



*19th Century Working
Watermill*

Acorn Bank Watermill
Temple Sowerby
PENRITH
Cumbria
CA10 1XN

Registered Charity No.
1193320



**Acorn Bank
Watermill Trust**

Our address for correspondence is:
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**TRUSTEE'S REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD
29th JANUARY 2021 TO
31st DECEMBER 2021
AS PRESENTED BY
THE CHAIRMAN TO
ACORN BANK WATERMILL
TRUST'S ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING (AGM) ON WEDNESDAY,
30th MARCH 2022**

Structure, Governance & Management

Acorn Bank Watermill Trust ("ABWT") was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 29th January 2021 (Registered Charity No: 1193320).

Under our Constitution, at every AGM, one-third of the trustees must retire from office. Bill Openshaw, Bob Price, and David Robertson tendered their resignations. At the AGM members voted to reappoint Bob Price, who sought re-election and elected Frank Bradley, Bridget Davey, and Jo Rees as new Trustees. Bill Openshaw and David Robertson did not seek re-election as Trustees although the AGM voted to retain the latter as ABWT's Secretary.

ABWT CHARITY TRUSTEES & OFFICERS (AS OF 30th MARCH 2022)

	NAME	POSITION (if applicable)	START DATE	DATES ACTED (if different)
1	BOB PRICE	CHAIR of TRUSTEES & PRODUCTION MANAGER	29/01/21	29 th January 2021 to 9 th March 2022. Reappointed as Trustee & Chairman at ABWT's AGM on 30 th March 2022.
2	DAVID ROBERTSON	SECRETARY & QUENSH MANAGER	29/01/21	29 th January 2021 to 9 th March 2022. Resigned as Trustee. Reappointed Secretary at ABWT's AGM on 30 th March 2022.
3	GEOFF BAILES	TRUSTEE & TREASURER	29/01/21	Reappointed Treasurer at ABWT's AGM on 30 th March 2022.
4	MARTIN FAGAN	TRUSTEE & SALES & MARKETING MANAGER	29/01/21	
5	NEIL HANNAH	TRUSTEE & BUSINESS & FUNDRAISING MANAGER	29/01/21	
6	BILL OPENSHAW	TRUSTEE & CHIEF ENGINEER	29/01/21	29 th January 2021 to 1 st March 2022. Resigned.
7	CARL RICHARDSON	TRUSTEE & CHIEF ENGINEER	29/01/21	Appointed Chief Engineer by ABWT Committee on 9 th March 2022
8	PETER SIMPSON	TRUSTEE & MAINTENANCE MANAGER	29/01/21	
9	FRANK BRADLEY	TRUSTEE	01/04/22	Appointed Trustee at ABWT's AGM on 30 th March 2022
10	BRIDGET DAVEY	TRUSTEE & INTERIM CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGER	01/04/22	Appointed Trustee at ABWT's AGM on 30 th March 2022.
11	JOANNA REES	TRUSTEE & ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY MANAGER	01/04/22	Appointed Trustee at ABWT's AGM on 30 th March 2022
12	DAVID FREAK	CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGER	29/01/21	Currently on "Leave of Absence"
13	MELANIE OPENSHAW	PUBLICITY & SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER	29/01/21	29 th January 2021 to 1 st March 2022. Resigned.
14	GLENIS PRICE	VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR	29/01/21	
15	FRANCES RICHARDSON	WEBSITE MANAGER & EDUCATION OFFICER	29/01/21	
16	MARTIN STORER	IT MANAGER	29/01/21	

Chairman: Bob Price

Secretary: David Robertson

Treasurer: Geoff Bailes

ABWT's Objects

- 1) *To preserve for the public benefit Acorn Bank Watermill, a Grade II* listed 19th Century watermill, located on the National Trust's Acorn Bank Estate at Temple Sowerby, Penrith, Cumbria as a building of architectural and historical interest.*
- 2) *To advance the education of the public by establishing Acorn Bank Watermill as a heritage centre which:*
 - *offers the public an opportunity to see a working water powered corn mill and associated machinery that mills wheat and produces merchantable flour thereby demonstrating the art of flour milling and the critically endangered craft of millwrighting using, as far as possible, traditional methods; and*
 - *enhances public knowledge and understanding of the watermill's role both in the context of the nation's wider agricultural and industrial heritage and its role in local cultural and social history, including its relationship with gypsum mining in Cumbria.*

Behaviour & Values

In support of our charitable objects ABWT is committed to maintaining and operating the mill for future generations by:

Working collaboratively and openly with colleagues and our partner the National Trust.

Engaging with the local community and relevant public bodies.

Ensuring visitors feel welcome by.

- *Offering a warm and positive attitude.*
- *Being polite, friendly, and showing an interest in their views.*
- *Valuing and respecting people as individuals.*
- *Sharing knowledge and experience in an engaging and enthusiastic way.*

Review of Activities & Achievements

Chairman's Overview

Following the National Trust's ("NT") decision to scale back operations at the Acorn Bank Estate, which included the decision not to reopen the mill because of the impact of COVID on its finances, the mill volunteers approached it towards the end of 2020 with a proposal to form its own charity to lease the buildings from it at a peppercorn rent for a five-year period to operate and preserve the mill. The Charity Commission registered ABWT as a charity on 29th January 2021 and ABWT entered into a lease with NT on 3rd August 2021. As the engineering report below explains there was a lot to do before we could start to mill flour and reopen to visitors - something which was achieved over the Easter weekend of 2021.

From a standing start in February, this was a remarkable achievement which involved several steep learning curves, and we would like to thank all our members who have worked so hard to make our first year of operation such a success. We would also like to thank the NT team at Acorn Bank for their co-operation and ongoing support.

Our focus during the first year was very much on preserving the mill and to ensuring milling continued, relying on the sale of flour and donations to keep us going. During the close season from November to March we have taken the opportunity to make several

improvements to the Mill particularly aimed at improving the Visitor Experience. Further improvements are planned for next year as outlined elsewhere in this report.

September 2021 marked the 10th anniversary of the date the Volunteers at Acorn Bank Watermill first ground flour after the Mill had been silent for some 70 years.

When we set out on this venture towards the end of 2020 we could not have dreamt that we would have achieved as much as we have, and we look forward to the new season with much anticipation and enthusiasm.

Production (Bob Price, ABWT Production Manager)

After ABWT's first season (2nd April to 31st October 2021) of operating the mill we can be very pleased with progress. We have a 5-year lease; we have rescued the mill from further decay, we have milled almost 3 tonnes of wheat into almost 2000 bags, almost all of which was sold, and visitors have come back in numbers; in numbers we hardly dared to hope for and have supported us with purchases and donations such that we are ahead of our original business plan predictions.

We have paid a lot of attention to quality control. An early idea was the introduction of the "Goldilocks Jars" so that millers had a reference standard of the flour quality we aim for. We have only had one complaint about the product, and even that has been helpful in making us refocus on the procedures we need to have in place to ensure a good consistent product. It was also established that bagging needs to be done to a consistent high standard to make the flour look professional.

There were problems in commencing milling. There was a quantity of unmilled grain in the store, but, as it was past its use by date, we decided that we could not afford the risk of producing sub-standard flour and the consequent possibility of reputational harm. We therefore disposed of it and set about replacing it.

The farm that had supplied us for several years had stopped selling bagged grain, so we had to shop around for an alternative. We settled on Cope Seeds, who are based in Lincolnshire – easy to deal with as their grain is priced including delivery. However, delivery proved to be their undoing at first, as their carriers failed to understand either the importance of delivering on the right date or the need to keep pallets of grain in the dry. The presence of mould in some bags of grain led us to introduce a temporary requirement for visual checking of the contents of each bag before putting it in the hopper. Eventually the problems were resolved, and they have since been very helpful.

The impact of the 12 months during which the mill had received no attention was felt on production when the gears and bearings needed attention. Another problem that we had to overcome was that mill moth had become well established in the stones and flour chutes during the lockdown year. It took a lot of work to be confident that they were not spoiling finished flour.

A further problem that persisted through much of the year was milling enough to satisfy demand. The machinery worked well on the whole, but the rainfall sometimes failed to keep up. It is possible that we could have milled and sold more.

We seem to have surmounted all these problems and I would like to thank all those who have milled and bagged as well as those who have maintained the equipment and premises. It is to everyone's credit that we were awarded membership of the Traditional Cornmillers Guild, a tribute to our attention to quality and traditional methods.

Marketing (Martin Fagan, ABWT Sales & Marketing Manager)

It has been a very busy first year, with four external outlets now selling our flour, Natures Health in Penrith, the Village Stores in Kirkby Thore and Stainton, and Low Howgill Butchers in Appleby, together with a regular slot at Stainton Farmers Market. There are further opportunities for us to sell our flour into other local independent outlets and perhaps other Farmer's Markets (for instance, Shap) but our ability to do this is limited to

our ability to produce sufficient flour to meet these commitments and our willingness to support the Farmer's Markets with sufficient volunteer efforts. If the meeting feels this is an avenue to follow, I will endeavour to make this happen.

On the publications front, we have produced new Tourist Information Leaflets, the second print run of which will be available on Monday 4th April, and I will begin distribution around the local outlets (Penrith, Appleby, and Kirkby Stephen) next week. I would also welcome the opportunity to get these into some other local places, such as pubs, hotels etc.

We will continue to provide visitors with samples of home-produced scones, cakes, biscuits, and bread using our own flour in exchange for a small donation. The recipe leaflets we provided last year were popular and have been reprinted and will be available from the mill in time for Easter.

The first stage of the Visitor Experience upgrade is now complete, and I am pleased to say that so far, the budget is well within the original estimate. The video presentation is proving to be well received, and I have actually seen visitors reading the new banners! Work is continuing to produce new interpretation panels for the Kiln Room and the Wheelhouse.

There are many possible opportunities for marketing, such as gift packs and alternative grain lines, but I feel that the first priority is to concentrate on setting a firm base on our core product and presenting an enjoyable experience for visitors before we start to dilute our efforts on other, potentially expensive avenues.

Engineering (Carl Richardson, ABWT Chief Engineer as from 9th March 2022)

Starting Up Again

One big lesson learned from the Covid lockdown in 2020 was that things deteriorate very rapidly! Having beaten a path through the weeds, we needed to make sure that the mill was fit to run again. Initial inspections showed that quite a few problems with the alignment of the machine had occurred in just one year of standing idle.

Several wedges that hold the waterwheel onto its shaft had either dried out or were badly rotted, meaning that the waterwheel was "loose" on the shaft and made some interesting clunking noises when turned. The missing or rotten wedges were replaced. Similarly, some of the wedges holding the pit wheel to the main shaft, the wallower to the vertical shaft, and the main shaft trunnion were found to be loose. This was discovered when we tried to run the mill. Some of the trunnion wedges came out and broke off against the bearing support, causing consternation to the millers on duty and resulting in a rapid shutdown of the mill. These were replaced, allowing the mill to run again.

The machine would then apparently run quite nicely without any load, that is without trying to mill any grain. However, the loose wedges of the pit wheel and wallower resulted in very poor engagement of these gears meaning that when you did try to grind grain, which puts an extra load on the gearing, the pit wheel was "skipping over" the teeth of the wallower and producing a truly horrifying vibration of the whole mill machinery, and once again a rapid shutdown. Several attempts were to be made over several weeks to get the pit wheel and wallower wedges correctly installed so that the gearing was sufficiently well aligned to allow the mill to run under load. Since then, fingers crossed, the mill has run well, although it is necessary that the wedges are checked from time-to-time to ensure all is well.

The housing of the main bearing for the millstones also "fell out", entailing a full strip down of the stones to clean and reposition this bearing.

Water Supply

Two large leaks were discovered in the leat, both of which were threatening to cause a possible collapse of the retaining bank. Although not "technically" responsible for the leat, we took it on ourselves to repair both problems as, without any water, we don't have a mill. Again, this work was quite time-consuming and was accomplished over five or six weeks of maintenance working. The repairs seem to have been successful and the leat banks are now stable in the problem areas. It is important to keep monitoring the leat for further leakages. Clearing some of the mud and debris from the bottom of the leat would generally lower the water level and improve the situation.

Work has also taken place on the launder to:

- Try to reduce the general leakage, especially onto the cobbled path alongside the launder
- Replace the rotten dump valve housing
- Replace the rotten gate valve and associated shutter

The gate valve in the sluice by the weir has been repaired.

In addition, a lot of vegetation has been cleared from the spillway at the mill.

In and Around the Mill

- The barrier fence in the lower mill room has been re-arranged to make much more space for visitors; this is a great improvement.
- An electric hoist has been installed primarily to make it much safer and easier to move meal and finished flour between the upper and lower floors of the mill.
- Better lighting has been installed in the exhibition room, wood store and wheelhouse.
- The barrier fence in the wheelhouse had been re-arranged to allow visitors a safe and much better position to view the waterwheel.
- The doors to the cart shed have been repaired/replaced.
- The flour bin has been modified to make for easier and safer access.
- A working storage grain bin has been constructed.
- A lot of general tidying work has been done in the mill and the wood store, and a lot of junk has been removed from the access track to the mill and cottage.

Conclusion

The primary objective of the engineering team is to keep the mill running and safely; this will always be the focus of our work. Beyond that, numerous other larger or smaller works not listed here have been undertaken over the past year to improve the operation of the mill, making it safer and easier for the volunteers to accomplish all the tasks that are necessary to provide a good visitor experience, and to produce flour.

I'd like to give my thanks to all those volunteers who have helped in keeping the mill running and carrying out improvements over the past year, and particularly to the skill, knowledge and enthusiasm of Bill Openshaw who has taken the lead on many of the works described above.

Future Plans

Projects

We have done very well at "firefighting" projects, but there are countless other things that would be nice to do. Whilst it is recognised that the need for firefighting will continue and there will always be occasions when it is necessary to call all hands to the pumps to solve some emergent problems. That is part of the fun of volunteering at ABWT!

We have also successfully completed a number of smaller projects alongside those already mentioned, including improving the signage around the mill complex, improving

the visual appearance of the mill yard with flowers and planters, and providing more seating. These will continue with arrangements to allow visitors limited access to the Upper Mill room to see the start and finish of the milling process

In the longer-term, we are also looking at possible "bigger projects" that require external approvals (e.g., Listed Building Consent) and/or funding and therefore need planning well in advance. These include:

- Reinstatement of the second waterwheel.
- Accessible entrance to the mill for everyone.
- Provision of water supply and toilets at the mill or nearby.

We can only realistically cope with one or at the most two larger projects at one time. The Trustees have therefore agreed that the second waterwheel project is the best vehicle for meeting our Charity objects of developing the Mill not just in terms of conservation, but also as a means of improving the visitor experience, involving the local community, and advancing the education of the public. Following discussions with NT, ABWT was earlier this month given the green light to start the compliance and permissions process starting with the preparation of a Business Case and the planning application documentation. We hope to be in a position to submit a pre-Listed Building Consent application to Eden District Council and Historic England later in the year.

This is not to say other projects will be forgotten. For example, we have agreed with NT to carry out a feasibility study to consider ways in which access to the mill can be improved.

Education & Heritage

COVID put paid to any serious plans we had last year to offer private tours. Nonetheless, the few that were able to join us enjoyed the experience. We already have two provisional bookings for this coming year and look forward to receiving more. It was particularly disappointing that we were unable to host school parties. We are confident that this will change this year and we want to attract education groups of all ages by showing them a working watermill and letting them grind and bag their own flour. This will be supported by information packs to put the mill in context of against local history, trade, food production and environment.

Volunteers will continue to be on hand to provide information about the mill and where possible guide visitors round the mill complex. Industrial Heritage tours from the mill round the Acorn Bank Estate, will start later in the year and explain the link between the watermill and the local gypsum mines.

Health & Safety

Staying on top of Health and Safety will continue to be a priority for the Trustees. The mill can be a dangerous working environment if not managed and monitored properly, so it is important that hazards, risks, and remedies are clearly identified, accessible and adhered to by Mill volunteers to ensure both their own safety and that of the Mill.

Food Hygiene

The Mill is of course already registered with Eden District Council Environmental Health Department, but it is our intention to regain our status as a Certified Food Supplier (our last certificate expired July 2020 and was not renewed because of COVID) so that we can once again distribute and supply our stoneground flour to a wider range of outlets.

IT

At the outset of this adventure, we established a communications and document storage facility through Microsoft's Office 365 service. Whilst this served its purpose over the close season Martin Storer, ABWT's IT Manager has been developing a more secure and

reliable system which is simpler to use and to which we are now in the process of migrating to.

Martin is also carrying out a review of the SumUp payment system, which allows visitors to make contactless payments for flour and to make donations, to see if it can be further improved and simplified.

The Trustees would like to thank Martin for all his efforts.

Our Finances

Apart from a member's loan of £5000, which has not been touched and remains in our Building Society account, our main source of income has been through sales of flour, donations, and a grant of £750 from the Arnold Clarke Community Fund. We were also able to claim some £900 back in gift aid. All income has been or will be used for meeting our charitable objects. In terms of expenditure, the big-ticket items are grain, other consumables (flour bags, labels etc) insurance and the pest control contract.

Our income of just over £12112 was almost 50% up on our original Business Plan prediction and with our outgoings amounting to £5248 some 30% less than predicted we were left with an end year surplus of £6864. Some £2500 of this has since been spent on the first stage of the Visitor Experience upgrade and the purchase of a saw bench. The Trustees have agreed that priority should be given to spending most of our income on maintenance and the purchase of sorely needed tools and equipment to ensure the Mill keeps running and remains open to visitors. The remaining funds should be allocated towards the cost of materials for some of the proposed smaller projects detailed above, particularly those relating to further improving the visitor experience and education.

In line with most charitable organisations, we will retain enough cash in our bank accounts to sustain ABWT for six months in the event of a loss of income and/or to meet any unforeseen expenditure that may occur.

A copy of our accounts, as adopted by members at the AGM on 30th March 2022 are appended to this report.

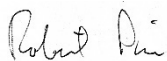
Our Treasurer has prepared a budget and cash flow projection for the 2022 season, copy attached.

If we continue to have similar visitor numbers and keep selling our flour at the current rate (effectively one bag to every third visitor) we can look forward to another good year. The first couple of weeks certainly look favourable.

Declaration

ABWT's Trustees declare that they have approved this report and that the AGM on 30th March 2022 formally adopted the Annual Accounts.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees



ROBERT PRICE

Chairman of Trustees
ACORN BANK WATERMILL TRUST

4th April 2022

Acorn Bank Watermill Trust

Accounts for the period ended 31st December 2021

Income

Sales	5,515
Donations	4,682
Guided Tours	191
Gift Aid	961
Grant	750
Building Society Interest	13
	£12,112

Expenditure

Purchases	1,823
Fixtures	445
Equipment	532
Consumables	419
Workwear	528
Insurance	725
Sundries	776
	£5,248
Surplus	£6,864

Balance Sheet

Assets

NatWest Current Account	4,930
Penrith Building Society	6,513
Prepayment	625
Cash Floats	30
	£12,098

Liabilities

Member's Loan	5,000
Creditor	234
Surplus Funds	6,864
	£12,098

Acorn Bank Watermill Trust - Registered Charity No. 1193320

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 30/03/2022