

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Renewable Heritage Trust held on 6 February 2016 at Howsham Mill

Present: Trustees Mel Fox (c), Dave Mann, Val Hood, Martin Phillips, Amy Beer, Helen Minnikin-Spring and 10 friends.

1. Apologies Paul Lister, Sarah Moore

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last AGM held on 31 January 2015 were accepted.

3. Matters arising not covered in the agenda

None

4. Trustees' annual report

Mel Fox welcomed everyone to the AGM. She paid tribute to Chris Fawdington, who was present but resigned as treasurer in October 2015, for all his hard work over many years through both difficult and exciting times. She explained that the annual report summarised activities and finances from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015 and she would also give a summary of what has happened since then.

The year began with the completion of work on the restoration, the snagging, and on spending the remains of the HLF grant on the swing bridge, a storage shed, upstairs furniture and a bird hide. Jen Wakefield, who resigned in September 2015, organised school visits for about 170 primary pupils, craft course, the Christmas Fair, tours for interested groups and some off-site talks. Jen also completed her forest school qualification and the island has been used for forest school activities. The Heritage Open Day in September again proved popular bringing visitors who might not have visited the mill before.

The annual canoe slalom was well attended. Three members of clubs that use the island are now in the national team and the site is one of the best in northern England.

A planning application to use the mill for hire for corporate events was submitted and has finally been approved subject to various conditions. We have no plans to use the mill as a bunk barn, one of the original uses, due to the demands of supervision.

We started showing films in spring 2015 as part of Cine North. Attendance was variable depending on the film shown.

The mill received three national awards for the quality of its restoration. The mill is open every Sunday and on bank holidays and Mel thanked our volunteer guides.

5. Treasurer's Report

Chris Fawdington summarised the finances for the year. Calendar year 2015 was the last year of the £738k grant from HLF. Of this 18% match funding came from other donors and our own resources. Much work went into planning the grant and it is pleasing that virtually all the money was spent and the project delivered on time and in

budget. The first three years of education costs were included in the HLF funding and now we have to fund that ourselves from electricity sales income. The income comes via our sister company Howsham Power Company which gift aids all its income to RHT and makes a loss thus paying no corporation tax. Chris highlighted high cost of repair and maintenance of equipment which also includes upgrading. Craft course were subsidised by £5k but in future will break even.

6. Some history of Howsham Mill

Elaine Gathercole gave a very interesting illustrated presentation of certain aspects of the history of the mill using newspaper articles spanning 1770s to the 1960s.

7. Update on current activities

The second screw has approval and is awaiting finance. Once operating, the output from the turbines will more than double. The replacement and restoration of the swing bridge completes the restoration of the historic landscape. It will allow occasional access of heavy plant and for emergency vehicles, but we do not have access across the field so will not be used regularly. The design is based on a drawing of a similar one over a canal in Wiltshire and we are very pleased with the outcome. Some work is still necessary to complete it.

Helen gave an update of her work since her start at the end of September. With Sarah Moore, who is head teacher of Foston and Terrington primaries, she has been developing material and encouraging visits. Pupils from the above schools are coming regularly for Helen to complete her forest school qualification. Leavening school has had to postpone due to bad weather, but will come later in the year. She has run one open day for teachers and another is planned. Three schools will be coming this month for an energy day organised by North Yorkshire Council's carbon reduction officer. Other visits are booked for March as well as maths and science literacy days. We were able to buy iPads and data loggers for school group use.

The Candlejar performance group are coming to provide the drama element of 'science of the seasons' for school groups.

There will be a special event for British Science Week in March

There is an outdoor drama event at end of February.

Suggestions for future uses of the mill were invited, including films for Cine North. One suggestion was inviting Yorkshire Film archive to use the mill as a venue. A Cine club subscription was another idea to encourage regular attendance.

Using the mill as a base for species identification courses for plants and birds and bird surveying. Other organisations are welcome to make suggestions for using the building and the island and are likely to be accommodated.

8. Election of trustees

Sarah Moore was cop-opted as a trustee in November 2015 and was proposed, seconded and elected as a trustee unanimously. There is a vacancy for a treasurer, which requires someone with some accountancy experience.

9. Any other business

None

10. Dates for the diary

Courses and events are listed on the website.

11. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will be held on Saturday 28 January 2017 at the mill.