

MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, WARNHAM  
on 29th MARCH, 1985 TO FORM A WARNHAM SOCIETY

Present: About 120 people

Chairman: Mr. C. J. Williams

1. INTRUCTION TO THE PROCEEDINGS

The Chairman welcomed those present and outlined the developments which had led to the calling of this meeting. During to winter a few residents had met to discuss the idea of forming society for the conservation of the village and this had led to the formation of an ad hoc committee (called the steering committee) to consider the matter more fully. At this stage the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies was consulted as were other village societies. In due course the steering committee decided to out the idea of a Warnham Society to a public meeting of residents within the parish. Posters advertising the meeting had been distributed house to house within the parish.

The Chairman then welcomed Mrs. Ruth Ward, Hon. Secretary of the above Federation, who had been invited to talk to the meeting.

2. TALK BY MRS RUTH WARD, HON. SECRETARY OF THE FEDERATION OF SUSSEX AMENITY SOCIETIES, ON THE THEME "CONSERVATION IN SUSSEX"

Mrs. Ward gave an account of the growth of amenity societies in Sussex which, as elsewhere, had got going in the late 1950's stimulated by the various visible threats to the environment, eg motorways, new towns, hypermarkets and latterly oil exploration. The societies shared the principal object of making planning authorities aware of local views and had also contributed to influencing planning legislation. Though the green belt legislation and the Countryside Act had many defects they were better than they would have been without the influence of the amenity societies.

The Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies had been formed in 1967 and now had about 100 members who could look to the Federation for advice and support. Welcoming the Warnham Society to the fold, Mrs. Ward scotched two misconceptions. The first misconception was that it ought to be the aim of every society to say No to all forms of development. The second misconception was that amenity societies were antagonistic to parish councils: so far from this being the case the partnership was often a fruitful one.

3. FORMAL INAUGURATION OF THE SOCIETY AND ADOPTION OF A PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION -- After thanking Mrs. Ward, the Chairman asked the meeting to consider the formation of a Warnham Society and also the adoption of the provisional constitution which the

steering committee had produced and which was circulated to all those present.

After some discussion of the provisional constitution, Mr. R. B. Bensted-Smith proposed the formation of the Warnham Society, this was seconded by Mrs. Lorna Parr; and was agreed unanimously.

Discussion of the constitution was then resumed and Mr. Stephen Garrish, seconded by Mr. Reginald Melhuish proposed the amendment of Clause 2 (the objects clause) to read as follows: -

"The objects of the Society shall be to safeguard the character of the Parish, to ensure that any development which takes place is in keeping with that character, and to do so in close co-operation with other organisations having similar interests and in as friendly liaison as possible with local authorities."

This was unanimously agreed.

Some of those present would have liked further discussion of the constitution but the Chairman pointed out that there would be an opportunity for a proper discussion and for amendments at a general meeting to be called in the Autumn. On this assurance the meeting agreed to proceed on the basis of the provisional constitution as circulated and as amended above.

#### 4. ELECTION OF A COMMITTEE

The Chairman said that eleven members of the steering committee were willing to form the initial committee (Clause 6 of the constitution) if elected and he read out the names as follows: -

Dick Bensted-Smith, Robert Courtier, Mrs. Elizabeth Cox, Mrs. Rosemary McLaughlin, Gerald McMullen, Richard Overton, Harry Parr, Mrs. Lorna Parr, Mrs. Olive Thornton, Mrs. Phyllis White and (himself) John Williams. Of these Richard Overton had volunteered to act as Hon. Secretary, Harry Parr as Hon. Treasurer, and he himself would be prepared to serve as Chairman initially if desired. He invited the meeting to elect the above, pointing out that there would be an opportunity as soon as the membership was established for additions to be made.

Someone expressed the view that this method of electing a committee was undemocratic, but the Chairman pointed out that it was the intention to hold a meeting of the Society in the Autumn, i.e. as soon as practicable, to elect a committee from within the membership after seeking nominations in the normal way, which for obvious reasons had not been possible now. Furthermore there was room meanwhile under the constitution for the recruitment of 3 more committee members (including 2 by co-option) if this were desired.

On a proposal by Christopher Cox, seconded by Brigadier Maurice Hall, the election of the committee as listed above was put to the vote and was carried with two dissenting voices.

## 5. QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

The Chairman invited questions and suggestions to the newly elected committee on what should occupy its attention at the outset. In the lively discussion which followed a number of subjects were touched on including litter (and the Best Kept Village competition), the care of the newly-planted oak trees, traffic through the village and the "Domesday Survey" on barns. The Chairman said the committee would do its best on all these. Mr. Gerald McMullen referred to the pressures arising from the Structure Plan and the expansion of Gatwick Airport, etc. and Mr. Garrish, pursuing this theme, asked if the committee would be keeping an eye on planning applications and making the Society's views known where appropriate. This the Chairman confirmed. There was some argument as to how this would fit in with the responsibility of the Parish Council to comment on planning applications, but Mr. Wood, the Chairman of the Parish Council said that it would be in order for the Society to state an independent view to the planning authority, as indeed could be done by any individual.

## 6. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING ON FRIDAY 18th OCTOBER 1985

This date was agreed. The Chairman explained that the meeting was intended as an early opportunity for members to participate fully in agreeing a constitution and in the election of a committee, and also to review progress generally and to make sure that the Society was on the right lines. In the meanwhile members would be kept informed through The Warbler of any action taken.

## 7. ENROLMENTS

At the conclusion of the meeting and while coffee was being served, 59 application forms were completed and subscriptions paid, resulting in a commencing membership (including members of the steering committee who had already enrolled) of 48, counting married couples as one.