

PITA Meet North 2017 Report

PITA Meet North and the PITA AGM for 2017 were held jointly at the premises of Romiley Board Mill, operated by **Preston Board & Packaging Ltd**. It commenced just as Storm Caroline was starting to make its way across the country, so there was a noticeable drop in temperature accompanied by a biting breeze, but the welcome was warm, and the buffet lunch that preceded the event was most welcome.



For those unfamiliar with the mill, it is reached via a side street off the main road running through the town, and is just a quarter of a mile away from the shopping area. Additionally, the site is unusual in that a public road bisects the site, such that the board machine is on one side, and some of the associated converting plant is on the other. As can be imagined, this can lead to some tension with locals, as the mill manufactures several thousand tonnes of board and finished goods, so is a

focus of many lorry journeys. Therefore, in addition to making business decisions, part of the job of the mill directorate is to act as politicians, brokering good relations with their immediate neighbours, particularly with regards to the highway.

After completing the formal AGM (minutes of which are appended below) the assembled group listened to two presentations outlining the history of the site and describing the current operation. The industrial heritage harks back to the 1830s when it was built as a cotton mill, and throughout the 19th century it continued to be used for textiles. Around WWI it operated as a margarine factory, and its transformation to papermaking occurred post WWI, so in the next few years the site will be celebrating its centenary as a paper mill.



The attendees then split into four groups, and we were treated to a very detailed tour of the site. Those of us unfamiliar with the operation were surprised at the amount of conversion

that occurred; we were expecting a multi-ply board machine, but not core manufacturing (both spiral and convolute), nor production of edge protectors (which, looking at the machinery, was potentially a natural progression from core making).

At the raw material warehouse discussions were held about the problems of getting recovered fibre of acceptable quality, and this expanded to cover the possible effects of the Chinese National Sword regulations on the UK recovered paper sector. As can be anticipated, plenty of opinions were aired, but in truth none of us were sure about what effect the Chinese action will have on the recovery sector; we just know there will be an effect (which in all probability will include price).



The tour ended with a view of the new sheeter. Investment has been steady and consistent over a number of years – as becomes obvious when you learn that production capacity has been increased from around 26,000tpy when Preston Board took over (in 1994) to the current 50,000tpy. A visitor can learn a lot from how this company extracts every last ounce from the machinery! Buying carefully, and adapting in-house, has been the order of the day.

Our visit ended and we left in the dark and the wet, as Caroline continued to disperse copious amounts of rain. Driving through the mill, lights shone in buildings on both sides of the road, as the small but dedicated workforce continued to produce the products upon which this company has built such a solid reputation.

Thanks are due to John Johnson (Operations Director) and Ernie Domville (Paper & Energy Consultant) for agreeing to host our meeting, and for being so accommodating with the accompanying tour.





2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Romiley Board Mill, Romiley / Cheshire

Thursday, 7th December 2017, 14:00 hrs

MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Stephen Hutt and Debbie Stringer.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (1st December 2016 at the Red Hall Hotel, Ramsbottom) were distributed to Members. Voting for approval:

Proposed by Mr Peter Nadin Seconded by Mr John Kirby carried nem con

3. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda of this Annual General Meeting was distributed to Members. Voting for approval:

Proposed by Mr Barry Read Seconded by Dr Daven Chamberlain carried nem con

4. Adoption of Chairman's Report

Dr Graham Moore, the National Chairman, read his report to the meeting, a copy of which is to be reproduced in the 2017/2018 PITA Annual Review. Voting for adoption of the report:

Proposed by Mr John Kirby Seconded by Mr Barry Read carried nem con.

5. Adoption of Accounts

A copy of the 2016 PITA Accounts were distributed to Members at the meeting and Mr Barry Read gave a summary of the financial situation. Voting for adoption of the accounts:

Proposed by Dr Graham Moore Seconded by Mr John Kirby carried nem con.

6. Election of Directors

Mr John Kirby as National Chairman:

Proposed by Dr Graham Moore Seconded by Mr Tim Klemz carried nem con.

Dr Graham Moore as Deputy / Immediate Past Chairman:

Proposed by Mr John Kirby Seconded by Mr Barry Read carried nem con.

Mr Stephen Hutt as Financial Director:

Proposed by Mr Martin Wroe Seconded by Dr Graham Moore carried nem con.

The Trustees due for re-election were Mr Tim Klemz and Mr Martin Wroe.

Mr Klemz:

Proposed by Dr Daven Chamberlain Seconded by Mrs Helen Dolan carried nem con.

Mr Wroe:

Proposed by Dr Graham Moore Seconded by Mrs Helen Dolan carried nem con.

7. Re-Appointment of Auditors

Mr Barry Read recommended Horsfield and Smith continue as Auditors for the Association.

Proposed by Mr Barry Read Seconded by Mrs Helen Dolan carried nem con.

8. Presentation of Meritorious Service Award

Mr John Kirby presented Mr David Ingham with the PITA Meritorious Service Award, to acknowledge the major contribution he has made to the UK Paper Industry over several decades. (A short report will feature in the forthcoming PITA Annual Review.)

9. Any Other Business

Mr Peter Nadin asked about future plans regarding the PITA Office; Mr Barry Read answered that we are in the process of subletting part of the premises.

There being no other business to report or discuss, the meeting closed at 14:31hrs.

Daven Chamberlain
13 December 2017