



FOXTON INCLINED PLANE TRUST

Minutes of 39th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Thursday 20th OCTOBER 2022
Canal Museum, Gumley Road, Foxton, Leicestershire. LE16 7RA

7.15pm for 7.30pm (refreshments provided)

1. Welcome and opening comment from Chairperson –Sean Park

First we can look at 2021

The 1st half the museum remained closed with a number of people working on both re-design and preparation for re-opening and changes of presentation & layout in a number of areas

The 2nd half we were able to cautiously re-open during June just weekends, adding a 3rd day from July to October.

Despite the limited opening we had welcomed over 3700 visitors to the museum by the end of the year.

The accounts for the year show a loss of £4238 which is almost ½ the previous year's loss when we were only open for 24 days in the whole year.

This is lower than we expected and part of the reason for that is the project grant received in 2021 from Leicestershire County Council. Of the £6000 received only £2000 has to date been paid out.

Much of this will be paid out before the end of this year.

There are numerous costs that apply regardless of whether we are open or not e.g.

- Insurance @ £2000+
- Lease @ £650
- Energy costs £3000+
- Equipment servicing & maintenance

2022 has seen after a 2 year “break” the re-engagement of Penny as Museum Manager – which has been a catalyst to push the museum (and the trust) forward.

We have been able to open (big thanks also to Ann & Chris) 5 days a week throughout summer – all the way to the end of this month before dropping down to weekend only opening.

The Trustees would like to thank our employees and volunteers for the time given and efforts made in still challenging times for everyone.

As we approach winter time there will be much activity at and around the museum. Without the traditional (but at high risk) surplus of the festival the trust needs to increase volunteer (and employee) numbers to cover a number of areas – including fundraising.

The museum has for many years independently run at a small loss – we wish 2023 to be different – we will need more people resources to make this happen. Hence November to February a lot of work, promotion and imagination will be needed.

All contributions will be welcomed.

We still need a prominent project, vision, appeal that will engage individuals, groups and organisations!

At the end of the meeting for those that wish to we can discuss more about our proposed approach to this as introduced in the recent newsletter.



2. Present-

Michael Handford, Lawrence Harrison, Stephen Barfoot, Tess Newman, Giles Harrison
Mary Matts, Derek Harris, Paul Hitchcock, Sean Park, Penny Arscott, Ann Hoxley, Matthew Knight

3. Apologies for absence –

Mike Beech, Chris Parker, Steve Bowyer, Trevor Towers, Peter Cole

4. Minutes of the 38th Annual General Meeting held 26th August 2021.

- Acceptance proposal - Lawrence Harrison proposed, Mary Matts second

5. Trustees report

- The accounts indicate a deficit of £4,238 compared to the deficit last year of £7,700.
- As at 31st December 2021 the trust had accumulated reserves of £50,683 which are stated after a retained provision of £10,000 for the Museum Maintenance Fund.
- At the end of June 2021 the Museum was delighted to be able to partially re-open to visitors after 16 months closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic; partially, as many visitors and volunteers were still being cautious about mixing with others. Income from entry and shop sales were received but not at pre-pandemic levels. Such we expect "in due course!"
- Unlike 2020 no Small Business Grant was provided in 2021 so the finances had to stand on their own for the whole year even though it was closed for the first 6 months. The deficit indicated above was much in line with expectations
- In opening a considerable effort had been made in the previous few months to both refresh displays in the Museum and ensure all appropriate controls were in place to protect staff, volunteers and visitors.

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

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

Peter Coles was not able to attend the AGM but he sent a short report:

- The accounts report another deficit, which in view of the continuing effects of the coronavirus has been kept to an absolute minimum. The final accounts still show a very positive balance sheet considering the current economic climate.
- I would like to thank Giles and Sean for making the accountancy, payroll preparation and reporting function a pleasant task.
- The treasurer has again supplied a good basis for the preparation of the accounts. There being no festival during 2021 and no grant/furlough claims the time spent assisting the charity has reduced and I am pleased to say so has my fee.
~~~~~
- LH asked why there was a drop in membership subscriptions – SP said there are a couple of reasons:
  - Partially due to some members have passed away
  - Some members would come into the museum to renew their membership but because of the pandemic they haven't come in
  - No active promotion of the membership scheme due to having no membership secretary for the last 7 years.

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



- Mike Handford proposed, Derek Harris second

## 8. Election/ re-election of Trustees

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

**Mary Matts and Matthew Knight.** (Both are seeking to be re-elected by the membership)

- Re-election of MM - unanimous
- Re-election of MK - unanimous

### b) Trustees elected by the Council of Management.

The following have expressed their wish to be elected as Trustees by the membership:

- Election of Paul Hitchcock – unanimous

## 9. Date and time of next AGM (provisional) - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## 10. Chairperson Summary.

2015 – Major revamp of museum, a resetting the way of doing things which came off the back of the news that the restoration of the boat lift was on hold / not going anywhere. A lot of people from the trust left around this time, leaving a gap in skills and people reduction within the trust.

The Trust was fortunate that it had accumulated decent reserves without any clear plans on what to do with it. This will be addressed.

We need to do something dramatic. It's not going to be a quick process. We need to attract new trustees with skills that will help the trust move forward. There needs to have an end goal, a project which will be engaging and inspirational not only for the Trust but also the community at large.

What is clear is that the Foxton Locks site hasn't got a focal point – for the visitor!, it has lots of parts which don't seem to link together. We think we can bridge that gap in a variety of areas, bring the site together. As the project develops we will have much greater involvement with the CRT and other stakeholders but at the present moment we as a Trust need to work on our identity and promoting it out. We also need to be conscious of any projects or development that need grants / support have to meet a lot of social criteria. They have to benefit the community, they have to cover inclusion and diversity.

The projects we have been recently involved with over the last year with Leicestershire County Council was part of that process. It was exploring a number different avenues, by getting our presence much better know and getting back in to play with some of the big players. In the past we had strong links with larger organisations but these got diluted over time. We need to start rebuilding these links.

Summary – Optimism – as long as we have some sort of vision to take us forward which will engage, excite and grow us as a trust otherwise the question, what are we doing & why? Will become a regular unwanted feature.