

Broads Authority

28 November 2025

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. How Hill is a magnificent Grade 2 listed thatched house near Ludham. It is owned and operated by the How Hill Trust Charitable Trust, with the aim to “share our knowledge and passion about local nature and history with visitors of all ages through a range of courses and activities.” The Broads Authority appoints one member to the Board of Trustees and that person is currently Tim Jickells. This report briefly reflects on activities at How Hill over the last year.

2. Activities update for 2024/25

- 2.1. How Hill has had another busy and encouraging year. For many years its core activity has been providing residential short courses for Norfolk children under the age of 16, and this year 1146 children came and stayed at the house and an additional 872 came on day visits. These visits involve educational interactions with the natural environment around How Hill, both on land and on the river.
- 2.2. A few years ago, the Trustees agreed a major refurbishment of the interior of How Hill to improve the standard of the residential accommodation, as described in a previous report to the Broads Authority. This necessary modernisation was done with the broader aim of making How Hill more attractive to adult groups of visitors. This objective has been achieved and such groups enjoying activities such as yoga, art & crafts, local natural and cultural history have increased, and the visitor feedback has been very positive.
- 2.3. This increase in adult group visits provides a valuable source of income which How Hill is looking to grow further, since it is clear that financial pressures on school budgets are leading to a modest reduction in numbers of schools visiting and the numbers of

students in each party. The income from these two broad groups of visitors is the main source of income for the Trust, alongside a very valuable and welcome income from charitable donations. The Trustees longer term aim is to make the income from activities cover all the operating costs of the Trust within the next three to five years.

- 2.4. In the past How Hill has opened a tearoom through the summer months which has been a valuable source of income when the weather is good but requires a large staff time input. The Trustees and the Director of How Hill agreed to discontinue the tearoom at least for now and were pleased that the Broads Authority were able to facilitate a “pop up” food and drink facility near Toad Hall Cottage this summer.
- 2.5. A prominent feature of the environment around How Hill comprises the three Wind Pumps, being Turf Fen Mill, Boardman’s Mill and Clayrack Mill. Turf Fen Mill is on the opposite riverbank to How Hill and How Hill Trust and staff are delighted that Norfolk County Council, who own the mill, have now raised the money to refurbish it with work starting imminently. How Hill staff will support this renovation, with the builders using How Hill for much of their access to the mill. We hope that in the future the renovation of the Clayrack and Boardman “Hollow Post Wooden Mills” adjacent to the How Hill staithe will also proceed.
- 2.6. At the end of September 2025, Simon Partridge retired as director of How Hill after 14 years. Simon has done an excellent job leading the organisation. The Trustees were very pleased to be able to appoint Lynsey Skeates as the new Director. Lynsey, a former employee at The National Trust has previously worked at How Hill for 4 years as education manager and field teacher, so she knows the organisation well and is brimming with ideas to develop it further in the coming years
- 2.7. There have been several changes to the Borad of Trustees over the last year or so. The current trustees are Andrew Scull (chair), Keith Bacon, Michael Flett and Tim Jickells. We are actively seeking to recruit a few new trustees, so if anybody is interested, please do get in touch

Author: Tim Jickells

Date of report: 21 October 2025

Background papers: none