



**Minutes of the Spring Meeting of the Traditional Cornmillers Guild
held via Zoom on Wednesday 11th May 2022.**

	<i>Action by</i>
<p>Welcome</p> <p>Simon Dodd, Treasurer, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Present:</p> <p>Simon Dodd (SD) – Worsborough Mill – Hon Treasurer Lesley Jones (LJ) – Holgate Windmill- Secretary</p> <p>Alan Gifford (AG)-Heage Windmill Alex Popovic (AP) – Mill Green Museum and Mill Andy and Anne Parry (AndP and AnnP) - Felin Ganol Watermill Bob Price (BP)- Acorn Bank Watermill Chris Wright (CW) Otterton Mill David Eddershaw (DE) - Pakenham Windmill Elwyn Davies (ED) - Wicken Windmill Graham Hackney (GH) - Wicken Windmill John Ward (JW) – Heage Windmill John Beddington (JB) - Honorary Life Member Jonathan Cook (JC) – Fosters Mill Lionel Green (LG) – Crakehall Watermill Lisa Harris (LH) - Food Museum (Alton Watermill) Mandy James (MJ) – Redbournbury Watermill Mike Lovatt (ML) – Stanway Watermill Mildred Cookson (MC) - Honorary Life Member Nick Jones (NJ) - Honorary Life Member Paul Wyman (PW) – Tuxford Windmill Peter Stobbart (PS) - Pakenham Watermill Richard and Sandra Harte (RH and SH) - Alderholt Watermill</p> <p>Apologies</p> <p>Barry Flannagan – Burton Mill Chery and Phil Harrison – Little Salkeld Dave Howell – Offley Mill Debra Riddell – Warwick Bridge Corn Mill Ed Hall – Layham Watermill James Waterfield - Maud Foster Windmill Jonathan Wheeler - Bardwell Mill Karl Grevatt – Charlecote Watermill</p>	

Matters Arising

- Next Craft of the Miller Conference takes place on 2nd June, details already circulated
- Welcoming of new members. The protocol of admitting mills to full membership was not adhered to at the last meeting. The members formally agreed that the following 2 mills should become full members Acorn Bank and Warwick Bridge Corn Mill
- Honorary Life Members LJ has contacted Desna Greenhow and the family of Derek Hoskins and both honoured to be appointed Honorary Life Members.
- TCMG hessian bags and recipe books are now at Worsborough. Bags come in boxes of 35 and cost £77 a box. 5 or 6 boxes of recipe books left. Contact Simon Dodd if you want any.

Appointment of new Chair

Jonathan Cook has put his name forward as willing to stand as Chair. Proposed by Dave Howell, seconded by Mildred Cookson. JC now took over the running of the meeting.

He initially gave a vision of where the Guild should be going over the next few years.

"I've been part of the Guild for 23 years, and in that time held both the positions of Secretary and Chairman and I'm pleased I can offer further time / energy to help move the Guild forward.

I want to thank Jenny Hartland for her hard work as Chair, equally thank & recognise the work that Dave H-J, Simon & Lesley are doing in their respective roles.

I'm very aware of the limited time everyone has and that to do anything these days requires time, energy and commitment.

Over the years I've recognised that Chairing the Guild is a complex task:

- Different members and associates have different needs and expectations
- There have been some long-standing questions and challenges surrounding our set up and constitution
- The market we serve is becoming both more exciting and equally more challenging in equal measure
- We are entering a particularly challenging period due to inflation and the impact of the war in Ukraine and that is on top of ongoing repercussions from the Covid period:
 - Grain prices
 - Customer financial concerns / worries
 - Unpredictable visitor numbers
 - The need to open up new routes to market through social media and "new" channels
 - Legislation – folic acid
 - Competition from "stone mills" and the establishment of local grain networks – we're not the only kids on the block milling stoneground flour anymore!

Our current production data suggests that most mills are producing less flour than a few years ago, although some are producing significantly more which is great news!

We've made and need to continue to make some decisions to clarify the role we play as a Guild, what we offer each other, how we admit members and how we uphold standards.

My conclusion reflecting on where we've come from and the road that lies ahead is that learning from each other remains key to our raison d'être (reason for existing). I learned an immense amount from Guild members when I began milling and I continue to do so.

Training in my view, in all its forms, needs to form a bedrock of our activities – whether it's calling a colleague for advice, talking at a Guild meeting or joining a more structured training session. I am very aware of the loss of expertise within our industry in the last 23 years – there are now fewer experienced millers and many of the milling families who were once part of the Guild are no longer with us. Equally, we need to share the learning and understanding that exists amongst our members. We urgently need to create a future for people entering our industry, to bring more young people in as apprentices, equally to give confidence to our volunteers who make milling / working in a mill their 2nd or 3rd career!

We've made great strides in recent years in building a truly international network through the Craft of the Miller and other initiatives and this is already paying dividends in information sharing, ideas and support.

I want the next few years to see the launch of our training offering, probably staged so that we don't bite off more than we can chew. Through training we build confidence in our teams, we improve safety, we better manage risk and critically, we continue to deliver a great product to our customers.

We are not a club, we are group of artisanal millers who make, or aspire to make first rate products using mainly historic machinery and buildings, keeping a centuries old tradition alive and evolving.

To do this, our committee is going to need more support and input from members. My challenge to everyone is to ask each one of you to identify an additional way you can get involved and mutually help advance our agenda. We've all got a choice! Sit back and watch the skills, learning, experience and management of our mills which were rescued by our predecessors between 1940 and 1990 wither away **or get involved, offer some time and bring the Guild alive.**

I will be asking each one of you what you can offer as the Committee maps out a plan.

Treasurer's report -Presented by SD

Accounts were sent out prior to the meeting.

The Guild in a healthy state financially.

Subscriptions will be sent out shortly. Thank you to everyone who had been paid by BACS and SD will send letters out for missing subscriptions.

LJ to email members to ask if anyone else wants to receive the newsletter.

<p>Food and Health Forum Subscription paid after the date of the accounts. JW asked cost - £400.</p> <p>JC suggests continue subscription for another year and then to access if expenditure is appropriate.</p> <p>MC asked what “clout” the Forum have within the Folic Acid debate. JC explained that through the newsletter we get quicker insight into questions asked in Parliament.</p> <p>MC asked if Guild contributes to the Forum. JC and NJ attended meeting and send comments on items raised.</p>	
<p>Secretary’s report Presented by LJ</p> <p>As usual during the last 6 months we have had our usual requests about everything to do with milling and flour including a research project from a lady at Edinburgh university to a student wants flour to make brownies for an online business to definitions of milling terms, however the most important thing as far as I am concerned is when members contact me to request help or advice how many of you reply. I know I appreciate your support as do the members who ned advice/help.</p> <p>Burton Mill in West Sussex has approached us and is currently an associate member awaiting inspection</p> <p>On a sadder note, we had an email about Pat Naismith who was always at these meetings and a great supporter of the Guild to say she had had a really bad stroke from which it was unlikely she would ever live independently again but I feel that it should be minuted that we have appreciated all her support over the years.</p>	
<p>Folic Acid</p> <p>Update sent out prior to the meeting.</p> <p>JW Asked what Creta Plus was. JC Creta Plus or Creta Praeparata is the combination of vitamins and minerals which by law is required to be added to white flour. Trading standards officers on their visits, test flour to make sure it has been added in the correct proportion. The frequency of visits by Trading Standards Offices varies depending on where you are situated. Core argument for exemption is that mills do not have machinery etc to add small/correct proportions to flour. NJ The issue of adding Creta Plus is to calibrate the amount added and then to guarantee in even spread.</p> <p>MC asked how many members of the public ask about the addition of Folic Acid. PW asked if 100% wholemeal needed to have additives. JC Only needs adding where flour does not meet the minimal compositional standard but wholemeal does meet those standards so no additives are needed. PW Many of his customers ask if there are additives in the flour.</p> <p>AG - Any negative side effects. JC Medical view not any significant risks</p> <p>JC - Application for exemption well received</p> <p>ED - Asked if anyone was testing as the cost seems expensive. SD Training Standards check additives in flour and report back and assumes we will not be responsible for testing in the future. JC Proposals are that Folic Acid will be added to Creta Plus in the correct proportion JW</p>	

<p>reiterated that you can test for Folic Acid but the cost would be excessive to make sure it is in the correct proportion. Suggests that when they do test they will test for calcium levels and if these are in the correct proportion the other additives will also be there. SD The reports from Trading Standards do report on all additives.</p> <p>DE - Does Folic Acid addition only apply to wheat flour? JC As the proposal is to include with Creta Plus then there will be no need for additions to wholemeal rye and wholemeal spelt.</p> <p>AG - Thanked JC for all his work.</p>	
<p>Training Scheme</p> <p>Update sent out prior to the meeting.</p> <p>JC Thanked GH for help of training in regards to Health and Safety. It has also been useful to look at Dutch Guilds competencies and recording hours. Training proposed to complement what is already happening in individual mills rather than replace it.</p> <p>NJ Are NVQ qualifications envisaged? JC Advice is to get course up and running and then talk to City and Guilds and other potential verification bodies. Vision is that over time some people will want to train or be trained to build levels of skill to ensure mills are running more efficient, we are producing a better product and mills are repaired and maintained so they will continue into the future.</p>	
<p>Website and Social Media</p> <p>LJ suggested the website could possibly be updated and more use be made of social media to promote the Guild and events.</p> <p>NJ How many mills have their own website? Websites old fashioned and if Guild is to move to the times we need to use social media.</p> <p>MC asked how many people go into the site. NJ Provided the following information: - monthly average is 1000 views per month, and 500 visitors. April 2020 however there were 8273 views and 3934 visitors.</p> <p>SD We are looking at who hosts the website and then it is a chance to look at website and social mill. Instagram is a good way of advertising as more foody "posts". The problem with a website is keeping it up to date.</p> <p>JC suggested setting up a working group.</p>	<p><i>LJ To send out an invite to mills using social media to set up a working group. Remit to include the hosting of the website</i></p>
<p>Constitution</p> <p>Suggested additions to the Constitution sent out prior to the meeting</p> <p>MC What happens when a mill changes hands? JC They should be reinspected. LJ Pointed out the Mill is the member.</p> <p>JB The Mill is not a legal entity. Originally it was the person who was the member of the Guild so if the mill changed hands the membership lapsed. It must be considered that mills have a different number of owner structures e.g. local authority, individuals, trusts etc</p>	

<p>BP -The management system should be the same entity.</p> <p>JC – Proposal to add a clause " At the point the mill changes hands there should be a new inspection". SD If the Council owns the mill it will never change hands but suggested there should be a named person.</p> <p>PW - A Guild is an association of crafts people not entities. The member should be a person. The person, if a Guild member could then work at multiple mills. It is also right the mill is a member by association and the Guild should work with as many mills as possible. JB Could have several members per mill. PW felt it was positive to have several members at each mill.</p> <p>JC - Once there is a training scheme and a way to recognise a level of proficiency, the position PW suggests becomes viable but until then how do we assess the quality of the members? Suggested a short-term solution (several years) that the mill remains the member and quality is assessed through inspection; as more members are qualified by experience or qualification, we can move to a new structure which recognises the miller as the member.</p> <p>JW - At Heage it would be better if the mill was the member as owned by a Trust and there are multiple millers who change over time. PW If all millers were qualified then it is not a problem to have several members at one mill. SD does each miller need to pay a fee? Could there be a separate mills section where each mill pays a fee? If several millers at one mill there could be 1 lead miller who represents the others.</p> <p>JC Having qualified millers is a long-term aspiration. In the short term the fee needs to be associated with the mill and there should be an inspection if changes hands or if lead responsible miller changes. Asked if JB would help on wording on the revised constitution. Need a longer-term discussion on competence of individual millers. Agreed by members.</p> <p>JC - Need a set of assessment criteria. LJ to send out the list sent out prior to the AGM.</p> <p>Constitution to be discussed again at AGM. It was agreed to set up a working group to create a list of inspectors.</p> <p>EW - Under "Objectives" wording could include "To support a set of agreed standards"</p> <p>LJ - Who would carry out inspections? JC Suggested setting up a working group. JW It does not have to be a working miller but someone with experience. NJ pointed out that he would not feel comfortable to giving up to date advice as he has been out of milling for several year</p> <p>JW – Should Inspectors be inspected so working to an agreed standard</p>	<p><i>JC Set up a working group to create a list of inspectors</i></p>
<p>Water Abstraction Charges</p>	<p><i>SD and NJ To set up a</i></p>

<p>NJ Referred to an article in Observer which suggested costs for water abstraction could go up from £150 pa to £15000. Any mill using water could be charged. Are there small-scale hydro schemes that members could use? Should we be encouraging members to generate electricity on a small scale? MC Petition on SPAB website</p> <p>JC Suggest setting up a subgroup to work with the Mills Section Volunteers, MC, NJ happy to be “word smith”. Volunteered to be part of the working group SD, LC, AnnP. SD and NJ to work out terms of reference.</p> <p>LC Agreed to an abstraction licence in 2014 to 2029 for £130 Effecting impound water.</p> <p>EW Had legal advice been taken?</p> <p>AnnP Different regulation in Wales</p>	<p><i>working group to look at this issue</i></p>
<p>Quality of Grain and Availability</p> <p>SD Organic grain prices increasing. Is there any way we can work together as a group? BP - £750 a tonne for next delivery but nothing else on the market with protein levels needed. Last year’s harvest short on protein. JW - Buy bagged grain at £800 a tonne. Another supplier getting grain from Russia.</p> <p>JC Little quality grain left at this time of the year. Grain possibly from Cope Seeds, John Norton</p> <p>JB Bulk buy only done by few mills.</p> <p>JC Reality of moving grain/ storage a problem. Could all struggle between now and next harvest? Likely to stay at £700/£800 a tonne</p> <p>LG -Has had problems with quality of grain. Initially fine but then subsequent deliveries poor quality.</p> <p>JC Set up another session in July to discuss grain quality to what different mills are doing, problems people are having. Wastage also a problem</p>	<p><i>A Zoom session to set up in July to discuss</i></p>
<p>Hessian Sacks</p> <p>MC - Asked about hessian sacks, most people use polypropylene or paper</p>	
<p>JC Thanked everyone for attending the meeting.</p>	