



**Minutes of the Spring Meeting of the Traditional Cornmillers Guild
held via Zoom on Saturday 24th April 2021.**

	<i>Action by</i>
<p>1. Roll Call & Welcome</p> <p>Jenny Hartland, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Present:</p> <p>Jenny Hartland (JH) – Holgate Windmill – Chair Simon Dodd (SD) – Worsbrough Mill – Hon Treasurer Lesley Jones (LJ) – Holgate Windmill- Secretary Alan Gifford (AG) – Heage Windmill Anne Parry (AP) – Felin Ganol Watermill David Eddershaw (DE) – Pakenham Watermill Emma Williams(EW) – Y Felin Watermill Fari and Paul Wyman (FW and PW) – Tuxford Windmill Karl Grevatt (KG) – Charlecote Watermill Jonathan Cook (JC) – Fosters Mill Lionel Green (LG) – Crakehall Watermill Nick Jones (NJ) – Associate Mandy James (MJ) – Redbournbury Watermill Mike Lovatt (ML) – Stanway Watermill Patricia Naismith (PN) – Lurgashall Watermill Peter Stobbart (PS) - Pakenham Watermill Richard Deacon (RD) – Mill Green Museum and Mill Rosy Hunt (RH) – Holgate Windmill</p>	
<p>2. Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Received from:</p> <p>Dave Harris-Jones – Heatherslaw Watermill – Vice-Chair Dave Pearce – Wicken Village Windmill Ian Ansell – Sibsey Trader Windmill James Waterfield - Maud Foster Windmill who let us know his father had died and JH agreed to send a card on behalf of the guild. John Bedington – Associate Mildred Cookson (MC) – Associate</p> <p>For the record, the Secretary didn't receive replies from the following Members: Alderholt Watermill, Avoncroft Windmill, Barony Mill, Burcott Watermill, Cann Mills, Claybrooke Watermill, Golspie Watermill, Letheringsett Watermill, Little Salkeld Watermill, Offley Watermill, Otterton Mill,</p>	

<p>3. Matters Arising</p> <p>Amendments needed to the last minutes for Fosters Mill.</p>	<p><i>JC to send LJ corrections</i></p>
<p>4. Chair's report</p> <p>I have to admit that for me as Chair, the time since our last meeting has been rather quiet. The real work has been done by Lesley as Secretary and Simon as Treasurer. As I'll be saying in my report on Holgate Mill, I find that uncertainty about the future makes it extremely difficult to concentrate, let alone plan for unclear futures. I'm sure I'm not alone.</p> <p>Presented by Jenny Hartland</p>	
<p>5. Treasurer's report</p> <p>We still have the Nationwide bank account and SD has been liaising with Dave Pearce to find a solution and a way of transferring the account over. We are hoping to open a new account with another bank but most banks not accepting new applications. Subscription reminders have not yet gone out. Until we have a new bank account Dave Pearce is still acting as signatory on the account together with JH.</p> <p>Accounts healthy just under £9000 in the account.</p> <p>Presented by Simon Dodd (Please note the new treasurers email address - tcmgtreasurer@gmail.com)</p>	
<p>6. Secretary's report</p> <p>Since our last meeting there have been no new members but we have had a number of enquiries including :-</p> <p>Woodbridge Tide Mill who are producing flour and seem to be fulfilling our membership conditions and</p> <p>Alton Watermill, Stowmarket who are restoring the watermill and want to become associate members.</p> <p>Other enquires have been</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An undershot corn mill in South West Wales who want to get the mill to full working order with a view to having it as a part of our living heritage that is open to the public and also to produce flour. • A man restoring a windmill, unknown location, who wanted help on the use of granite millstones. • We have heard nothing more from Warwick Bridge Watermill near Carlisle in Cumbria and are just waiting for further details of their product range and the history of the mill, as well as some photos. • A lady in Canada doing some research on her families milling roots in Shropshire and wanted to know about the training millers might have received. <p>I sent out a link to a map of mills producing stone-ground flour in Britain and Ireland where the focus was to enable professional and home bakers to find the flour they are looking for.</p> <p>http://www.brockwell-bake.org.uk/mill_map.php</p> <p>Sadly, we heard that Mike Hall of Y Felin had passed away and I sent our condolences to his family on behalf of the guild. We are pleased that Emma his daughter, will be continuing to run the mill.</p> <p>Presented Lesley Jones</p>	<p><i>LJ to send details to EW</i></p>
<p>7. Membership Categories</p>	

<p>At the last meeting that the officers and JC said would look at the whole constitution. The membership categories have been our focus and proposed categories sent out.</p> <p>It is suggested that there will be Mill members and Honorary Life Members</p> <p>Mill membership, would have 2 categories Full Members and Associate Members. Associate Members would be mills waiting to become full members and when inspected and passed our criteria would become full members</p> <p>Honorary Life Members are members who are no longer working at a member mill but have given a great deal of service to the guild. They would pay no fee would have full voting rights and act as advisors and maybe in the future they may be asked to be active in inspections.</p> <p>FW suggested changing terminology so gender neutral., also that it is the Mill that is a member and there is a voting representative for each mill.</p> <p>JC pointed out that associate members could be at that level for years until they reached the level of competence to reach full membership.</p> <p>NJ 4 mills in Cumbria that could come into the Associate mill category. Warwick Bridge Mill, Acorn Bank Mill, Boot Mill, Eskdale and Heron Mill, Beetham.</p> <p>JH possible associate members Woodbridge Tide Mill (Suffolk), Alton Watermill (East Anglia) Warwick Bridge (Carlisle) , Bardwell Windmill (Suffolk), Acorn Bank Mill (Cumbria), Windmill Hill (East Sussex) and Herne Mill (Kent).</p> <p>AG Suggested that mills should not be associates for ever JH said mills should be assessed individually.</p> <p>Membership Fee agreed to remain the same :- Full Members £25 pa and Associate members £15 pa</p> <p>This section of the constitution was proposed by Emma Williams seconded by Alan Gifford and passed by the members.</p>	<p><i>LJ to amend</i></p>
<p>8. Folic Acid & Creta Plus – Jonathan Cook.</p> <p>There has not been a lot of change. JC sent an update a few weeks ago. A question has been raised in the House of Lords. The person who advises the Lords was the person who visited some of the TCMG mills to access our situation. It is possible a decision will be made in the Autumn.</p> <p>MC “Folic Acid seems to have picked up more momentum now (reading the Hansard report Jon sent round). I am sure Jon will back me by saying anything that SPAB can do to further the cause please let me know, I do write monthly for the Milling & Grain magazine which covers the Folic Acid debate regularly, but of course this is concentrating on the larger roller mills who want this.</p> <p>Perhaps an article on the ‘Traditional Mills’ point of view might be considered?”</p> <p>NJ Brought to the members attention the use of glyphosate and has sent this link for members to read an article on its use. https://mailchi.mp/sustainablefoodtrust/news215-720469?e=f0234129d6</p>	
<p>9. Grain Supplies - No serious concerns in sourcing grain</p>	

<p>10. Training Scheme – Jonathan Cook</p> <p>Training millers has becoming an international concern. A training scheme is important to encourage people into the industry but also to have confidence in knowing people can use the machinery etc.</p> <p>JC presented the information on slides- see attached</p> <p>He suggested that there will be a fee involved. He said the qualification will be a badge of confidence.</p> <p>He asked if anyone would volunteer to join a working party. Emma Williams from Y Felin and Karl Grevatt from Charlecote Watermill volunteered.</p> <p>Discussions on :-</p> <p>If there should be 1 qualification or a core and then a watermill qualification and another for windmill. Consensus that there should be 2 qualifications.</p> <p>KG -Should existing millers be expected to take qualifications but JC said that existing millers already have a level of competence so would not be expected to do the qualification. Millers should however be supporting new learners</p> <p>DE - Standards will be daunting for volunteers. JC replied the qualification would be aimed at millers who want to make milling their main profession.</p> <p>JH -Holgate Windmill there is a volunteer experience log which could be shared.</p> <p>JC -Training could be offered through SPAB to other mills. PN suggested an intermediate level qualification for volunteers.</p> <p>FW -bought it to the guilds attention that farms/community groups are buying mock mills to mill grain and a qualification is a big plus to promote TCMG flour.</p> <p>EW -People calling themselves traditional millers but they are milling on electric mills.</p> <p>JC -Dutch have a volunteer and a professional qualification.</p>	<p><i>Anyone volunteering to join the working party to contact JC</i></p>
<p>11. Website Information</p> <p>Could members please have a look at their pages on the TCMG website and if they need updating let LJ have details.</p> <p>Some of the information in the members section may also need updating so if anyone has anything, they think needs adding to this section please let LJ know.</p> <p>The role of membership secretary will now be included in the secretary's role so if there are there are any changes in contacts can they please let LJ know so the contacts list can be kept up to date.</p>	
<p>12. Mill reports focusing on preparing for post Covid management</p> <p>Charlecote There has been a lot of maintenance done over the winter because of flooding but the mill is now running smoothly. Currently milling 2-2½ tonnes a week. Repair work has been done to the windows, painting still to be done. Karl can't see the mill opening in July as there can't be a one-way system and difficult to do social distancing. If the mill did reopen it would have to be by a pre booking</p>	

system but in all likely hood probably not going to open this year and this is roughly 1/3 of the business.

Crakehall Watermill - The demand for flour has dropped away but I have been able to find new customers both in the retail and commercial sectors. The extremely dry weather is my main concern and without the water I cannot produce the flour! I am also looking to reinstate a 2nd pair of stones over the coming weeks – not quite sure of the time scale.

Felin Ganol - Milling has continued busy throughout the autumn and winter, with an overall increase in the volumes we are milling and some new customers. As a tiny mill with limited grain storage capacity, we can't deal with large bulks, so our focus has been on milling individual wheat varieties from small farmers. It's an area we continue to find fascinating... It's also rather fashionable at the moment and seems to have made us attractive to a new wave of specialist bakers and restaurants. Along with Mark Lea who grows some of the grains we mill and Lampeter Bakehouse we are part of a project at Aberystwyth University looking at the nutritional and baking qualities of Hen Gymro wheat (a Welsh landrace wheat). which we're hoping might begin to give us some real evidence about whether the assumption that 'heritage' grains are 'better' are true. We're reliant on water power from a very flashy river so over the last few months we have dealt with both floods which have washed away parts of our weir, and drought which has allowed us to repair it! Ongoing maintenance has included Andy remeshing and adjusting the wire machine which has made a great improvement in its efficiency. We have never attracted large visitor numbers, so being closed over the last year hasn't had much financial impact on us, and although we miss some of the delightful interactions of the school visits, it is quite nice to just get on with milling!

Heage Few changes. Milling on a regular basis. Sales on alternate Saturday morning. Concerns about opening the mill but visitors do make a big contribution to the mill. Team looking at this but will probably be via a booking system.

Heatherslaw - Since we all met in the Autumn it's been a tough year at Heatherslaw, in brief orders have remained at about 150-200% above normal, New webpage on a new Ford and Etal website launched in the autumn with a revamped online purchase system has helped mail orders to stay strong. After the work to replace the bearings at the end of the main shaft and also for feed pipes to the rebuilt grain bins had been completed, I believed I was set for a steady winter, sadly trying to restart after a major flood we discovered internal rot on the waterwheel/pitwheel shaft and basically were bugged. We have reinstated and upgraded an old standby motor as a temporary fix and hope that repairs will enable the wheel to start turning again in 2-3 weeks, although after a few months of standing still I believe the timbers which have dried out will creak groan and be out of balance for a while once moving.

We are also currently seeking a new staff member to cover days off and holidays so anyone who fancies moving up North please let me know!!

Holgate - Milling has settled down to a comfortable level – still above pre-pandemic levels, and with a number of new customers. Saturday shop customers are now allowed into the ground floor/shop area of the mill. Meanwhile, we are currently planning to open the whole mill to visitors in July, aware that there is a lot of clearing up and cleaning to do. We are also planning for a training/refresher day for volunteers and also hoping that some new storage furniture might be in place. It's clear that with so much uncertainty, so much needs to be considered, but not necessarily acted upon until much nearer the time. An awful lot of time and energy can be wasted planning for the unknown.

Lurgashall – Closed from January to end of March. Museum site could open from end of March. Visitors will be on site but can't come into the mill. Hopefully from May 17th allowed to talk to visitors across open gate way but they will not be allowed in the mill Kept all trade and farm shop customers so back to producing at levels before pandemic. Also kept all volunteers although 1 or 2 are not well.

Mill Green Alex Popovic is the new miller but Richard Deacon is still involved. During the first lockdown sales went through the roof sales now steady but expect them to go up when the mill reopens. Not sure how to get into people into the building safely, possibly reopening in September. Refurbishment has been done also have improving exhibits that children can operate.

Need some repairing of underwater brick work. If anyone has any contacts PLEASE get in touch.

Otterton

Pakenham – Closed for a year so lost a lot of flour and tea room sales. Flour sales are beginning to increase so up 20%. Started selling flour from the mill door. Refurbishment seepage of water which has been a problem for a few years has been cured by volunteers and floor now dried out. Sizewell EDF will be doing some repairs to water supply on Pakenham Fenn which will solve another leak.

Planning on reopening possibly in May but certainly by the end of June. Also considering a new visitor centre.

Priors Mill - Market is buoyant and milling is with both wind and electric. A lot being done in the mill including another flour dresser etc. Number of people to the mill quieter over the last few weeks but mail order still busy. Grain supply has been good and exploring new contacts for next year.

Sibsey - We have struggled a bit due to loss off tourism/visitors/tearoom trade. We maintain our flour sales. The mill, as you probably know, is undergoing a major refurbishment. A new cap, sails, kerb are being made, the tower has just been fully scaffolded to facilitate brick work repair and internal works will follow. This has obviously restricted our activities. The pandemic has delayed the project by a year at least.

Stanway – Stanway Estate closed last year and this year so no visitors but have picked up 2 or 3 new trade sales so trade sales picked up and milling about ½ tonne a week but this has taken toll on the mill. Milling for a farmer who produces heritage wheat.

Would be interested if anyone could provide help on how to price this i.e., the cost of milling and bagging.

Tuxford Sales hugely up based on year-on-year sales. Decision not to reopen the tea room probably ever again. This will have an impact on sales but retail sales have been maintained. Supply 25-30 shops and 2/3 bakeries. Loads of demand and can't keep up! Tuxford use one farmer for their grain. Issues in the mill because of volume of milling. Including broken spindle and teeth. Mill extremely busy.

Whissendine - At last with my helpers John and Johan have made a start on the new single sail to replace the one removed in 2019, the wood is all sawn and the new sail back has been delivered to a barn near Worcester where it will be made. Hopefully we will get it up this summer which will allow the doubles to come off as they are coming to the end of their useful life. Also need to do repairs to fantail gears. Flour trade has been very up and down since the spring buying madness in 2020. Thankfully the last few weeks have been able to let visitors in the mill again which is providing a much-needed boost to the income and some of my

closed outlets have reopened. Have had problems of late in getting wheat with a decent protein level have ended up with imported organic wheat.

Wicken Village - All is well at Wicken Mill, as we start to pick up on millwrighting aspects again. The mill has been running very reliably since the start of the December lockdown.

Fortunately, many of our customers have proved very loyal despite the difficulties of fulfilling the COVID precautions.

Worsbrough - During the most recent lockdown we have undertaken a lot of work on the mill machinery and wider site as a result of a Cultural Recovery Fund grant. This means that, when we are able to open to the public, we will have a new visitor centre and retail space. In addition, the onsite café has been able to increase the size of its kitchen and will be implementing a one-way system for customers to go along with the takeaway menu they have operated for the past 12 months.

Inside the mill itself there will be new improved interpretation boards and we are looking at a one-way system and limiting numbers accessing the mill at any one time.

We have recently made the decision to limit our delivery area to within 50 miles of the mill as we were finding it difficult to meet the seemingly ever-increasing demand for our white flour from bakeries that were further afield.

Y Felin - 2021 has started quietly with the orders and frantic requests certainly dropping off. This 3rd lockdown has certainly had an impact on the number of customers calling to buy flour from the mill We have however kept up with a steady supply of wholesale orders although losing all our hospitality orders as I'm sure is the same for all other millers.

We are still unable to allow tours of the mill so have had a few unhappy customers. Most are understanding and are always happy when they can go to see the waterwheel. We are trying to think of ways to improve this situation although with such a confined space (when you take into account the 2-meter social distancing) we are drawing a blank at the moment. I would love to hear what others are doing.

We had some urgent repairs done to the wheel shaft which I'm pleased to say went well. We are still waiting for the wheel arms to be replaced. I'm very pleased to say we have had an oak tree offered to us from a local customer. This is fantastic and we were all set to get going on planking it (the weather is ideal) when our carpenter had a nasty accident with a chisel, so we are having to be patient and just wait!

13. Any Other Business

A. **National Mills Weekend.** Information from MC- "National Mills Weekend will be May 8th and 9th, and still many mills remained closed, although I expect those in the Guild will still be working with Covid restriction still in place.

SPAB is doing a virtual tour of mills over the weekend, and some of the Guild mills are to be included".

KG at Charlecote Watermill has been invited to be part of the weekend but suggested any other mills who want to be involved to contact SPAB.

B. **Craft of the miller conference.** JC There is an outline invite for the UK to organise one of their conferences. JC trying to work out what would be expected from the host country. Each conference has a theme which is not about the mill but about the craft of milling. Greater part of the conference should be productive, include discussion conversation and learning and have action by members. The aim of the conference is for millers to develop their own practise. Might need sponsorship to put in place. If it does take place, it will be a combined event with SPAB.

C. **Next meeting** Dates and details tbc

NB Points to note