

Ruddington Framework Knitters Museum Ltd
Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting
Thursday 12 November 2020 at 7:30pm

Attendance: Mr Julian Ellis (Chairman), Mrs Faye Stenson, Mr Neville Stankley, Mr Jim Grevatte, Mr Matthew Hamilton, Mr Neil Coupland, Mrs Barbara Harrington, Ms Heather Howard, Ms Anne-Marie Gibson, Ms Lynda Carter, Ms Mary Hawkins, Mr Stuart Botterill

1. Apologies

Mr Brian Playle

2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM

There were no comments and the Minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4a. Chairman's Address.

Mr Ellis gave the following address:

"The redevelopment programme is progressing well according to plan with just a bit of a delay due to the virus. Building work is currently out to tender with returns due in the next couple of weeks. Unfortunately the smaller builders, who can be expected to be cheaper, are all too busy but several heritage specialists are quoting.

Some of the basic and labouring work can be done by the Rotary Club who can't wait to get started with their sledgehammers. Our Project Manager, Lucy Godfrey, is leading the development work very capably, and is easy to work with.

During the present lockdown, Jim and the crew are doing some restoration work on the cottages, and are clearly enjoying it. There are pictures on social media of people, for example Helen, getting stuck in in the garden.

We have sufficient income from the Heritage Lottery and the landfill charity to do most of the work on the museum development work, but there is quite a lot of work that was ineligible. Thanks to the generosity of other donors, notably Audrey and Andrew Winkler, we seem to have much of that covered now. There are a few cash flow problems ahead, but we have been offered a short term loan from several Trustees to cover that.

The Friends of the Museum continue with their wonderful financial support and encouragement. They have made a donation of £2,500 and paid for the A-board outside the museum for when it is open. They have also funded the restoration of the Parker Family Bible. This is on display in the Chapel at the moment, but longer term its siting will be determined as the museum development continues. As ever, we are very thankful to the Friends for their support.

I must not forget to thank Mary Hawkins who continues to support us with her work on training on the Griswolds and associated activity, and who donates the money she raises to us.

We have been lucky to receive a donation of all the residual funds of the Lace Federation as it is closing down. That money will be used, most appropriately, for interpretation of the development of frame knitted lace into Nottingham lace.

We are having a much needed new heating system in our heritage buildings. It is all electric which is more expensive to run, but far less intrusive. We have long-term plans to put solar panels on the roof of Gunn Cottage to run the heating. Unfortunately we have discovered that the roof of much of Gunn Cottage needs replacement, so that will be done during building work at no inconsiderable extra (and unplanned) cost. Hopefully, this will be partly funded by a bequest we have been told to expect – but when we will get it, heaven knows.

Jim has now been with us for two years, and he is doing an amazing job. He has loads of ideas, and is excellent at ignoring some of the wilder ideas thrown at him, particularly by me. Helen is often given challenges by Jim, an example being the making of the finger pointing to the entrance of the museum. She rises brilliantly to these challenges, but continues to be creative in many directions and seems to be able to turn her hand to anything.

Jan has been a great addition to the team as Volunteer Coordinator, and organises so much on social media to keep interest in the museum going during lockdown and at other times. Like all the others in our team, she is very adaptable to meeting needs that arise.

Mathew is so committed to framework knitting that in a few years I believe he is likely to become one of the world's leading experts on the subject, perhaps second only to Martin Green. He is training quite a few volunteers to work on the frames so they can demonstrate in his absence. I hope that one day we will be able to spare him to go to the Philadelphia Museum, if they can fund it, to go and teach them how to framework knit – assuming he wants to go, of course. A student placement by somebody from Philadelphia made us realise that our museum is the only place in the world where you can learn to framework knit.

We owe a considerable debt to our staff for all their work over the last year. With the lockdowns, we have been unable to call upon our regular volunteers so easily as the museum has been closed, but a few have been doing useful jobs, such as research, quietly in the background. We look forward to welcoming everybody back, hopefully in the spring next year.

Jim will be talking about some of the other things going on in and around the museum, but I would like to say that the Heritage Lottery people have said how much they congratulate the museum for our outlook. They consider us very ambitious in our plans, but since we have a history of listening to their advice, acting on it and doing what we say we will do, they are very happy to fund us.

I recently talked to the Drapers' Trust who make us donations of relatively modest pump priming funds for projects. Their Head of Funding told me that he regularly uses us as a prime example of a beneficiary who spends every penny wisely and maximises the benefit of the help we receive from them.

To close, I thank you all for your support for the museum and especially my fellow Trustees, without whose overall care and commitment to the museum it would not have been steered to such a positive position.”

There were no questions from the floor, but Mrs Harrington expressed her thanks to the museum staff and volunteers for their efforts over the year, especially with regard to the challenges posed by lockdown.

4b. Manager's Address

Mr Grevatte gave an overview of some of the key activities taking place at the museum. These include hundreds of hours of research undertaken by volunteers into the history of the Parker and Waldron families. Areas investigated include way of life, pay and conditions.

Other volunteers, including some from Nottingham Trent University, have been undertaking placements at the museum to experience history in the workplace. This has involved tasks such as research and image creation. Thanks to Mr Stankley for facilitating some of these placements.

The museum has also been working with Nottingham College, who have sent us a series of student groups, to help develop our visual identity and a new logo; write audio scripts for the various rooms in the museum to be used after redevelopment; and create animations for interpretative displays.

Common Threads have given us some great feedback around the Resilience Quilt project and how it's helped them and their audience. A new project is in the pipeline; this will involve the creation of a Victorian-style sampler relating to the families who lived on our site.

The Artist in Residence project will start in December, with the first artist Sabine Kane reporting her activities on Instagram.

5. Appointment of Trustees

Mr Smith and Mr Rowson were retiring by rotation and being eligible, were seeking a further term of appointment. Their re-appointments were unanimously approved.

Mr Grevatte's appointment to the Board was also unanimously approved. His appointment as a member of paid staff enables us to benefit from our new status as VAT-registered.

6. Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year to 31 March 2020

Mr Neil Coupland of RWB Chartered Accountants presented the accounts. He noted that RWB Chartered Accountants have examined the accounts and report and found no issues requiring investigation under Charity Commission and Charities Act guidelines.

Mr Coupland ran through the museum's income and expenditure, and explained the workings of the restricted and unrestricted funds accounts. The main item to note was that both income and expenditure increased significantly on 2018/2019 due to funding received and corresponding redevelopment works. The tendering and consultation processes undertaken for redevelopment led to a large increase in Professional Fees in particular.

Income from admissions and sales made by the tearoom and Textile Emporium were reported to be slightly down on 2018/19. These will see a large drop next year due to lockdown.

Rental income was on a par with 2018/19 but will also fall next year, as one of the properties has now been vacated for conversion to museum space.

The net result for 2019/20 looks good on paper, with a large surplus. However, this is mostly restricted funds, with unrestricted funds showing a deficit. Mr Coupland noted that this is to be expected at the starting point of a project such as ours.

The Balance Sheet shows a healthy net asset position. This is based on the cost value of the buildings, which are worth more than the figures shown, but don't represent money that can be spent. The cash figure shown is mostly made up of grants received.

There were no question and the accounts were accepted.

7. Appointment of Reporting Accountants

Messrs RWB Chartered Accountants were unanimously reappointed as reporting accountants. Mr Ellis thanked Mr Coupland for his work over the year and attendance at the AGM.

8. Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:05pm.