

## **Statement for The Sussex Archaeological Society**

**Annual General Meeting – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2021**

### **Matt Pope**

Having now served on Council for three years, and my first term coming to a close, I am seeking your support to remain for a further three years and continue the hard work underway to guide the Society towards a brighter future. My first three years were a steep learning curve, finding out just how hard-working and dedicated the Society's staff and my fellow Council members were, and just how serious the Society's financial situation had become. My commitment deepened upon taking on the role of Vice Chair; supporting two successive, inspirational Chairs of Council to develop a strategy for recovery and renewal. None of us could have imagined the subsequent impact of the Pandemic and just how hard our Staff, Council and interim CEOs would have to work to get the Society through the national crisis intact. During this experience I feel I gained a deep understanding of how the Society works, having been involved in wide range of areas of its operations. Along with other Trustees, I was involved in the recruitment of our new CEO, and I'm delighted to say I feel the Society has in Andrew Edwards a real visionary and prudent leader at the helm.

As part of my role as a Trustee I was also delighted to be asked to take on the Chairing role of the newly formed Collections, Engagement and Research Committee, which is working with Staff and Trustees to support and develop our activities in this area. During the Pandemic I worked with Staff to enhance our social media activity, as circumstances forced us to become an on-line Society; growing our Facebook and Twitter accounts from less than 50 to over 2000 members and hosting the Sussex Archaeology at Home online lecture series - as well as our successful online Climate Change and Archaeology conference. I intend to keep my commitment to this area of engagement as the Society develops its online profile, and fully harnesses the global as well as regional and national audiences it has opened-up. My commitment to our research and publication role is also as strong as ever. I helped in the recruitment process leading to the appointment of Jaime Kaminski, our new SAC Editor, ensuring the continuity of our treasured and important Society journal. I have begun to look at harnessing networks of expertise to foster professional, well-funded research with scope for community involvement, stronger relationships with the wonderful local archaeology Societies in the county and with rescue archaeology teams working in the county. Through these networks of modern, professional expertise, we can seek to both support and be involved in exciting historical and archaeological research in the county.

With your support I intend to spend the next 3 years building on the momentum of change we can now see in the Society. I am excited at the prospect of a further opportunity to serve the Society and help foster the potential of our respected, 175-year-old heritage organisation to deliver on its charitable aims in a way which meets the modern challenges which both the heritage sector, and wider Society face.