

Whitchurch Silk Mill Welcomes a New Chairman and Inspiring Initiatives

Rupert Nabarro, of Bere Mill near Whitchurch, has accepted an invitation to become Chairman of the Whitchurch Silk Mill Trust. He will replace Councillor Keith Watts, who has been Chairman since all the other serving Trustees resigned last year amid a controversy over the future of the Silk Mill as a public asset.

Rupert Nabarro said “It is an honour to be asked to chair this great project which is an important community asset; part of our industrial heritage; and of interest way beyond Hampshire. Keith has done a great job in getting a fine team of managers and trustees together and I hope to be able to contribute to its future success. We aim to make the Mill a self-sustaining, living, industrial heritage site that weaves silk and enthral all who walk through its doors. Sometimes people overlook the jewels on their own doorstep so we would like to invite our neighbours to visit this local treasure.”

Keith Watts said “As a Whitchurch Councillor who represents the Borough Council on the Trust, I saw my job as being to lead a transition from last year’s decline, that threatened closure of the Silk Mill as a public asset, to a lively and optimistic voluntary body under professional leadership. That job is done, this is the time for me to give more time to my wider responsibilities as a Councillor and leave the Chair for someone new who will lead the next stage of the resurgence of Whitchurch Silk Mill.

The Mill is the only silk mill in England which is still weaving on Victorian machinery so it is the perfect place to learn about the tradition of silk weaving. It is also one of the few places where the public can have access to the beautiful banks of the River Test.

As you probably know, this wonderful, national asset is dependent on the generous support of our visitors who make donations, use the café, and buy our products in our shop. We hope this invitation will encourage local people to renew their support for this site of unique importance to our national cultural heritage. And you will find 21st Century technology for all of our visitors’ personal use as we’ve installed free wireless internet access in our cafe so that you can get online whenever you visit the Mill - you can have a cuppa or a cream tea whilst you’re in the Clouds!

High Energy Mill Makeover – SSE’s Many Hands Lighten Up the Mill Inside

The Basingstoke team at Scottish and Southern Energy are taking the opportunity to get out of the office and learn about each other in a completely different environment. As part of “Community at Heart”, their commitment to encourage each of their 22,000 employees to take a day out of work to volunteer, they will be helping to preserve a gem of our industrial heritage at Whitchurch Silk Mill.

The historic building, which dates from around 1815, is in need of redecoration to preserve its unique period features. Working with the Mill’s own team of volunteers, the men and women of SSE will be spending six days in September at the Mill giving the café and the lobby of the weaving-shed a coat (or two) of paint.

You could be part of the fabric too....Volunteer roles, include helping visitors in the café, stewarding the galleries, guiding, interpreting the history of the Mill and undertaking maintenance tasks. These roles will suit people who want to help keep alive a part of our industrial heritage, housed in a beautiful building in an idyllic setting. They will provide an interest for people who are interested in giving something back to the community and meeting lots of people, full training will be given.