

Another successful year... A Yuletide message from Worthing Downlanders Chairman

Another year has passed us quickly by and, looking back, I feel it can definitely be chalked up as a successful one for the Worthing Downlanders.

The annual meal in January - a month later than everyone else's seasonal feed-ups - proved a big draw, which is why we are holding it again at the same venue on January 18, 2013. We are looking forward to seeing familiar and new faces there for the start of the downland year.



The innovation of screening a film at the AGM also worked well, with the business side of it all kept to a minimum, and this model will again be followed in 2013.



One event that won't be taking the same form in the coming year is Ostara. The second annual musical event, held in March 2012, again proved very enjoyable for all who attended, but there is a lot of work involved for our volunteers in staging it.

We are looking at a more informal music celebration this spring, with the possibility of the fully-fledged festival returning in future years.

Other highlights of the 2012 calendar included the marvellous tree walk provided by Peter Wish and the popular evening celebrating Sussex poet Hilaire Belloc. With other happenings including a pub quiz and a midnight dance around the Midsummer Oak at Broadwater, we like to think we are providing events for a fairly wide range of tastes!

Having said that, we are always keen for new ideas and for members to get more involved in putting on the kind of activities they would like to see the Worthing Downlanders organise - so please don't feel hesitant about contacting us with any ideas.

Meanwhile, of course, the whole point of our existence is the urgent need to protect our downland and countryside. While the tenancy of Tenants Hill and Mount Carvey has still not been completely resolved, we are confident everything is still moving in the right direction - and we are ready to take appropriate action if it isn't!



A worrying longer-term issue is the renewed talk of an A27 bypass for Worthing, with the implied threat of a motorway ploughing through the South Downs National Park past Cissbury Ring. We had hoped this was permanently off the agenda, but we clearly need to remain vigilant as the excuse of a need to "boost the economy" sees the government giving the go-ahead for all kinds of developments considered totally unacceptable by the vast majority of the public - notably the fracking that risks causing untold damage to the environment and water supplies of Sussex and the whole country.

Our Sussex Downs are a precious gift that we have been handed down by nature, and we are determined to ensure that future generations of Worthing folk can enjoy them as much as we all do today.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy Downland New Year!

