

# **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 vision**

The Belper North Mill Trust is ambitious and wants to achieve change and be a major influence on the protection of the historical heritage of the Derwent Valley, the development of increased economic growth, the regeneration of the historic mills and the promotion of educational facilities to both the local community and visitors from far and wide.

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 for the interpretation and enjoyment of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and the history of Belper for the benefit of the public. We need Trustees with skills and the energy to achieve change and help realise the great economic and historic potential of the Belper Mills and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

## **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 specified 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 as the birthplace of the modern factory system, together with the communities and infrastructure that were developed to support it.

## **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.

For more information see our website [www.belpernorthmill.org](http://www.belpernorthmill.org) and for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site [www.derwentvalleymills.org/](http://www.derwentvalleymills.org/)

### **The Trust's finances**

The Trust's finances are currently secure, and it operates as a going concern. Annual turnover in 2017 (excluding a significant bequest) was c £125,000. The Trust benefits from grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and from local authorities together with income from its activities.

Copies of the Trust's annual reports and financial statements are available on the Charity Commission website and the 2016 Annual Report is on the museum 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 Development Management Ltd 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 and so this funding support from the Council will come to an end.

The Trust is currently looking at options for its future (see below).

### **Current challenges and constraints**

#### **The condition of the North Mill and the Belper mills site**

Some 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. 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. In the past Amber Valley Borough Council has indicated 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 together with 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, 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 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Strutt enterprises in Belper and the watercourses and leats from the North Mill 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 has a small retail outlet.

### **Resources**

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 should 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 February 2018. The main elements of the project have now been completed and the Trust has:

- Reviewed, revised and amended its Memorandum & Articles of Association;
- Undertaken a skills audit of trustees and identified skills needs;
- Established sub-committees to progress the work of the Trust;
- Put in place new procedures for the appointment of trustees;
- Prepared a Strategic Plan for the next five years;
- Produced an *Outline Masterplan* for the future of the whole of the Belper Mills site authored by DCA Consultants and Purcell architects.

The *Outline Masterplan*, which is now available on the North Mill website, 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 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.

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 have been announced recently that 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.

### **The Trust Board**

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. The Board may have up to eighteen members.

In July 2016 the Trust amended its original 1998 Memorandum and Articles of Association to bring it into line with current company and charity legislation and governance 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 is currently looking to strengthen its expertise in a number of areas including: income generation; promotions, marketing and audience development; and planning and regeneration.

A Trustee will need to demonstrate:

- A strong personal commitment to the Belper North Mill Trust and to 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
- a strong commitment to heritage, the community and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

### **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.
- Trustees will also be expected to represent the charity at various events and in meetings with key stakeholders.

**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.

Further guidance about the role of trustees is available on the Charity Commission website [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)

**Further information**

For further information including copies of the Trust's:

- Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022;
- Memorandum & Articles of Association (2016);
- Trustee application form

Please contact the Company Secretary, Rosemary Annable by e-mail [rosemaryannable@btinternet.com](mailto:rosemaryannable@btinternet.com)

Or by phone (01773) 828141