



Minutes of the Autumn Meeting of the Traditional Cornmillers Guild held at Avoncroft Windmill, Worcestershire, on Saturday 2nd November 2019.

Awaiting photo from Michael

Prior to the Meeting members looked around Avoncroft Windmill where they were welcomed by Michael Skoda, Robert Cholmondley, Rodney Crompton and Johan Vanderstelt

	<i>Action by</i>
<p>1. Roll Call & Welcome</p> <p>Jenny Hartland, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Michael Skoda and his team at Avoncroft for hosting the meeting and arranging a delicious lunch and refreshments.</p> <p>Present: Jenny Hartland – Holgate Windmill - Chair Rosy Hunt– Holgate Windmill Dave Pearce – Wicken Village Windmill - Hon Treasurer Charles Howell – Offley watermill Nigel Moon – Whissendine Windmill Simon Dodd – Worsbrough Mill – Hon Secretary Charlotte Addams – Worsbrough Mill Andy and Anne Parry – Felin Ganol Michael Skoda – Avoncroft Windmill Roy – Avoncroft Windmill Rob – Avoncroft Windmill Dave – Avoncroft Windmill Alisa Crawford - De Zwaan Windmill Island, Michigan, USA – Guest</p>	
<p>2. Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Received from: Richard Deacon – Mill Green Watermill Volunteers – Heage Windmill Jon Cook – Prior's Windmill Dave Harris-Jones – Heatherslaw Watermill – Vice-Chairman Alan Eccleston – Heage Windmill Alan Gifford – Heage Windmill John Bedington – Associate Mike Lovatt – Stanway Watermill David Howell – Offley Watermill – Chairman Nick Jones – Hon Secretary Karl Grevatt – Charlecote Watermill Michael Shaw – Golspie Watermill</p>	

<p>Peter Stobbart – Pakenham Watermill James Waterfield and Richard Pennington – Maud Foster Mill Mandy James – Redbournbury Emma Hall – Y Felin Watermill Lucy Hockley – Lurgashall Watermill Michael Stoate – Cann Mills Phil and Cheryl Harrison – Little Salkeld Watermill Peter Ellis – Associate Sandra and Richard Harte – Alderholt Watermill Ian Ansell – Sibsey Trader Windmill Michelle Thurlow - Letheringsett Watermill Barry and Patti Partridge – Associates Geoff Dees – Associate Carol Rigby – Associate Steve French – Burcott Mill Issy Grieve – Barony Mill Paul Wyman – Tuxford Mill Chris Wright – Otterton Mill</p> <p>For the record, the Secretary didn't receive replies from the following Members and Associates:</p> <p>Calbourne Mill, Claybrooke Mill, Paul Marriott, Desna Greenhow, Derek Hosken, Five Sailed Mill.</p>	
<p>3. Signing of the Minutes</p> <p>One amendment was made with Elwyn Davies of Wicken Village Windmill being added to those who were present at the meeting.</p> <p>The secretary will amend the Minutes of the Spring 2019 AGM and the Chair will sign them as a true and accurate record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>4. Matters Arising From Secretary's Report: Folic Acid fortification – see item 5 below.</p>	
<p>Talk by Alisa Crawford – De Zwaan Windmill Island, Michigan, USA Alisa passed on warm wishes from Dutch millers (AKG) and from US millers. She talked about how UNESCO has placed "Miller" on a list of intangible heritage and drew our attention to an international conference in June (18-20) 2020 to be held in the vicinity and surroundings of "de Zaanse Schans" just north of Amsterdam. Further details can be obtained from the secretary. Alisa went on to give a very interesting talk about De Zwaan windmill which was sent to the US in 1964 from The Netherlands and which she has managed to get listed on the US's National Register of Historic Places allowing her to access federal funds for repairs. The windmill received over 126000 visitors last year and is open from April to October with the off-season given over to maintenance.</p>	
<p>5. Folic Acid Campaign Update</p> <p>The committee thanked all members for their work on the campaign. Member mills have handed out fliers, spoken to the public and written to MPs and other influential persons. A number of members have forwarded the received replies to the secretary and these will be passed onto Nick Jones for posting on the website.</p> <p>In particular the committee wants to thank Jon Cook and Nick Jones for their work preparing the information for mills to use, template letters for members, and for the public, to send to MPs and drawing together the Guild's response. Jon has raised our concerns with Historic England and this has resulted in a very positive letter of support</p>	

(attached to these minutes). In addition he has the prospect of a meeting with the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care where he will be able to, amongst other things, present our 38 Degrees petition which reached 4000 signatories.

Dave Harris Jones attended a meeting in Edinburgh hosted by the Scottish Government. Here's his report on the meeting.

"It was a small group which was disappointing but maybe to our advantage and gave us more of a say/influence because we did turn up.

Cat Hay - Food and Drink Scotland

Sam McKeown- Food Standards Scotland

Kimberley (Kimi) Scottish government.

and myself.

The Scottish government are now looking at all the replies to the consultation and developing a policy plan to move forward. They aim to publish their viewpoint and next steps within 4 weeks, and to publish a response to consultancy in 12 weeks. If it is decided to go ahead the aim would be to pass regulation/legislation within 12 months and then compliance to begin in approx 3 years.

My gut feelings, having been in the meeting and reading between the lines, are that wholemeal flour will be exempted based on the definition in the current regulations, but not sure if this was wholemeal across the board or just in small mills I argued strongly that as many of us also sieve flour for blends and dress to make white flour and that this is an important income source the exemption would need to cover this as well, given the issue of safe addition, physically and financially for traditional mills. There is also an issue re: gluten-free flour as often this is blended at a different site/different business to the people who were responsible for the milling of the ingredients (often abroad) etc.

Voluntary fortification is not likely to be affected (i.e Kelloggs fortifying special K) as it is thought unlikely that this could lead to an overdose and it was also suggested quite ironically that those who are pregnant or likely to get pregnant would also still be advised to take supplements?

Exemption is definitely being discussed, it was suggested that this could be based on either turnover or numbers of staff not by weight which also seemed a bit backward to me especially given the fact that industrial milling is actually really low in terms of workforce.

Having had time afterwards to digest the meeting I have sent Kimberley a response that clearly states once again our views. There is also the possibility that if this is dropped UK wide which was also discussed then the Scottish government may then also push ahead with it, or may do so at a faster timescale than the rest of the UK. Cat Hay from Food and Drink Scotland also voiced her concerns for small millers involved in other ingredient milling in Scotland."

6. Applications to join the Guild

Crakehall Watermill – Lionel Green and Alison Barnes

Jenny Hartland read out the below report on the visit she and Simon Dodd paid to Crakehall. Those at the meeting granted the application for guild membership.

Warwick Bridge – Cultura Trust

Simon had received their application but, on reading the membership criteria, the Cultura Trust decided that they were not yet at the required production stage and so would contact the guild when they felt they met that particular criterion.

Clencher's Mill – James Hervey-Bathurst

Simon had received an application but, on reading the membership criteria, James replied that the mill was not quite ready being only seasonal millers due to water restrictions.

<p><i>Calborne Mill</i> Past members – Simon to enquire as to whether they wish to re-join. (A)</p>	SD
<p>Members present suggested contacting Oldland Post Mill in Sussex, Sarehole Mill in Birmingham and National Trust mills to try to increase membership (A)</p>	SD
<p>7. Treasurer's Report Dave Pearce reported that virtually all subscription requests have been sent out. It is increasingly difficult to collect subscriptions as the guild account no longer allows bank transfers. Dave is looking at alternative accounts so that this issue can be resolved. (A)</p>	DP
<p>8. Members Reports Members attending the Meeting reported as follows: <i>Wicken Fen</i> – currently supporting two other mills <i>Holgate</i> – <i>Offley</i> – current production is around 4 tonnes per week, mostly for chapatti flour. Also doing millwrighting work. <i>Whissendine</i> – soldiering on, flour production stable. Aiming for new sail in spring. <i>Avoncroft</i> – the windshaft is scraping at the sprattlebeam. Rot has been detected in the weatherbeam underneath the front-bearing. So currently affecting production. <i>Felin Ganol</i> – <i>Worsbrough</i> – increased sales mainly due to Instagram account. Hopefully production will be more than previous years, aiming at 18 tonnes total.</p> <p>The following members who were unable to be present sent in reports :</p> <p><i>Sibsey Trader Windmill (Ian Ansell)</i> We are about to commence the long-awaited major restoration project. The cap is to be removed as the first stage of the planned works. Repairs to the tower will commence in spring. We are still continuing to function as a business and remain open. Our flour is still produced by horizontal stones etc.-but not in our mill. The last four years have been very difficult for us as the mill has been out of action. Since the sails were removed for safety in early 2018, the visitor and tea room turnover has reduced drastically as would be expected. The flour sales have been better than expected. We now look forward to the completion of the project (realistically within 2 years) and put the problems arising from 2001/2 behind us at last.</p> <p><i>Pakenham Water Mill (Peter Stobbart)</i> We have milled 6 tonnes of locally sourced wheat, mainly wholemeal flour and some spelt. The mill machinery is in good order performing well. The mill grounds and orchard are well tended and the tea room always busy with visitors. Flour sales and visitor numbers have improve a little over last year.</p> <p><i>Charlecote Mill (Karl Grevatt)</i> The mill has generally had a very good year, sales have stayed strong and I've milled about 85 tons in total. The demand for white flour has continue to grow and is at the point where I'm trying not to take on any more large customers, (I feel sorry for the poor dresser and volunteers who are feeding it on loop!) Chapatti wholemeal flour is still the main market for me and I've recently had a flurry of new customers finding the mill. The end of the public open season saw the total number of visitors as 927, which is slightly down on the previous year but still quite healthy. With the turbulent weather we've had more recently it highlighted some weak spots in the roof and I did need to rely on a couple of buckets for a brief period, but I'm pleased to say I've had a chap & cherrypicker in and the holes have been repaired and the mill is water tight again (for now). Over the last couple of months the river levels of the Avon have been all over the place</p>	

<p>and I've lost over two weeks of production so far. I am managing to keep up with demand and not disappointing my customers but only just. This has allowed me the time to give both waterwheels a lot of love and they have had new starts & paddles where needed and are both complete and running well.</p> <p>Finally, I've just started milling this years harvest which seems to be milling and performing well. I'm still on Crusoe which my customers seem to really like. The hagberg was slightly down, but well within tolerance, and the moisture was slightly up. I was initially concerned that the wheat may stick in the stones but so far hasn't been an issue and it's producing a very nice flour. I do have concerns for next year as the farmers I use haven't been able to get the seed into the ground. Fingers crossed for some drier weather very soon!</p> <p><i>Fosters Mill (Jonathan Cook)</i></p> <p>We've had a crazy summer and autumn, customer orders did not quieten down for us and the autumn has been unusually busy. Wheat purchasing from the 2019 harvest has been interesting with all our usual farms not offering viable parcels of organic wheat. However, we've at last sourced a good crop for the coming year. This autumn we will be experimenting with bulk delivery to the mill and blowing cleaned & dried wheat into the mill wheat bins – thus avoiding 25kg sacks at least for milling wheat.</p> <p>Maintenance wise, we managed to complete most of our planned external sail painting before the autumn rain arrived, we also sorted nagging issues with one of sets of millstones on the wind – reminded me of the importance of keeping stonnut teeth in good condition given that so many vibration issues emanate from them. Also, the importance of maintaining a good depth and width of swallow on the runner stone.</p> <p>If anyone is looking at digitising their stock management or setting up an EPOS system (Electronic Point of Sale) – tracking what products you are selling and numbers of each product, I can recommend iZettle – it is a free app / product you can download, plus add on credit card / debit card payment facility, till, receipt printer etc.. We are finding this resource really useful, especially maintaining records for organic certification.</p>	
<p>9. Publicity and Social Media Item moved to future meeting – to be decided by committee (A)</p>	<p><i>Comm</i></p>
<p>10. Correspondence Received details of SPAB course for millwrights (A)</p>	<p><i>SD</i></p>
<p>Email from Sue Raven at Blackwood Mill wanting advice on how to move towards production. Charles offered to get in touch. Simon to send contact details (A)</p>	<p><i>SD</i></p>
<p>11. Tour of NE France and Belgium April 2021 Deposits due by November 9th. Aiming for 19/20 participants.</p>	
<p>12. Any other business Discussion about how mills increase sales (from Michael's team) – social media (Instagram is good for bakers) and range of bag sizes,</p>	
<p>13. Future meeting dates and venue probably at Wicken Fen – date tbc</p>	<p><i>SD</i></p>

NB Follow-up Actions = A