

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Renewable Heritage Trust held on 3 February 2018 at Howsham Mill**

**Present:** Trustees Mel Fox (c), Dave Mann, Val Hood, Martin Phillips, Paul Lister, Will Brown education officer Helen Spring and seven friends.

**1. Apologies** John Renel.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last AGM held on 4 February 2017 were accepted.

**3. Matters arising not covered in the agenda**

The question of the time of year was discussed and it was agreed to move the AGM back to spring, hopefully attracting more people to attend.

**4. Trustees' annual report**

Mel Fox welcomed everyone to the AGM. The year being reported runs from 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2017. The main activity dominating the year was the installation of the second screw which started in September 2016. The contract was awarded to the Polish company Hydromew to both construct the screw and install it. A new bridge was needed to get a digger to where a new space was excavated next to the existing screw. A concrete slab and sides were laid to hold the screw. It arrived on 1 February 2017 and was unloaded onto the pontoon. It was two weeks later when the river level was low enough for it to get under the bridge and up the river. It was then dragged into the prepared site. Work continued intermittently though the screw was not positioned at the correct angle. In September the company went into liquidation. The main work remaining was to install the control panel and this was negotiated directly with the Polish subcontractor. The lower bearing then failed and was returned for repair and is due back soon. Despite all these problems we can be proud of the fact that in conjunction with Dave Mann's company, RHT has been in the vanguard of Archimedes Screw turbine technology in the UK.

Another setback during the year was the failure of the waterwheel shaft in October, itself replaced in 2012. Fortunately for RHT it was under warranty and a new one, designed to avoid the same fault happening again, was installed and working within three months.

A milestone was passed on 13 March 2017 when the millionth kilowatt hour of electricity was exported.

Helen has continued with hosting school visits, though at a reduced level. This was due to health and safety concerns expressed by North Yorkshire County Council education department. Working with a consultant from NYCC, these have now been addressed and we have an H&S management system in place.

Two groups of volunteers spent a day each doing practical tasks on the island.

For Heritage Open Day, Field Trip Arts returned to present an interactive outdoor theatre event called Flour Power which attracted 150 people to the island. The HandleBards Shakespearean group also returned to present A Midsummer's Night Dream outdoors to a sell-out audience, marred only by the rain.

We continued to screen a number of films as part of Cine North. Audiences varied depending on the film.

We offered the mill as a venue for craft course tutors to use if they organised the course. This resulted in fewer, but well attended courses, including yoga classes.

The annual canoe slalom was again well-attended and a very successful and enjoyable weekend.

For the future, the main priority is to get the second screw working. The repaired bearing should be back within the week and will be fitted as soon as practical, depending on river level. Other works need to be finished, in particular getting the screw at the right angle, which will involve excavation in the river bed. School visit bookings are increasing. The visits are free to the school and in some circumstances RHT may be able to subsidise transport costs.

Martin explained that the accounts are not yet complete, but gave some provisional figures on income and expenditure. It was good year for electricity sales due to the favourable river level and gross income was about £43,000. After deduction of costs, net income was £35,000. This money has not been transferred to RHT but went towards the cost of the second screw. As a result, only £81,000 of a budget of £140,000 for the second screw has been borrowed. The major items of expenditure totalling £16,000 were education visits, book-keeping, insurance, a new fire alarm panel, and a professional valuation of the whole project demanded by the Charity Bank for a loan application, which was subsequently rejected. All expenditure was met from funds already in the RHT account.

## **5. Election of trustees**

There were no new nominations for trustees, though RHT would welcome new trustees coming forward. Three current trustees have completed their three year term and stood for re-election. Paul Lister, Mel Fox and Martin Phillips were all re-elected for a further term.

## **6. Any other business**

Bruce Skinner asked if there was any progress on the stone sundial, a topic he had raised the previous year. Helen replied that it was included in her first grant enquiry to HLF, which was rejected, with comments on how to improve it. She will be submitting another enquiry.

There was a suggestion to show films, for instance wildlife films, in the afternoon. This would be practical on the same weekend as a feature film showing when the equipment was set up.. All films shown publicly have to pay for a licence fee, which is at least £120.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

The next AGM will be held on Saturday 11 May 2019 at the mill. A suggestion of changing the financial year so that the AGM occurred in summer and might attract more people will be considered.

Helen Spring then gave a short presentation about her activities with school groups and showed two short videos taken by one of the parents from a home schooled group. She also demonstrated some of the equipment she uses with pupils.