

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Renewable Heritage Trust held on 10 October 2020 via video conferencing**

**Present:** Trustees Mel Fox (c), Dave Mann, Martin Phillips, education officer Helen Spring and three friends.

**1. Apologies** Will Brown, Val Hood, Paul Lister.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last AGM held on 13 April 2019 were accepted.

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

There were no matters arising.

**4. Trustees' annual report**

Mel Fox welcomed everyone to the AGM. The AGM has been delayed from April due to the lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and is being held by video conferencing due to restrictions on numbers meeting. The year being reported runs from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019. Howsham Mill remains is the only site that RHT is concerned with.

During the period both screws and the waterwheel operated satisfactorily. River levels were favourable for electricity generation and output was up 44% on the previous year at 310,000 kWh.

Environmental education continued to be the main activity with 913 primary pupils in 20 school groups attending. RHT was pleased to welcome a group of children from the Chernobyl area who are hosted for a holiday each year by a North Yorkshire charity. There were also about 60 students from local colleges and York University who came to learn about various aspects of the project.

Cine North screenings did not continue during 2019 due to poor and variable attendance. However, if a local group wishes to start a cinema club, the mill could host it. The mill has provided volunteering opportunities and Mel thanked those volunteer guides present, who each provide a different take on the story of the mill.

Once again, the mill took part in the national Heritage Open Day, which was well supported by people who would not usually come to the mill. In total, about 600 people attended organised events, with many more casual visitors on Sundays.

Dave gave a summary of the hydro performance. There are still items of screw 2 that need to be sorted out. As the fish pass has not been installed by the EA, we have not been able to get the screw positioned at the correct angle or the gabion wall secured. The wire mesh over the screw also needs to be improved. This work may have to be done ourselves. The owner and occupant of the Hall have approached us to see if we would supply them directly with electricity. It would be at a price less than retail but higher than wholesale, benefitting both parties financially, and giving the Hall a green

tag. We would have to install the cable and make the connections. A contract has not yet been signed.

Helen showed a PowerPoint presentation of her education activities. During the period there were plenty of school visits. Terrington Hall was a regular. Several local school groups came, some from York and a large contingent from a school in Leeds that came in three groups. There has been lots of positive feedback, including thank-you letters from children. The home-schooled group came regularly each month through the year. Occasional groups included Beavers and Guides. Gary has been leading monthly days for older home-schooled children, concentrating more on bushcraft. The lockdown stopped all school visits. Terrington Hall has since returned, but not other schools to date. Hopefully this will change. Helen tried to set up some activities on the island for individual families to do using Facebook and QR codes directing to various activities. These were of limited success. A postponed polar science day, for which Helen is a polar ambassador, did finally take place in the summer holidays in smaller than usual groups. Mel thanked Helen for all her efforts.

Martin summarised the financial position. During the period, two factors affected the accounts. The first was the priority to repay the loans for the second screw as quickly as possible to minimise interest payments. The second was the liquidation of Solarplicity in August 2019 following many months of uncertainty when FIT money and export payments were only partially paid. Consequently gross income to HPC, the trading arm of the project, was 27% less than the previous year at £51,402, despite a 44% increase in electricity generation. Cost of production was a third higher at £2826. Income passed to RHT was the minimum to pay the major items of rent, cost of the education visits and other events, maintenance and insurance. The loans for the second screw have this month been repaid in full. The total cost was £146,000 including financing. This was less than the budgeted amount. The modifications mentioned by Dave will be additional.

All the outstanding FIT payments not paid by Solarplicity have now been received under a compensation scheme paid by Ofgem, but not the export payments which will probably have to be written off. The accountant has advised that these late payments will be in the accounting year they are made, not accrued to previous years. However, Martin will check this again.

## **5. Election of trustees**

Four trustees have completed their three-year term. John Renel is standing down. Dave, Val and Will offered themselves for re-election and were duly elected. There were no new nominations, though RHT would welcome new trustees coming forward.

## **6. Any other business**

Tracey Ostle thanked the trust for allowing her and her partner Mark, to camp on the island recently and complimented RHT on its achievements. Mark is a roofer and noticed some possible repairs needed, which he offered to do as a volunteer.

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

The next AGM will be held on Saturday 17 April 2021 2pm at the mill if possible, or by video conference.