

## *Autumn 2022 Newsletter*

A lot has changed since the last newsletter and the MoBE has a new board of trustees



From left to right – Margaret Benton (Minute Secretary), Henning Wagner (Vice Chair and Secretary), Sally Leavey, Emma Pollock (Chair), John Maxwell and Simon Horne (Treasurer)

### **At The Mill of Benholm**

Aberdeenshire Council is still the owner of the Mill of Benholm but, North East Scotland Preservation Trust (NESPT) is in negotiations with the council for an asset transfer. Sarah Kettles, of Sarah Kettles Conservation, has been employed as a Development Officer by NESPT for Mill of Benholm. Sarah will assist with raising the funds needed to revive the site.

The last hurdle for the asset to be transferred, seems to be the proof of the funding for Phase One. Phase One being, making the site safe and accessible for the public including access into the mill building, refurbishment of the grain store for multipurpose use, repairs to the water course so that the wheel will be turning again, new signage and some cosmetic repairs. The funds needed for Phase 1 are estimated to be around £250,000.

## **The Future**

The board of the MoBE wants to not only concentrate on the Mill of Benholm, but to widen out their interest to the Mill Brae Woods and Benholm Kirk. The woodland opposite the Mill of Benholm is of huge natural interest and used to be used as part of the Mill of Benholm experience, with beautiful paths and walkways which nature has almost reclaimed.

Working closely with Historic Churches Scotland, who own Benholm Kirk, we hope to use both historic sites to benefit each other.

And finally, including the Conversation Area of Benholm, a truly beautiful and peaceful place of great natural and historic interest.

If all pieces of Benholm work together, with the Mill of Benholm as a hub for locals and visitors alike, then the Mill of Benholm can thrive and be financially sustainable.

## **Media and Communication**

The Press & Journal have visited the Mill of Benholm and interviewed some of the trustees in their effort to support the project to stop further deterioration of the site and bring it back to the glory it deserves as a hub of the community. The article got posted on their webpage on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2022.

We are steadily growing our Facebook audience to reach even more people in the area and have over 900 followers, not bad for a small local page! Facebook will be the place where you can find regular updates, stories and pictures of the Mill of Benholm, so please visit and like the page.

As well, there will be newsletters which will be distributed by email to all members and supporters. The plan is to have regular quarterly newsletters, starting with Autumn 2022, followed by a Winter 2022 newsletter in December/January.

But if there is any development of importance, there will be a special newsletter in between, so that everyone knows what is going on.

To complete our digital presence a new website for the Mill of Benholm Enterprise is planned, this will help to communicate with members and interested people alike as well as showcase the Mill of Benholm Enterprise to all potential funders, stakeholders and partners



Photos courtesy of Ken Whittaker of Whittaker Engineering Ltd



## Events

The stall at the Johnshaven Fish Festival was a huge success, we took over £100 from donations and sales, spoke to numerous interested people from the area offering their support or just wanting to know about future plans and we gained many more members and supporters.

The feedback we received indicated the huge interest of the community to have the Mill of Benholm back in the community as a hub, a café, a place to wander, to enjoy the beautiful nature, the gardens and the historic buildings or just to rest in this peaceful setting.



We had planned to hold a Doors Open Day Weekend in September, but Aberdeenshire Council required a License to Occupy which was only drafted a few days prior to the event. There was an impossibly short timeframe to sign this document and unjustifiable costs involved to do this.

The board decided, with regret, to cancel the opening up of the Mill of Benholm on this occasion.

However, our friends from Historic Churches Scotland came to the rescue and allowed us to use their Benholm Kirk to set up a display and meet and inform the interested visitors.

The display will be a permanent feature at Benholm Kirk, so please visit the display when you are in the area.





## **The Mill of Benholm needs your help**



It took only a few years from the left photo to the right one... action is needed fast

To help us in our efforts to not only revive the Mill of Benholm with its Category A listed buildings described by Historic Environment Scotland as “an exceptional and rare survival”, but to stop further deterioration, before it is too late, please write to your local Councillor, your MSP and your MP to draw their attention to this important project for the local community and visitors and harness their support





There is still time, before it is too late...



The Mill of Benholm 1934 in a Press & Journal article

### **Membership Drive**

And last, but not least, we are on a membership drive, as the more members the MoBE has, the stronger is our position to stop the deterioration of the Mill of Benholm and bring it back to the lively hub it deserves to be.

So please, if your relatives, friends or neighbours are interested to support us and become members, ask them to get in contact either through

Facebook - Mill of Benholm Enterprise, @benholmmill

Instagram - @millofbenholmenterprise

Or through email – [millofbenolmenterprise@gmail.com](mailto:millofbenolmenterprise@gmail.com)