

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Renewable Heritage Trust held on 14 November 2012 at Barton-le-Willows village hall

Present: Trustees Mo MacLeod (c), Dave Mann, Chris Fawdington, Val Hood, Paul Lister, Martin Phillips; Education and Events Officer Liz Vowles; Patron Sir Fred Strickland-Constable and 15 friends.

1. Apologies None

2. Introduction by the Patron

Sir Fred introduced the meeting by saying how his concerns for the environment have increased over his lifetime and how carbon dioxide emissions are likely to affect his children and all our children. When Mo and Dave approached him to become involved with the RHT he was pleased to help and become involved. Now that the turbines are generating hydro-electricity and the mill restoration is approaching completion, the RHT can be proud of its achievements.

Mo responded by thanking Fred for his part in gaining planning permission by offering land for a car park.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last AGM held on 26 October 2011 were accepted.

4. Matters arising not covered in the agenda None

5. Trustees' annual report

Mo thanked everyone for coming. She said that when she and Dave started eight years ago, the response to their idea of restoring the mill was either no or scepticism, with a few exception like Fred. Now we can look at all the achievements culminating in the current building work.

The following key achievements are taken from our Annual Report for July 2011 to July 2012.

- Preparing the HLF final application was a team effort with Chris preparing the figures and Mo the rest. The total grant was £653,000 from HLF.
- Significant legal issues had to be resolved to give the HLF a charge over the island in the event of failure of RHT to deliver the project. These were all done by Chris;
- There was a detailed tendering process for the main contractor. The right contractor needed to embrace the challenge of a difficult and isolated location and have a sense of humour. Six companies were invited to tender and di, three were interview and we do not think we could have chosen better that Stephen Pickering Traditional Building Services Ltd;
- Stephen Pickering organised a 'meet the contractor' weekend in August where in addition to showing off the building and work, he built a lime kiln and showed how lime is made;
- A successful Heritage Open Day in September on the use of traditional techniques in building restoration and maintenance of old buildings was held in September 2012, in conjunction with Stephen Pickering. At least 400 people attended the two events;

- The regional slalom event had to be cancelled this July due to the wet weather. Canoe clubs have continued to use the site regularly;
- Mo introduced Liz Vowles the education and events officer appointed on 1 October. She is now getting to grips with all the information about the mill, drafting the education policy and making contacts for the future;
- Angela Cole ran a series of craft courses during the summer that was well-received and brought new people to the mill. There was a second weekend of outdoor film shows in September 2011 that were very popular. We may consider doing these again outside the building. Events are planned that are connected to heritage, renewables, rural lifestyles, new uses for old technology, school groups. We want to continue with unusual and quirky events so any ideas will be welcome;
- Our trading company Howsham Power Company (HPC) transferred £40,000 to RHT from electricity sales. Output this year is down due to too much water and the breakdown of the waterwheel, which will be a costly and difficult repair;
- Thanks to Schofield Sweeney our solicitors for past pro bono work and subsequent good service;
- Mo specifically thanked Julie Blanchard for her book-keeping help to Chris in running the accounts. She also thanked Martin for taking on the role of client liaison with the design team and contractor. And finally thanks to all our supporters and trustees for their continued commitment.

6. Treasurer's Report

Chris highlighted a few points from the annual accounts that have been approved by our accountants and have sent to Companies House and the Charity Commission. Copies were available for inspection. He said this year there was a very positive feeling with £643,000 from the HLF and a turnover of £161,000. Expected turnover this coming year is between £300,000 and £400,000. The current balance at the bank is very healthy at £89,000, but of this £84,000 is restricted. The funding from the Country House Foundation has eased the cash flow greatly as the contractor requires payment within 14 days while HLF takes 21 days to pay claims. RHT has no liabilities.

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 of the generation equipment is met by HPC, which allows it to reclaim VAT. As last year it made a small loss so that no corporation tax was paid. The transfer from HPC was £40,000 of the total donations of £44,000. This reflects a good generating year, and as previously explained, the current year will not be as good due to reduced output and the waterwheel breakdown.

Chris thanked Julie for her invaluable help with book-keeping, including the complicated HLF claims and VAT returns.

In response to a question, Chris stated that RHT owns all the equipment, which is now fully depreciated. HPC pays for any repairs.

7. On-going fundraising

Mo explained that the cost of a replacement Diana statue was not included in the HLF bid. It was then realised it would be better to replace her now and a sculptor Nikki Taylor has agreed to make a wire mesh version of her design at a reduced cost. All donations are now going to the Diana fund.

There is also a sundial on the south face of the building to replace in due course.

8. Progress report

Martin gave a slide show with highlights of the building work so far. The contractor and sub-contractors have done well, coping with the access problems, poor weather and flooding at the end of September. To date the roof structure is complete and slating has just begun. This required rebuilding the upper courses of bricks, installing oak beams to form a wall plate on the brick course, lifting four large hip beams forming the four sides of the roof pyramid, adding purlins and roof spars. The floor beams and joists are in place revealing the first floor. Much of the new stone has been delivered and the new upper string course has been built. New stone has been used to replace damaged stone on the walls. Internal and external pointing is largely complete. Rendering of the waterwheel chamber has been done to prevent damp coming into the building.

A new oak bridge has been made locally and installed on a girder crossing the outflow from the waterwheel at the south end so making a circular walk around the island.

9. Elections

Under the RHT constitution, trustees are elected for a three year term and then stand down or can be re-elected. Mo Macleod, Martin Phillips and Chris Fawdington agreed to stand for their present positions, proposed by Paul Lister and seconded by Dave Mann. All were elected unanimously.

Mel Fox had resigned due to personal reasons in June 2012, but was now able to stand again for election. She was proposed by Mo Macleod and seconded by Martin Phillips and elected unanimously. Mo said that there were still spaces for more trustees.

10. Any other business

Liz said she was very pleased to be involved with the project. She is rewriting the education policy, she has been developing ideas for other uses with York University Centre for life-long learning, ideas for film-making, story-telling and oral histories. She has set up a Facebook page to attract younger users' interest.

11. Dates for the diary

Sunday 9 December - Christmas craft fair at the mill

12. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will be held on 13 November 2013, venue to be confirmed.