

Kew Bridge Engines Trust and Water Supply Museum Ltd

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting, held on 30th September 2025, at the Museum

Members present:

Mark Baldock, Tim Revell, Freddie Hollom, Maria Gmur-Pierre, Stephen Cole, Jean Benn, Phil Burness, John Johnson, John Waxman, Oliver Pearcey, Elizabeth Pearcey, Hilery Pereira, Chris Great, Martin Wicks, Andrew Pierre, John Stone, Clive Penfold, Susan Windeatt, Ann Hugues, Jean Dubash, Farokh Dubash, Rob Casey, Glen Williams, Scott Pereira, Andrew Barnard, Richard Albanese, Marten Bonham, Ben Russell, Georgie Salzedo, Noel Simmons, Nigel Barnes.

In attendance:

Hannah Harte (Museum Director), Holly Slater, Richard Cude

1. Apologies for absence

Noted

2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM, held on Tuesday 1st October 2024 at the Museum

Members were satisfied that the minutes were a fair reflection of the 2023 AGM and approved them by a show of hands.

3. Presentation of the 2024 annual report from the Chair of Trustees

- John Waxman (JW) reflected on his first full year since ratification as chair by the last AGM, and recorded his thanks to Tom O’Leary (TOL) for supporting the transition.
- JW thanked HH for guiding the museum through the first year of what would most likely be a multi-year transformation.
- The museum’s financial position remained challenging throughout 2024 although perhaps not as severe as it was at the start of the year.
- Continued steaming through 2024 remained an important part of the museums offer, but, in common with rest of the sector there had been a decline in overall visitor numbers.
- JW noted that TOL had stepped down as a trustee at the end of 2024 and that the current number of trustees was 5. Looking ahead 6-8 trustees would provide more resilience. A “gap analysis” for trustee skills was underway with recruitment planned for 2026.

4. Approval of 2024 Annual Report and Accounts sought by the Treasurer

A motion to approve the 2024 report and accounts was approved by a show of hands.

5. Appointment of Auditors

The Board proposed that Collards should be reappointed as auditors for the 2025 financial year. Members requested a rationale for reappointment. Freddie Hollom (FH) responded that Collards had been auditors for some years, and hence were very familiar with the museum's arrangements and that their fees remained competitive when benchmarked against competitors.

The motion to reappoint Collards as Auditors was proposed was approved by a show of hands.

6. Sum up of 2024 by the Museum Director

- HH reflected that 2024 had provided the foundations for continued development in 2025 and beyond.
- A team restructure had put the right people in the right places, but this was still a small team facing a big, sector wide challenge. The difficulty in securing a finance officer was noted.
- The hard work in 2024 had paid off with the award of MEND4 funding for the Great Engine House project. This was the largest award give in this round of funding and a huge complement to the quality of the (over 300 page) bid.
- Volunteers are the lifeblood of any museum, and activities such as regular steam ups had reenergised the LMWS volunteer base – leading to recent large and fun summer BBQ event
- Financially, 2024 began on the brink of disaster, but characteristically the museum's supporters rallied around via the "survival" crowdfunder, allowing time for cost efficiencies to become effective and for more structured fund raising to be put in place. Whilst not yet fully sustainable, 2025 finances are a lot healthier than 2024.
- Whilst delivering the Great Engine House project will be a huge part of the immediate future, there are wider ambitions including:
 - Reopening of the Tower
 - Redefine our café offer
 - Continuing to develop the variety of events – eg GaussFest
 - Plans for the Electric House including restoring the Arc rectifier
 - Submissions to the NHLF to:
 - Continue the journey to explore options for "green steam" with Steamology
 - Improve the visitor experience through a development of the site

- HH reiterated that we are “never out of the woods”, and that the museum relies on our visitors and members, so please continue to support the museum through spreading the word, renewing memberships and where possible donating both financially and through volunteering.

There were a number of questions from the membership:

Would the opportunities for volunteering be added to the website?

HH responded that a new website was in development and that volunteering was part of the design.

What impact is the disruption caused by the GEH Project likely to have on visitor numbers?

HH explained that the 90” and 100” would not be accessible for the duration of the project and that there would likely be a reduction in carparking spaces, but the rest of the site (1838 house, steam hall etc) would not be impacted. The schedule had been designed to allow access to the Splash Zone during the summer, and the project itself should provide some “behind the scenes” experience events.

How many actual paid staff were there in the period?

HH clarified that there were 10 people working part time, this was the equivalent to 5.9 FTE.

What concerns keep you awake?

HH responded that her main concern was visitor numbers.

JW responded that work load on the team was his primary concern

What is the current membership?

HH responded that membership stood at approximately 250.

How will the work on the GEH project be documented and shared with the membership, for instance could YouTube be used?

HH responded that this was being considered and Kew News would remain the main channel for membership updates. Producing good quality YouTube material was still quite costly and resource intensive but could be considered.

Could the Blue Peter episode that featured the 90” be found, and perhaps re-enacted?

HH responded that this was something that could be looked into.

Note: following the AGM - the episode was identified to have been broadcast on 7/10/1976 on BBC One London.

A motion to approve the report of the Museum Director was approved by a show of hands.

7. Any other business and questions

A request was made for the start time of the AGM be brought forward as 7pm was rather late for some people. Other members commented that an earlier start would be difficult to accommodate due to work commitments. A compromise of 6:30 pm was proposed for the next meeting.

The possibility of allowing online participation via Microsoft Teams was discussed. It was felt that a mix of onsite and online would require investment in video and sound recording but could be looked at in the future.

RA thanked the trustees for their commitment to the museum.

8. Visit to the Great Engine House as an upcoming funded project

Visit was conducted following the formal close of the meeting.

9. Close

The meeting closed at approximately 7:15 pm