

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Renewable Heritage Trust held on 20 October 2010 at Westow village hall

Present: Trustees Mo MacLeod (c), Dave Mann, Chris Fawdington, Mel Fox, Val Hood, Paul Lister, Martin Phillips. Howsham Mill friends present were Christine Keller, Peter Smith. Susannah Smith, Graham Long, Mike Wood, Jem Charles, J Blanchard, Gez Pegram.

1. Apologies Dylan Hayes.

2. Minutes of the last meeting The minutes of the last AGM held on 21 October 2009 were accepted.

3. Matters arising not covered in the agenda

The phone line is now installed and is a residential line.

4. Trustees' report

Mo started by saying that unlike in 2009, there has been no serious vandalism. Overall there have been many achievements this year with the following highlights taken from our Annual Report.

- Volunteers are still especially welcome on the first Sunday of the month. Jobs have now progressed from digging and are more varied;
- School parties and other groups have continued to visit. This was part of the condition of the RES grant to restore the granary. If any group wishes to have a conducted tour they should contact the trust;
- The BBC programme Countryfile came to film on 4 July. The piece that was broadcast did not get our message over very well, but it was good publicity and has certainly brought other visitors who were not aware of the mill and our project;
- There was a delay in getting connected to the grid due to disagreements over where to site the transformer, but electricity generated is now exported and the trust is earning money;
- The Architectural Heritage Fund, which has supported us from the start, holds up the mill as an example of sustainable building restoration;
- The fish studies done as part of the licence from the EA show the good condition of the river. Studies continue on the status of lamprey in the river and the effects on them of the turbine;
- There have been regular groups of trainee soldiers spending a day volunteering at the mill;
- The trust no longer has financial liabilities following a £50,000 donation from the BBC restoration fund;
- The Country Houses Association has offered us £100,000 matched funding for a HLF application.

The trustees report will be put on the website.

5. Treasurer's Report

Chris highlighted a few points from the annual accounts that have been approved and sent to Companies House. He was pleased to announce that the trust now has an operation surplus of £35,000. A private loan and creditor were fully repaid during the year. Assets are now fully depreciated, a situation that funders view favourably.

Howsham Power Company (HPC) was formed in September 2009 as the trading arm of RHT. Within its memorandum of association it states that its purpose is to make over all profits to RHT so will never make a taxable profit. All maintenance and replacement costs will be met by HPC, which allows it to reclaim VAT. This year it made a small loss due to start up costs and as no Feed-in tariff (FIT) income has been paid yet, the income to RHT has been small to date.

Private donations remain a valuable source of income with one generous benefactor. The total this year was £19,000 and gift aid on this was £4500.

Chris thanked Julie for her invaluable help with book-keeping.

6. Progress reports

Easement. We still do not have a legal easement for the cable across the land belonging to the hall. They gave us a verbal agreement and documents have been prepared but not signed. The owners are now in dispute with a potential purchaser and this has prevented our easement and the sale to us of the lock and canal. When there is a new owner we will try to forge a good relationship. There is the possibility of a permissive path across the land to Howsham wood that would allow access to the mill from that direction.

Grid connection. Dave explained the delay in getting the connection was due to the number of people involved. Finally a compromise was reached and a pole mounted transformer installed, not the ground mounted one we wanted. One positive outcome of this delay is that our generators are now on the FIT, increasing our income. The FIT is 18p/kWh with 4p paid by the company that buys the electricity.

The waterwheel is also generating. The hydraulic system is rather noisy and we hope a solution to this will be found. Low flows much of the summer restricted its use as there was insufficient water to operate the screw and wheel. Output can be viewed online on our website.

7. Courses and open days

Mel talked about the craft courses this summer run by Angela Cole. Mel also organised a heritage building course as part of a national weekend of heritage courses. With support from Ryedale District Council and Leader funding, two day-long courses were run each for nine participants by Geoff Hutchinson, the stone mason who worked on the granary. Most

of the participants were local owners of old houses who learnt about slating, cobbling and use of lime mortar. The Heritage Alliance heard of the course and will use us as a case study.

For children there was a session grinding wheat to make flour to turn into leavened and unleavened bread. The first time in over 60 years that wheat had been ground into flour at the mill.

8. Phase 2

As described in the recent Newsletter, RHT has been successful in getting stage 1 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for restoring the rest of the building. This is worth £19550 with match funding to get all the elements in place to start the construction. This includes all the decorative stonework. If successful stage 2 funding would be applied for next March with a likely start of building in September 2011 and completion in October 2012. The total cost is about £550,000. This sum includes funding for an education consultant who will prepare teaching materials and make contact with all local schools and colleges that might use the facilities. There will also be three years funding for an education officer. There is funding for a project manager as well. Tenders have gone out for all the specialists and these will be opened on 9 November, with contracts let soon after.

9. Elections

No nominations had been received for the positions of chair, secretary or treasurer. Although Mo said at the last AGM she would like to stand down as chair, now that the completion was in sight she would like to stay as chair. Other trustees agreed, as she has put in so much work on the HLF application. Mo was nominated for chair by Martin and seconded by Mel. She was elected unanimously. Mo nominated Martin and seconded by Val for Secretary, Chris was nominated by Martin and seconded by Val for Treasurer, both were elected unopposed. Dave and Val had come to the end of their three year term and agreed to stand again. Martin nominated Dave and seconded by Mel, Val was nominated by Martin and seconded by Mo, both were elected unanimously. Other trustees agreed to continue to serve.

Anyone interested in possibly becoming a trustee in future was encouraged to come to the mill on Sundays and/or attend trustees' meetings.

10. Any other business

Paul said that sampling for lamprey was starting again this week. Jez asked if anyone from SPAB had been to the mill. Paul is a member and he said they were aware of the project.

11. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will be held on 26 October 2011, venue to be confirmed.