

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Renewable Heritage Trust held on 1 February 2014 at Howsham Mill

Present: Trustees Mo Macleod (c), Dave Mann, Chris Fawdington, Val Hood, Paul Lister, Mel Fox, Penny MacDonald, Martin Phillips; Education and Events Officer Jen Wakefield; Patron Sir Fred Strickland-Constable and 16 friends.

1. Apologies None

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last AGM held on 14 November 2012 were accepted.

3. Matters arising not covered in the agenda

The chair explained that the reason for the delay in holding the AGM, normally held in autumn after the year end of 31 July, was due to the late completion of the accounts. She also introduced Jen Wakefield who is the new Education and Events Officer replacing Liz Vowles.

4. Trustees' annual report

Mo said that the annual report could be summarised in the building in which we are sitting. She thanked Martin for his vigilance and liaison with the contractor Stephen Pickering in achieving the high quality of the restoration.

The following key achievements are taken from our Annual Report for year ending 31 July 2013.

- The standard of workmanship in the restoration is excellent and all involved can be proud of their contribution. The work was shown off during an open weekend on 18-19 August 2012 and again as part of the national Heritage Open day on 9 September 2012.
- Mo gave five talks to groups in Yorkshire about the project that encourage visitors and interest in the project. The completion of the building work marks the end of one phase and the beginning of the next;
- She highlighted the meeting of the Association of Preservation Trusts in May. When Mo and Dave first started the project they went to an APT meeting in Belfast and wondered how their plans could match the projects being presented. Today the APT cites Howsham Mill as an example of a good local project;
- Eight groups were given conducted tours of the mill while restoration work was in progress, including the York Civic Trust, Yorkshire branch of SPAB and York Guild of Builders;
- A series of craft courses was held during summer 2012 and spring/summer 2013;
- A shadow puppet show was held for children in the finished building;
- Due to the four floods and generally high river level, electricity generation, which only occurs when there is sufficient head or fall over the weir, was greatly reduced. Coupled with a major repair to the waterwheel, gift aid from the Howsham Power Company, the trading arm of the trust was nil. These problems and cash flow difficulties are not anticipated in future years;

- Mel Fox added that she had received an email from Lower Wharfe Canoe Club thanking the trust for continued use of the facilities, complimenting it on the restoration and the great success of the annual slalom held in July 2013. The achievements of four particular club members were highlighted.

5. Treasurer's Report

Chris described it as another interesting year, as all years have been for the trust. Cash flow during the period of the build was a big issue as HLF took between 10 and 28 days to pay a claim, while the contract with Stephen Pickering was for payment within 14 days of the invoice. A bank overdraft facility was arranged and two trustees made loans to cover shortfalls. These have now been repaid. Turnover for the year was £412,000 which left a deficit of £52,000. This was in part due to a major donor not honouring his commitment so more was required from RHT in match funding. A retained surplus from the previous year meant that £23,300 was carried forward.

There was a big drop in donations as there was no money from HPC. Reduced generation and repairs to the waterwheel of £23,000 prevented this. In fact RHT made a loan of £7000 to HPC to cover the cost of repairs, which has now been repaid. HPC has in its constitution to pay its profits to RHT and does not make a profit that is subject to corporation tax. HPC is VAT registered so can reclaim VAT for spares and repairs. Mo added that on average the income from electricity generation makes the project self-sustaining. RHT would like to subsidise transport costs for schools as an incentive to visiting the mill. Other fundraising will continue with this purpose in mind.

Dave showed some figures of what HPC had earned and what it had spent. In a poor year income was about £23,000 compared to the previous good year when income was above £40,000.

A question from the floor was who owns the hydro equipment? It is owned by RHT and is now all written off for depreciation. We need a sinking fund to pay for repairs and replacements, which we will be building up over the coming months. Gifting the profits to RHT is a simple way of making a lease charge to HPC.

6. The illustrated story of the build

Martin gave an illustrated talk of the process of the build from start to finish.

7. Election of trustees

Mo Macleod announced that she was standing down from the board of trustees. Her role had been to promote the trust and attract interest and she now feels that as the project is moving into a new phase, it was the right time for her to step down. Martin thanked her on behalf of everyone present for her invaluable contribution to the success of the project. Without her vision and that of Dave we would not have been sitting in the mill today. Mel Fox had indicated her willingness to stand as acting chair, she was proposed by Mo and seconded by Paul Lister and elected.

Under the RHT constitution, trustees are elected for a three year term and then stand down or can be re-elected. Dave Mann and Val Hood were nominated by Paul and seconded by Mel and Chris respectively. Both were elected unanimously. Penny

MacDonald also resigned due to changing personal circumstances. Mo thanked her for her one year as a trustee, and in particular on the education side.

John Renel, who has been supporting Chris as book-keeper and agreed to stand as a trustee was proposed by Mo, seconded by Paul and elected. Martin proposed Amy-Jane Beer, Mo seconded her and she too was elected.

8. Any other business

There was a question as to who had taken the photographs on display downstairs. Mo replied that Tony Bartholomew had taken them. He is a professional photographer who has been recoding the events at the mill since the inception.

9. Dates for the diary

Jen referred people to the two leaflets listing events and craft courses over the coming year.

10. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will be held on 15 November 2014 at the mill. This will get back to the usual cycle of reporting.