampart is much higher here than anywhere else, so that the quarried chalk might have been used to raise a suggested pre-existing poor rampart c. 1216, as a local defence against Prince Louis'

rampaging army.
Sompting Paddocks (White House). Excavations were being undertaken on Fridays, concentrating on the SW corner of the field. There will be a dig there for 2 weeks in July. The Research Group continues in its endeavours to find further evidence of the building, and its function.
Highdown Big Dig. A 2-week excavation at Highdown – the first since 1988. Including a trench within the scheduled area. The most interesting finds were outside this area. Investigations of an area referred to as 'Vincent's Barrow' located a number of inhumation burials. In trenches F and G finds suggest Iron Age and Roman activity, or there is possibly an occupation site nearby. In terms of logistics this was the most complex project WAS Field Unit has been involved in, with over 120 volunteers taking part. Excellent work by the Finds Team, led by Gill Turner, assisted by Jennie Williamson, has meant that the finds have been sorted and recorded and are (mostly) now with the various Experts for post-excavation analysis and reporting. Also thanks to Connie and Sarah for producing an excellent Surveying Report. The aim is to return to Highdown sometime in 2027.
Finds Team. The Finds Team continues to meet throughout the year, and, while space inside the shed limits numbers, better weather may mean working outside, thereby allowing an increase in the number of attendees.
Worthing Museum Flint Collections. The major building works at the Museum are coming to an end. Which, hopefully, will mean a return to record the extensive flint collection there.
Looking Forward. 2026 is looking to be a very busy year for the Field Unit and everyone is welcome to take part or assist in anyway.
Two projects scheduled for 2026: 1. Return to Sompting for further investigations at the White House, with the focus on the well and occupation levels.
2. We are returning to Burpham in August to investigate a possible Iron Age and/or Roman site in the field North of the Church.

7. GDPR. The Society only uses your date for sending out Newsletters and events information. When you receive the 2-monthly Newsletter, you will always see a section that asks you to let the Membership Secretary know if any of your details have changed, as it is important to ensure that all the data we hold is up-to-date. As part of our compliance process Donna has completed the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO's) Controller's Checklist and we are compliant. I have therefore updated our Statement of Compliance Document to reflect this and it has been uploaded to our website.
   Finally, please take time to read through the Data Protection and Privacy Notices on our website to refresh your memory on this subject. If you have any questions please let Donna know.

8. Election of Officers and Committee Members. It was agreed to elect these en bloc. Proposed by Richard Seconded by Becki Powell. Carried.
   The Officers and Committee members:

   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 Com-

mission), 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.

9. AOB – none forthcoming.

The AGM was followed by Bob Turner's Lecture on the Vikings.