

News of Mills

Gaily Mill, Whitchurch Silk Mill, Eling Tide Mill, Hockley Mill

Gaily Mill, Kingsclere *report by David Plunkett*

I attended the Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan meeting at the Fieldgate Centre in Kingsclere on the evening of Friday 16th October 2015. The meeting was chaired by Phil Turner (retired Planning Officer and HMG Member) who I spoke to before the meeting started. I also studied the various proposals on stands at the rear of the hall.

There are seven sites in the village under review of which one is adjacent Gaily Mill.

In my view it was not a good site to build any houses, let alone 20 to 30, as proposed before the meeting.

The meeting got underway with introductions and notices etc.

Planning Policies explained. 40% of new houses would be for 'affordable housing'. And 40% of those, earmarked for local people. Five property developers are in the project at this time.

Question time: With over 100 people present and lots wanting to ask questions, they were slowly dealt with by sound reasoning and clarity in my view.

The meeting continued with what had already been dealt with previously in this project such as;

Tree listing, ecology at Gaily Mill, title deeds checked for ownership. Criteria to which any site must conform etc.

Land next to Gaily Mill: In planning criteria terms it scored very low (98), It comes in flood plain zone 2 & 3. On that basis it will be excluded from the proposed plan going forward.

The top scoring site was Fawconer Road, with a score of 159. So that is at the head of the list.

What is next: Await SEA report publication. Draft to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, then a referendum to the whole of the parish on this Neighbourhood Plan which will be binding on BDBC.

The interesting conclusion to this is: This planning project conclusion lasts up to 2029, for the whole village, with no review between stated.

Sounds pretty good to me!

Whitchurch Silk Mill *Sue Tapliss - General Manager*

Plans to conserve Whitchurch Silk Mill and its historic machinery have received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to help get the project off the ground.

Whitchurch Silk Mill Trust has been awarded £123,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop more detailed plans and prepare a full grant application for its Preserving the Fabric project.

The Grade II* listed Silk Mill will be conserved under the plans, with accessibility improved for visitors. Its historic textile machinery will be restored, enabling the Mill to demonstrate silk making on a daily basis.

Claire Isbester, Chairman of Whitchurch Silk Mill Trust, said, "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. The 200-year-old building will be conserved under the plans, with access improved for visitors. It's great to know that we are a step closer to preserving the Mill for another two hundred years"

Included in the project will be a refurbished entrance building, welcoming special exhibition and meeting areas, and new displays telling the fascinating story of the Mill, of silk and silk weaving, and of water power. The café and shop will be combined on the banks of the River Test and the grounds will be improved to encourage chalk stream wildlife. The funding will allow also the Mill to employ apprentices, who will be given formal training in heritage skills, and volunteers will be given training so they can help care for the machinery and engage with visitors.

At the moment we have only one weaver who knows how to use all the historic machinery, apprentices will ensure these skills are passed onto the next generation and we can continue weaving into the next century"

The Mill will apply for a second round of HLF funding in 2016 and, if successful, building work is scheduled for 2017 and the new-look Mill will be launched in 2018.

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said:, "The Preserving the Fabric project plans will enable the team at the Mill to achieve their vision to transform Whitchurch Silk Mill into a self-sustaining, living, industrial heritage site. We're really pleased to be giving them the green light and look forward to seeing the project progress over the coming months.

Lottery Fund Update

Things have moved fast since the Heritage Lottery Fund granted us initial funding and a conditional promise of full funding of our plans for preserving and developing the Mill. We're currently interviewing consultants interested in project managing the development plans and for managing our audience development plans.



New Book about the Social History of the Mill

Staff member, Jackie Browne has written a book about the social history of the Mill. It's being published this week and is available from the Mill Shop.

"Winders, Piecers, Warpors and Weavers"; The Story of Whitchurch Silk Mill" traces the 200 year history of the Mill, telling the story of the owners, the customers and the changing circumstances of the many hands who, over the years, have woven their names into the Mill's story and contains previously unknown material.

Jackie began her research for the book in 2009, shortly after she began working at the Mill. Having discovered that much of the formal history had been lost in a fire, she set out to uncover what she could of the missing story.

Jackie is generously donating profits from the book to the Mill.

Eling Tide Mill *by Matt Painter*

Dorothea Restoration (millwrights) began work on the 21st October.

Over the following three weeks, the following was accomplished:

- “ Using toe jacks they lifted the stone nut and checked the footstep bearing. They also investigated the use of an A frame to raise the water wheel, stripping out the panelling around the spur wheel
- “ Waterwheel raised and bearing under both journals removed to allow new brasses to be made.
- “ The crown wheel teeth measured and new complete set made at Bristol workshop. Also making of new undercroft ladder.
- “ The eastern vertical shaft, needle gunned and pressure washed to remove corrosion followed by primer paint. Followed by same on the cast iron weighing scales.
- “ Checked working vertical shaft and bearings. Fitted new crown wheel teeth and back wedges. Followed by detail profiling of new teeth.
- “ Sanding and cleaning new grain storage in bin loft. Checked Armfield Arch adjustment bolts. Painted eastern vertical shaft.

The millwrighting continues. The new construction at the adjacent Heritage Centre has still to commence.

Hockley Mill *by Eleanor Yates*

Members of the Hampshire Mills Group opened Hockley Mill to the public on Sunday 13 September, Heritage Open Day. We welcomed over 60 visitors and received donations of £40 towards the repair work we are doing on the sluice. All the visitors were very interested, even those who were just walking past and stopped to see what we were doing. Some of the visitors stayed for nearly two hours looking at the fixtures and examining the mill. One visitor, a local author, is thinking of using Hockley as the background to his next novel, although changing its name.

Mick signed a new member to HMG and sold a copy of Book 1. Ivor measured the wood that will be used for the repairs and checked how we will hoist the sluice gate up. And all of us were hoarse by the end of the day and glad of a hot cup of tea in Ivor's camper-van. *The latest news from Hockley Mill is that the repairs to the sluice are “coming along nicely”. There will be a more full report in the next issue*

Playing Jigsaws at Hockley Mill

The millstone (below) was donated to HMG by a Sussex mill and has been stored until now at Crux Easton. Now the HMG Committee have decided to keep it at Hockley Mill, with the owner's permission, until a decision is reached about its future.

The picture below shows HMG's Technical Advisor, John Christmas with the millstone jigsaw puzzle

