

Bunbury Mill Annual General Meeting

31/7/25

Present:

Grahame Shallcross - Chair
Neil Fowkes. - Treasurer
Clare Groves. - Secretary
Michael Thomas. - Trustee
Ann Wall. - Trustee
Polly Booker. - Trustee

Mike Watson
Hilary Watson
Julie Fowkes
Carol Clowes
Kenny Anderson
Richard Langley
Christine Bond
Judy Gray
Barry Menzies
Julie Menzies
Paul Booker

Chairman's Report:

- First AGM for some years
- The aim of the AGM is to disseminate information about the mill.
- The mill operates within the framework of the Charities Commission, and all its policies and procedures are based on the guidance issued by the Commission. It is overseen by seven trustees, but the success of the charity is entirely thanks to commitment of its volunteers.

The Chair offered a huge vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Ken Broster and to the outgoing secretary Philip Sandbach and retiring trustees; Judy Gray and Vanessa Greenbury.

- 1) **Mill buildings:** Thanks to the guides and millers for keeping the story alive, and to Kenny Anderson, Mike Watson and Polly Booker for preparing the detailed scope of work for the repair of the leaking pentrough which is due to take place this autumn. Thanks due to Michael Thomas and his team who have painted the ceiling inside the mill this summer.
- 2) **Education:** A huge vote of thanks to Ann Wall, who has been overseeing the educational visits for 14 years. As well as shepherding the year 1 children, Ann and her team introduced a scout troop to the delights of the mill this year. The scouts leader left a very positive review of the experience in the visitor book.
- 3) **Garden:** This year, Carol Clowes personalised the garden zones and allocated volunteers to their areas. This seems to have been a great success. The grounds are looking wonderful. New innovations include a compost and fire pit area; the extension of the path to create a circular track around the upper garden, new benches, the duck house which attracted nesting birds, and improvements to the area in front of the visitor centre and the creation of the stepped area to the back lawn. Ken Broster has been instrumental in persuading United utilities to cut back trees, repair a leak in the tunnel under the road and repair the damage to the car park island. He has also made the police aware of the use of the white garden for illicit drug parties.
- 4) **Visitor centre:** Thanks to Julie Fowkes who has kept the visitor centre running with her volunteers rota and sorting out the cake supply. Julie was also responsible for the new wall

display 'Bunbury Mill through Time'. The kitchen area and reception desk are new additions over the last couple of years and have greatly enhanced the visitor centre. A new Wifi booster has been installed and should improve the electronic till facility.

- 5) **Publicity:** The challenge has been to maintain visitor numbers and a lot of work goes into the social media for the mill. Carol Clowes noted that recent leaflet drops around Alraham bought in new visitors, and are definitely worth doing further afield. The Mill's display tent has been to four shows this year – Church Fete at Beeston, Bunbury Village Day, Tarporley Carnival and the Nantwich Show. The chair thanked Richard Langley, Judy Grey and Peter Jones for all of the set ups and clear downs together with all of the volunteers who had helped to man the tent. The changing of the charging structure to allow the kids to come in for free was thought to be a success. The mill has been featured on the front page of The Link this year, and also in My Village, and Tarporley Talk. Private hire to local groups also generates traffic on their social media. Rain and Shine Theatre group gave two performances this year, donating some of their profits to the mill, but also generating publicity for the mill. The chair thanked Judy for all her hard work with Rain and Shine. **Judy noted that the 2026 Rain or Shine will be on January 10th.** Michael and Ann have helped to curate a display about the mill at the Nantwich Museum this summer. Visitor numbers have been steady compared to last year.

Going Forward:

The Chair wants to inaugurate a rolling plan to cover improvements/maintenance issues across the whole mill site, which can be visible to all so that it is clear what is happening behind the scenes. Kenny Anderson and Mike Watson have already started a list of repairs/projects required to the mill and visitor centre. Grahame asked all to consider how and where the rolling plan could be developed, maintained and best made visible to all volunteers.

Other items identified have been added to the next Trustee meeting for review and progress:

Work needs to be done on new volunteer induction.

The employment of a cleaner will be considered.

The minutes of the trustees meeting should perhaps be made available to all volunteers.

A "Summer at the Mill 2026" event is at its germinal stage.

Signage for the car park and the road entrance is also under discussion. Rachel Davies might be able to help paint the road signage, and Mike Watson suggested using a spare mill wheel as a feature. The council might need to be involved.

The end of season volunteers bash is scheduled for November

Kenny Anderson proposed a round of applause for our new Chair.

Financial Report - Neil Fowkes

Financial year runs April to April.

The Treasurer noted that the cash in hand has reduced slightly over the past few years but this is because of the cost of maintenance and external groundworks. The highest outlay is the annual insurance, which was £3,000 this year.

The visitor numbers have been steady, with a very slight increase. The most lucrative income stream has been hiring out the visitor centre. School visits have decreased, because of the cost of

transport. Rise and Shine Theatre group donate 30% of ticket revenue, which is divided between the venue and the mill.

Large amounts of cash have been reserved in case of maintenance issues. The pentrough repair will require around £5,000 this year.

Grahame offered Neil a vote of thanks for all his hard work.

From the Floor:

Judy asked if the mill has applied for a charitable donation from the co-op administered by Rose. Neil will chase this up.

There was some discussion around reinstating Father Christmas this year with Barry Percival, perhaps on a Saturday and Sunday afternoon with pre-booked tickets, and a free book (not sweets) for every child.

Richard noted that there is some interest in Educational visits for mentally handicapped adults.

The need for a clear pricing structure was noted - perhaps a basic price can be agreed and then if a visit is tailored, extras can be clearly priced. This structure needs to be easily accessible for the volunteers at the front desk..

Mike asked if VAT can be reclaimed on projects, but Neil pointed out that we are not registered for VAT since our turnover isn't big enough. There would be some disadvantages to being VAT registered, not least the paperwork.

Mike also asked if the ticket price would be raised in line with inflation next year. Neil said it probably would, but the current pricing seems to work currently.

Ann pointed out that those with grandchildren might like to consider the Nantwich museum science workshops on colour on Wednesdays and Thursdays in August.

Michael asked those with friends or family in business to sponsor a bucket using his form. This provides a tax efficient gift on an annual basis but needs to be chased up every year.

CJG 31st July 2025