

The Belper North Mill Trust

Registered Charity Number 1068485

Company Limited by Guarantee Number 3509183

Registered Office: The Derwent Valley Visitor Centre, Strutt's North Mill,
Bridge Foot, Belper Derbyshire DE56 1YD

Our objects

The Belper North Mill Trust was established in 1998 as a Company Limited by Guarantee and as a Registered Charity.

The objects of the Trust, as defined in its Memorandum of Association, are:

- (1) To advance the education of the public into the industrial heritage of the Derwent Valley with particular reference to Belper North Mill; and
- (2) The conservation, maintenance and protection for the public benefit of the historical, architectural, archaeological and industrial heritage of the Derwent Valley.

What we do

The Belper North Mill Trust runs a small, independent museum in 'Strutt's North Mill', a former cotton-spinning mill in Belper, Derbyshire, and the Derwent Valley Visitor Centre at the same premises. The North Mill and the larger site of which it is a part, together with a significant number of buildings in Belper, form the central element of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, a group of sites that extends from Derby in the south to Matlock Bath in the north, along a 15-mile stretch of the River Derwent.

The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site is the only World Heritage Site in the East Midlands and was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2001. It is the birthplace of the modern factory system and of the communities and infrastructure that were developed to support it, sitting within the very beautiful and still recognisable 18th century landscape into which this new world of work was inserted.

In 2004 the Trust adopted the name 'Strutt's North Mill' as the operational name for the museum, to highlight the importance of the Strutt family in the history of Belper. The North Mill is a Grade I listed building and is one of the earliest iron-framed, fire-proof buildings in the world and a precursor of modern high-rise construction.

The museum, which is fully Accredited, is staffed by volunteers and is open five days a week from March to October and at weekends in November and February.

Our staff and volunteers

The Trust has a permanent part-time Manager supported by a team of some 40 volunteers who undertake all of the essential tasks required to open and maintain the museum on a daily basis.

The museum's collections policy focuses on: the history of Belper; cotton spinning and stocking manufacture, the main industries of the town for almost two centuries; and the role of the Strutt family whose commercial enterprises throughout the Derwent Valley and far beyond shaped the local community and its infrastructure to become the world's first cotton spinning town.

In addition to the museum's permanent displays, there are also temporary exhibitions and other activities, including guided walks of the larger mill complex and the historic mill town of Belper. An education package for schools, tailored to the National Curriculum, and run by the volunteer education team, is offered throughout the year, as are also group tours.

In 2016 the museum had some 3,850 paid admissions and events. This includes 428 who participated in educational programmes while over 3,000 people called at the Visitor Centre. In addition, a free Open Day associated with a local Craft Fair attracted over 1,000 visitors. There is a charge of £5 for general admission which includes an annual pass (children under-16 are admitted free of charge). The Trust has started Gift Aid for admissions in 2017.

For more information see our website www.belpernorthmill.org and for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site www.derwentvalleymills.org/

The Trust and its governance

The Belper North Mill Trust was established in 1998 to run the visitor centre and museum which had opened in 1995 when Amber Valley Borough Council decided to use part of the vacant North Mill to promote tourism and the heritage of the cotton spinning industry.

The Board currently has eleven Directors, five of whom are nominated by local authorities and organisations (Amber Valley Borough Council, Belper Town Council, Derbyshire County Council, Belper Historical Society and the Belper North Mill Volunteers' Association) and six of whom are co-opted for their specific skills. All Trustees are directors of the company. Trustees are appointed for a three-year term and may be re-appointed.

In July 2016 the Trust amended its original 1998 Memorandum and Articles of Association to bring it into line with current company and charity governance and best practice, and in particular: to move towards a more skills based Trust; to enable the Board to appoint more co-opted members and; to provide more transparent processes for the appointment of Trustees. The Trust may have up to eighteen members and is currently looking to strengthen its expertise in particular in marketing (specifically promotions, market research) and audience development.

The duties of a Trustee are:

- To ensure that the Belper North Mill Trust complies with its governing document, charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations;
- To ensure that the Trust pursues its objects as defined by the governing document;
- To ensure the Trust uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives;
- To contribute actively to the role of the Board of Trustees;
- To safeguard the good name and reputation of the Belper North Mill Trust and to behave in a professional manner, keeping all activities confidential;
- To ensure the efficient and effective administration of the Trust;
- To ensure the financial stability of the Trust;
- To protect and manage the property of the Trust and to ensure proper investment of the Trust's funds;

- To ensure that any fundraising activity carried out by, or on behalf of, the Trust is properly undertaken, and that all funds collected are properly accounted for and spent according to the charitable objectives.

In addition to the above duties, each Trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board make sound decisions and in particular, take a proactive interest in their particular areas of expertise.

A Trustee will need to demonstrate:

- strong personal commitment to the Belper North Mill Trust and its charitable aims;
- high levels of personal credibility and leadership;
- skills, knowledge and experience that would positively benefit the Trust;
- links to relevant networks e.g. business, professional, governmental;
- time and energy to devote to the Trust.

And will have:

- a strong commitment to heritage, community and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site;
- a pragmatic approach to decision making with the flexibility to react effectively to changing circumstances;
- excellent communication skills, and to be able to represent the Belper North Mill Trust effectively in the public arena.

Further guidance about the role of Trustees is available on the Charity Commission website www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

Meetings and time commitment

The Board meets in Belper every two months, on the last Friday of the month. Sub-committees meet between Board meetings as required. Trustees are also invited to exhibition openings, social gatherings and other special events at the North Mill and these provide the opportunity to support the work of the museum and to meet the volunteers.

It is envisaged that the time commitment of the Chair will be four to five days a month.

The Trust's finances

Annual turnover in 2016 (excluding a significant bequest) was £127,000. A Service Level Agreement with Amber Valley Borough Council to run the Derwent Valley Visitor Centre (approximately £45,000) and to care for its museum collections and an annual grant from Belper Town Council (£10,200) are key annual income streams. The Trust is heavily reliant on Amber Valley Borough Council to ensure that operational budgets break even.

The SLA funding from Amber Valley Borough Council covers the rent and service charges on the museum premises due on the underlease (see below). Other income is derived from admission fees, events, shop sales, donations and grants.

Copies of the Trust's annual reports and financial statements are available on the Charity Commission website.

The museum premises

The Trust holds a 25-year underlease for the basement and part of the ground floor of the North Mill from Amber Valley Borough Council, which in turn holds a 25-year lease from the owner, GHL Property Management and Development Limited of Jersey. Both the lease and underlease expire in April 2020. Amber Valley Borough Council has indicated that it does not intend to renew its lease when it expires.

The Trust could negotiate a lease in its own name, but unless the costs are of a peppercorn level, or any future Amber Valley Borough Council SLA income continues to match the building costs, the Trust would operate with a financial deficit and need to call on its reserves.

Current challenges and constraints

The condition of the North Mill and the Belper mills site generally

Parts of the Grade I listed North Mill and most of the buildings within the remainder of the mill complex, including the large Grade II listed East Mill (a landmark in the town), are untenanted and receive little routine maintenance, putting them at considerable risk of slow decay and vandalism. This has been the case for many years. The condition of the watercourses and leats around and beneath the buildings is unknown. As such the future of the whole mill complex is uncertain. Amber Valley Borough Council has indicated previously that it may pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order for the site, if appropriate remedial works are not undertaken by the owner, but this has not been progressed.

The North Mill (Grade I listed), the arched footbridge and the horseshoe weir, its retaining walls and sluices (all Grade II* listed) are all on Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk' Register.

The Courtauld's factory, on the opposite side of the road from the North Mill, is now unoccupied after the company went into administration in May 2016. This site, which was once part of the main mills complex, contains much of the archaeological heritage of the 18th and 19th century Strutt enterprises in Belper and watercourses and leats from the North and East Mill pass under it.

The museum premises

The comparatively small area occupied by the museum severely limits the Trust's ability to develop its operations and in particular to run the museum as a commercial enterprise. While access to the basement enables visitors to see the building's important 'fire-proof' construction, it is permanently damp and subject to periodic flooding and so is completely unsuitable for museum exhibits. On the ground floor the museum has only one gallery and a small audio-visual area that doubles as temporary exhibition space. The reception area serves as the Derwent Valley Visitor Centre and also has a small retail outlet. An extremely cramped storage space (which is not environmentally controlled) is used to house the collections and also doubles as general storage. There are no workrooms in which staff, volunteers or visitors can work on the collections and no meeting rooms for groups, school parties and other activities. In 2015 the Trust leased an office on the fourth floor of the North Mill to provide a staff office. This was largely made possible by grant funding. The current

premises provide no opportunity to make the best and fullest use of the museum collections, of staff and volunteer skills, or to develop new initiatives.

Resources

A Service Level Agreement with Amber Valley Borough Council, to match building costs, is secured to March 2018 and an annual grant of £10,200 from Belper Town Council is secured to June 2018. However these funds, together with income from the museum, are insufficient to do more than just meet normal operating costs.

Funding cuts imposed by central government threaten the continuation of non-essential services by local government and where that support is still available this is allocated on a one, or two-year basis, making long term planning, the retention of paid staff and effective continuity of management extremely difficult.

The financial position of the Trust changed fundamentally during 2016 with a bequest from the Reverend Canon Raymond Ross of £340,767. The Trustees decided that the bequest will be used for securing the long-term future of the site and the provision of appropriate heritage interpretation within any redevelopment. As a heritage charity there is the potential for the Trust to use these funds to lever in much larger contributions from other organisations and funders.

The future

In 2015 the Trust received Heritage Lottery Fund Transition Funding for its project 'Rescue, Restore, Revitalise: new beginnings for the Belper North Mill'. This project is due for completion in September 2017. To date, the Trust has:

- Reviewed, revised and amended its Memorandum & Articles of Association;
- Undertaken a skills audit of Trustees and identified skills needs;
- Established four sub-committees to progress the work of the Trust;
- Agreed and put in place new procedures for the appointment of Trustees;
- Prepared a Strategic Plan for the next five years 2017-2022;
- Produced an Outline Masterplan for the future of the whole of the Belper Mills site authored by DCA Consultants and Purcell architects. Copies of this have been given to the: Heritage Lottery Fund; Derbyshire County Council; Amber Valley Borough Council; Belper Town Council; The National Trust; Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site; Historic England; Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust and the Neighbourhood Plan for Belper Working Group.

The Outline Masterplan is a contribution to what the Trust hopes will be a longer term process that will result in the eventual acquisition of the North Mill (and potentially all of the Belper mills complex) by an owner, or consortium of owners, willing to invest in its conservation and appropriate redevelopment as a vibrant part of Belper and of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. The Trust's ability to continue to provide a heritage offer in Belper will depend upon its ability to obtain additional financial support or, should the site be redeveloped, to obtain premises within the site, at a minimal rental, from which to provide a renewed heritage offer.

While Belper is acknowledged as one of the three main elements of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (together with Sir Richard Arkwright's Cromford Mills and The Silk Mill in Derby) the town has, to date, received little financial support to conserve, revitalise and promote its heritage. The Trust believes that the

local authorities should ensure, through the planning process, that appropriate heritage interpretation must be included in any new developments on the site.

Two new projects, announced recently, should be of direct benefit to the town and potentially to the Trust in its work to promote its heritage:

- The Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and Historic England have recently awarded the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership a £1.5m ‘Great Place’ scheme grant for its *Vital Valley* project to inspire and enable people to have a sense of pride in and belonging to the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and to do this by celebrating the Valley’s heritage and the promotion of the arts;

and

- Belper is one of nine market towns included in a new drive to boost tourism with the assistance of a new Market Towns Project Officer appointed by Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire.

This is a critical and challenging time for the Trust as it looks forward to working to secure a renewed future for the North Mill and the Belper Mills site and continuing to provide facilities for the interpretation and enjoyment of the World Heritage Site and the history of Belper for the benefit of the public.

Applications

For further information, an application form and copies of other documentation including the Trust’s:

- Draft annual report and financial statements for 2016;
- Outline Masterplan for the Belper Mills Site;
- Strategic Plan 2017-2022;
- Memorandum & Articles of Association (2016).

Please contact the Company Secretary, Rosemary Annable by e-mail

rosemaryannable@btinternet.com

Or by phone (01773) 828141

Applications for this position will close at 5.00pm on Thursday 31 August 2017.

Candidates will be invited to meet members of the Board in the week beginning the 25 September for discussions and conversations.

1 August 2017