

Broads Authority

10 May 2024

Agenda item number 17

Member report on outside bodies- How Hill Trust

Report by Tim Jickells

Purpose

Members appointed by the Authority to outside bodies are required to submit a written report on the organisation's work and activities.

Recommended decision

To note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. I represent the Broads Authority on the How Hill Trust which maintains the historic How Hill House and estate primarily as a residential site for education and inspiration of children, young people and adults. The trustees' meetings are held about every 3 months and this report updates members on recent developments at How Hill.

2. Update

- 2.1. The occupancy by schools, which has for many years been the core business of How Hill, has essentially recovered to pre-pandemic levels, which is really good to see. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the accommodation to modern and en-suite standards, which was undertaken during enforced closure during lockdown, has made the site much more attractive to adult visiting groups. This means that bookings by adult groups for visits at weekends and other times when schools do not visit have increased markedly. The house and estate are also used for day visits by schools and various other groups, including the Broads Authority for its annual staff development day in 2023.
- 2.2. This improved occupancy is welcome given the challenges of recent inflation, particularly for heating and electricity. The How Hill house refurbishment during lockdown allowed the insulation to be improved, but heating such a large old house remains an expensive business. The trustees recently held an away day to begin work on a longer term plan for the development of How Hill, and the business plan arising from that is being developed which aims to ensure the long term financial viability of the Trust.
- 2.3. There are several ongoing initiatives at How Hill to note.

- 2.4. The boardwalks through the “secret garden” area are being replaced.
- 2.5. With help from Broads Authority, and particularly Sue Stephenson (Ecology & Design Supervisor), a reed bed within the How Hill estate is being improved partially funded by FiPL.
- 2.6. The How Hill Trustees are delighted that Norfolk County Council has committed to the refurbishment of Turf Fen Mill and work should begin in 2024. We now hope for the renovation of the Boardman and Clayrack Mills as well. The How Hill staff and trustees will do everything they can to support these mill refurbishments. These mills form an integral part of the landscape within this part of the Broads and also can offer.

Author: Tim Jickells, appointed by the Broads Authority

Date of report: 07 March 2024

Background papers: none