



FOXTON INCLINED PLANE TRUST

Minutes of 40th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Thursday 21st SEPTEMBER 2023

Canal Museum, Gumley Road, Foxton, Leicestershire. LE16 7RA

7.15pm for 7.30pm (refreshments provided)

1. Welcome and opening comment from Chairperson –Sean Park

- The last 4 years including 2022 have been challenging for the Trust.
- In 2022 from March to September the operation mostly covered income against expenditure with much of the loss generated in the whole year attributable to off-peak regular expenses (mainly energy & salary costs) and off-peak one-off payments i.e. Insurance, grant payments, energy payment correction.
- Museum takings in 2022 were just over £28,000 and it is pleasing to report this amount has already been exceeded in 2023 such that currently our annual income & expenses for the year are similar. This represents a much welcome improvement from recent years.
- We are obviously aware our main financial challenge is over the period from November through to March when income reduces. The ability to generate to create a reasonable income over this period is vital. The next few weeks will influence how we approach this period and decisions made will impact on the future of the trust.
- 5 new volunteers have joined. This has strengthened the front of house team providing vital visitor engagement. This has enable volunteer specialisation including site tours, grounds care, collection care and social media development.
- New acquisitions primarily funded by benefactors and donations – Chain Survey book and toll book from Grand Junction Canal Company and a personal photographic album belonging to Thomas Milner covering the construction of the boat lift.
- We have created an education group to look at developing materials that support the national curriculum through our collection.
- We have also been showcased on daytime TV programme, Bargain Hunt.
- We are looking to engage more fully with our community through partnerships. We have linked with University of Leicester through their student work placement programme and had our first student Monica volunteer through July and August. She has worked on collection management and care, designing posters and interpretation panels and applying for grants.
- Canal and River Trust remain an important partner. Meetings have been established to realise the potential of the site. Alex Goode the local site manager at Foxton Locks has moved on. A new local management structure has been formed with Janette Warrener who is the Destination and Attraction of



the East Midlands being our main contact for development of Foxton Locks which included glamping pods. Progression on this had stopped due COVID initially and is now on a back burner due to CRT have been focusing on a major project at Stoke Bruerne Museum.

- Canal and River has agreed that we can take site tours onto the Inclined Plane site which we have been doing and have been successful. The site is still closed off to the public and has been for over 3 years. They have also agreed that we are recognised as the history hub of the site.
- We have been working with Foxton Primary School. They are seeking a long term connection with the site. Work with us to develop a wide-ranging curriculum through visits, outreach and online support. This will enable us to engage with all schools within our locality.
- Forward Plan was finalised in January for the museum and the Trust. Key focuses for museum are to become a more vital part of the local community, strength the connection between museum site and the inclined plane.
- Steve Bowyer sent in his thoughts after reading the newsletter which listed the key priorities – Prepare financial projects for the current year and at least next 2 years to understand timings to turn things around. SB's commented that it is critical to look at the whole year, what changes need to put in place to improve and how we need to look at things in more detailed manner. SB's view is that the trust urgently needs a plan of action that is actively managed to secure the long term future of the trust. SB suggested to explore corporate sponsorships. Richard Haywood, who's a fairly new member to the Trust, raised a similar point and talked about a number of organisations who do corporate sponsorships and obviously if we can create the right message for the right company.
- The critical thing about the forward plan is that can have all the wonderful ideas in the world, but if you haven't got the people to take them forward, then you become limited in what you can. How do we attract more volunteers?

2. **Present-** Tess Newman, Mary Matts, Peter Coles, Lynn Jones, Ann Hoxley, Chris Parker, Penny Arscott, Paul Hitchcock, Sean Park

3. **Apologies for absence** – Michael Beech, Steve Bowyer, Giles Parsons, Derek Harris

4. **Minutes of the 39th Annual General Meeting held 20th October 2022.**

- Acceptance proposal - Mary Matts proposed, Peter Coles seconded

5. **Trustees report**

The accounts indicate a deficit of £13,654 compared to the deficit last year of £4,238. As at 31st December 2022 the trust had accumulated reserves of £37,029 which are stated after a retained provision of £10,000 for the Museum Maintenance Fund. The knock on effect of the pandemic and the overall economic climate, especially energy costs has impacted on and in many cases altered peoples spending habits. Key to overcoming this is our ability to raise our profile, our engagement with local and targeted communities and development of joint activities and ventures with major stakeholders; The Canal & River Trust at the top of the list as guardians of the whole Foxton Locks site. Educational development through schools and families is



also high priority. Our updated forward plans encompasses all of the above and extends to major exciting projects being progressed as our short/medium term objectives are achieved.

6. Independent Examiner`s report and adoption of Accounts.

(Information available from the Web-site or by request- please contact the Museum)

- Peter Coles commented that the chair has cover all the points in his opening comment regarding income generation and the deficit.
- Notable in the accounts is the furlough payments. And that was the biggest source that kept the trust alive financially.
- PC offer his personal thanks on to Giles. His job has been made a lot easier that there's no festival which is a time consuming part and similarly for the second year running, PC has been able to reduce his fees just because of the work that Giles has put in.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner – Cedar Accountancy Limited, of Leicester

- Unanimous

8. Election/ re-election of Trustees

a) Retirement by rotation as per the Constitution of the Trust

Mike Beech and Derek Harris. (Both are seeking to be re-elected by the membership)

Re-election of MB - unanimous

Re-election of DH - unanimous

b) Trustees elected by the Council of Management.

None

9. Date and time of next AGM (provisional) - 23rd May 2024

10. Chairperson Summary.

- There are still challenges and still some key decisions to make going forward.
- A substantial adjustment to what we are doing beneficially and there's lots of things in the thought process stage, the part planning stage and the development stage. We've still got an awful lot of work to do.
- We do need to concentrate on getting more active volunteers.
- We do have to look at the additional fundraising opportunities that arise.
- We have to develop further the partnerships and collaborations that we have had and reignite some of the ones that we've had historically.
- We need to look at the concept of corporate sponsorship.