farfieldmill

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20 September 2025 at 11am

Present: 13

Zoom: 3

Peter Brooks	Carolynn Cotton	Christine Thornborrow

In Person: 10

*Carole Bowman (minutes)	Julian Exeter	Jo Thornborrow
*Andy Denton	Debbie Richardson (Chair)	Jane Thwaites
Vincent Egan	*Janet Sumner	
Joy Exeter	John Tebbutt	

***** Members who nominated the Chair to vote on their behalf or voted online

For the AGM to be quorate, 10% of the membership must take part. The meeting was quorate as the Member Register holds 698 Members and a total of 103 Members took part (14.7%). Of the 103 Members taking part, 9 were eligible to vote at the meeting (6 in the room and 3 on Zoom) a further 94 Members appointed the Chair as their Voting Representative.

1 Welcome

Debbie opened the 2025 AGM thanking those attending on Zoom and those who were attending the meeting having braved the weather.

She reported on recent improvements, including the revitalisation of the heritage displays, the addition of children's activities in house and online, and the successful operation of a Hattersley Mark I loom on level 1. The volunteer weavers were grateful for the support of other Hattersley Weavers who had helped so much with practical advice.

The Society ran the first Textile Competition funded by a legacy from Mary Burkett OBE, drawing in 170 entries. Subsequently, the Foundation managing the legacy advised that they would pay the remaining funds to the Society. These funds will principally pay for the competition but can also be used to sustain the Mill's ability to continue to run the Textile Competition.

This legacy, was received in 2024/2025 and recorded in the accounts and make them look very healthy however, despite record visitor numbers and sales, the Society has not been able to cover its costs. Donations are lower than hoped and she reminded the meeting that any and all donations help support the Mill and the environment created for our visitors.

The Mill Director and her team are responsible for day to day operations, supported by the Board of Directors that provides the essential strategy and governance needed for success. At this AGM Vincent Egan and Mary Frankland are both retiring after 7 years – due to a lack of new recruits to the Board these Directors agreed to serve an additional year. Vincent has been Chair of the Finance Committee for several years and Mary, Chair of the Heritage Group. She thanked both for their time on the Board and providing their expertise and knowledge for the benefit of the Society.

Debbie will also be leaving the Board, and at the Governance meeting in October, John Walker hopes to take on the position of Chair.

2 Apologies for Absence (12)

Nick Moule	Derek Lloyd	Mary Dowson
Christine Wallace	Susan Sharrocks	Mary Frankland
Norah Ball	Jo Mowbray	Cat James
Cecilia Hewitt	Stuart Wilkie	Vic Brown

3 Approval of the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21 September 2024 as an accurate record of that meeting.

Decided: To approve the Minutes

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

5 Directors Annual Report & Accounts

Members were asked to approve the Annual Report & Accounts for the year up to 31 March 2025.

Decided: To approve the Annual Report & Accounts

6 Auditors Report

Receipt of the Auditors Report confirming the work they had done. There were no questions from Members.

Decided: The Auditors Report was received

7 Re-Appointment of the Auditors

Decided: The resolution was carried

8 Appointment of Directors

Two Directors had been co-opted onto the Board in 2025.

8a Members were asked to approve the appointment of Christine Thornborrow

Decision: The resolution was carried

8b Member were asked to approve the appointment of John Walker

Decision: The resolution was carried

9 Any Other Business

9.1 **Julian Exeter** noted that the Tea Room is clearly short of staff and wonders if it is time to invest in more staff, or even increase the wage for Catering Assistants as he believes the current situation can't continue. He believes the Mill has employed the same number of Tea Room staff for several years, and in that time, the visitor numbers have substantially increased. Clearly, everyone is doing their best, but to generate a larger income stream will require investment.

Chairs Response: *There is currently a vacancy for someone to join the Team, and adverts were place a month ago. Attracting applicants takes time, which she believes is due to the location of the Mill. Applicants must be able to get to the Mill either by car or arranging a lift.*

This is something that the Board should look at/review.

Joy Exeter visits the Team Room for lunch every week and wished to congratulate Juliette and the Team as they do a brilliant job with the resources they have. Joy noted that on one day, after a very busy lunchtime service, a large group of bikers arrived at 3pm for refreshments and the staff coped very well.

Chairs Response: *She referred to her previous answer.*

Carolynn Cotton wished to record "what a magnificent job you have done Debbie and Vincent, and all Directors in taking the Mill forward in the last 7 years" she felt sure that everyone would agree with her comments.

Jo Thornborrow thanked Carolynn for expressing her thanks and commented that she had planned to convey a similar message. Although she hadn't been able to witness the changes herself, she knows what an immense amount of work has been undertaken by the Chair and the Board, and added her thanks.

Chairs Response: *I appreciate those comments, thankyou.*

Andy Denton raised a potential income stream for the Society**,** several years ago the Board had discussed whether those living in homes adjoining the Mill should be responsible for a percentage of the road rent or any maintenance costs for the shared road to the Mill site and he wondered whether this matter has been pursued or discussed.

Chairs Response: *Yes, this has been discussed several times, at length, but the Board had not made any decision on an arrangement for shared costs. However, it remains on a list of ideas to develop. Recently the Mill had been seeking quotes to replace the stockproof fence along both sides of the road leading to the Mill.*

John Tebbutt asked if whether there was the possibility of another Share Offer and noted that the Society was 7 years on from the original share offer.

Chairs Response: *Debbie noted that this was possible and something the Board has discussed in the past. However, one of the things that the former Chair Peter Rothery was always very cautious about was to ensure that the Member shareholding never exceeded the Society's assets and this caution remains.*

However, Debbie noted that there were in excess of 690 Members, many of them shareholders with the minimum holding (£50) and it had also been discussed whether the Board should write to shareholders and ask whether any wished to donate their shares back to the Society and then those shares could be resold.

Vincent Egan stood to give a vote of thanks to Debbie Richardson who was leaving the Board. He noted that she had been an excellent Chair and that there were 'big boots to fill' when the previous Chair, Peter Rothery left the Board. However, she quickly proved she was up to the task and has carried out the role so well, necessarily employing her well developed diplomacy skills often under extreme pressures from all sides.

On a personal note, Vincent said it had been a pleasure to have known her over the last 7 years.

Debbie is not leaving the Mill entirely as she will continue to support the Mill in her capacity as a Hattersley Weaving Volunteer and will be seen demonstrating weaving to the public on level 1.

The meeting closed at 11.25