



SPRING NEWSLETTER



Mill at the end of the rainbow – courtesy of, and thanks to, Jacqui Davis

Dear all,

A little over four years after the formation of Our Belper Mills, and with a stated objective to ...

'.... work together at local, national and international level to restore and put to viable use, the Belper Mills site(s) to a world-wide recognised standard.'

.... the Mills have finally secured planning permission. You could say that we now have the pathway to development; we know what's been agreed and we know what needs to be done first, before the builders come on site. And to be clear, there's a lot; a lot of planning conditions which need to be satisfied before we see the lights shining from apartment windows.

Our position is clear. We're delighted that this step has been taken. This is progress and it's a big 'thank you' to Amber Valley Borough Council. But, having taken this bold step, we feel it's crucial that the conditions, of which there are 43, are not watered down or abandoned. Why? Because in granting permission to develop a UNESCO world heritage site of such significance, it needs to be done properly, respectfully and in a timely fashion.

The ball is now with the owners, First Investments, to do this well and soon. We're looking forward to working with them to meet our stated objective and as for the District Council (or whatever the Local Government reorganisation brings next), please make sure you're not afraid to stand by and enforce your conditions. OBM will be watching and reporting, you can be sure of that.

NB. We've uploaded Appendix A of the planning conditions to our website. To read them, simply click onto this link - <https://ourbelpermills.co.uk/2026/03/16/planning-permission-secured/>

Roger

Roger Moors, Chair - OBM

CURRENT STATUS: PLANNING APPLICATION APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

The application by mill owners First Investment Real Estate Management Ltd, was approved at a planning committee meeting held on Monday, February 16 at Strutts Community Centre.

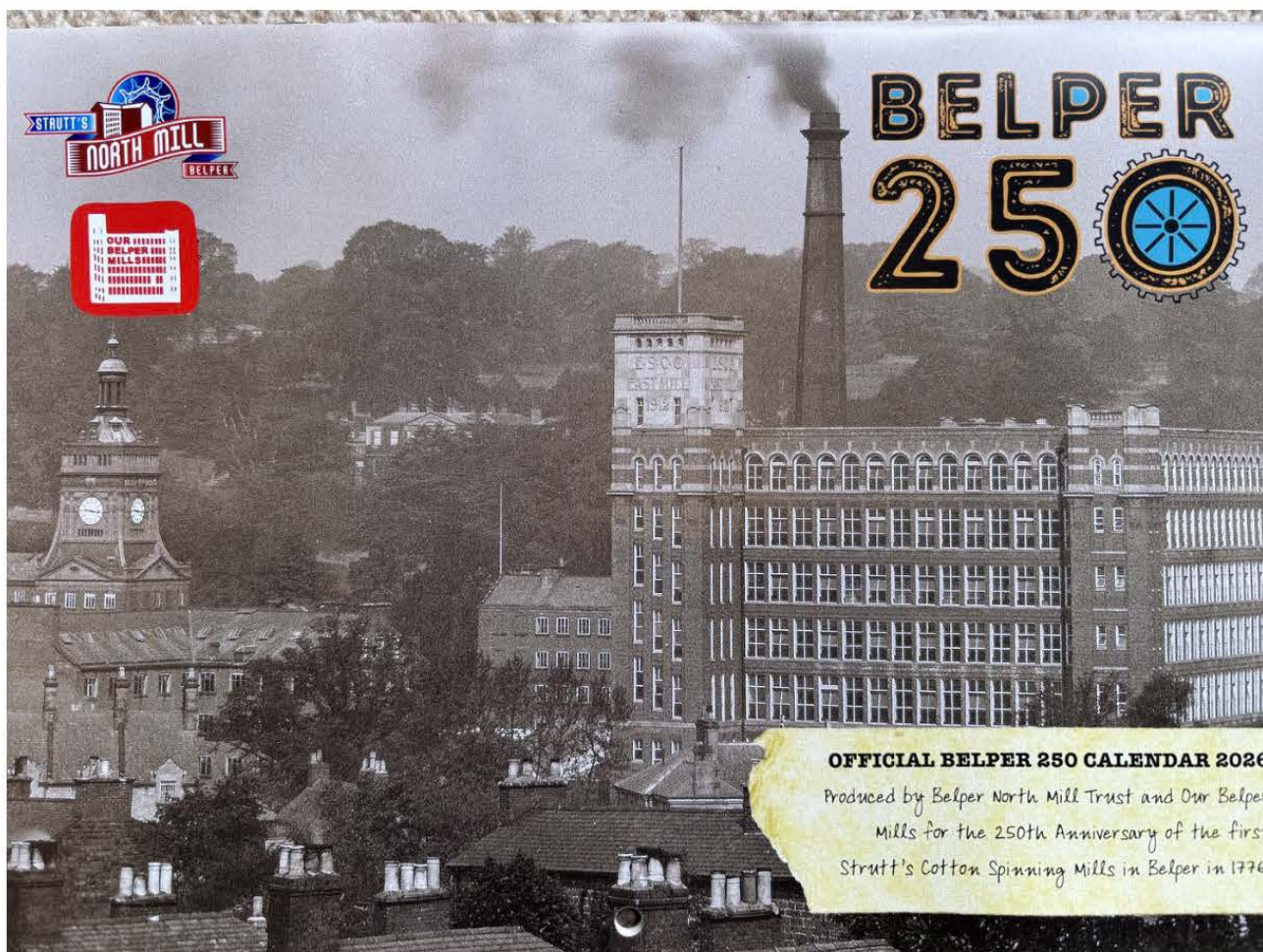
In a nutshell, the main proposals within the application are for 130 apartments in the East Mill, provision of some parking, conversion of the pavilion (formerly Chucklebutties) into a restaurant or café, repairs to the North Mill, the Archway House footbridge and other buildings on the site.

The approval is subject to agreement from the developers to abide by Section 106 requirements to fund local services and 43 conditions relating to the manner of the development and the materials used.

Committee papers can be found here -

<https://www.ambervalley.gov.uk/council/committees-and-meetings/committee-documents?CommitteeRef=PLBD&MeetingRef=2459>

OBM is recognised as the means of representing the public voice. We will continue to keep you updated.



2026 CALENDAR

OBM joined forces with Belper North Mill Trust and Volunteers Association to produce a calendar to celebrate Belper's history and the 250th anniversary of Belper's first Strutt mill. The calendars sold well and provided £865 in profit to support OBM in the future.

The few that were unsold were donated to the residents of Ada Belfield Care Home in Belper and Milford House Care Home in Milford. Milford House was built in 1792 as a summer residence for Jedidiah Strutt, whose birthday we are celebrating this year.



Belper North Mill Trust & Volunteers Association

Belper North Mill Trust's long-term aim is to return a Heritage Centre to Belper. We are currently part of our MP's Partnership Group with OBM and others. We are hopeful that the work of this group will ultimately help us achieve our main aim as part of the full regeneration of the Belper Mills site.

In the short to medium term The Trust continues to support the Volunteers Association, to 'tell Belper's Story' through its programme of mill site tours, heritage walks, talks, educational services and other events. Thanks to all the hard work from our volunteers, our customer support has been amazing.

2025 was a really good year –

1. Customer numbers were at their highest since the museum closed – more than 2,000 people came to visit us in 2025, that is more than double the number in 2023.
2. We received the Trip Advisor Travellers Choice Award again (the third year running).
3. Our volunteers' hard work was acknowledged when in March our Volunteers Association won the Visit Peak District and Derbyshire Tourism Award, Team of The Year category.
4. We have welcomed seven new volunteers to our team and would be delighted to welcome more.
5. We returned key elements of the Belper Museum Collection for display in Belper Library.
6. We developed existing partnerships and set some up new ones, for example to reach out to families who would benefit from experiencing Belper's rich heritage. Two very successful Family Fun Days have been held thanks to the support from Amber Valley Partnership
7. We are now fully engaged with Belper 250, the 250th Anniversary of Belper Mills in 2026.
 - a. Our partnership with Crich Brew Co. to produce four anniversary ales will see the first special beer released in February – Pull Yer Socks Up Porter.
 - b. Our new book 'The Strutt Mills of Belper and Milford' will be formally released on World Heritage Site Day, 18th April at the bargain price of £8.
 - c. We will be putting on special events on key dates like National Mills weekend 9th and 10th of May
8. All our tour, walks and volunteering information is on our website www.belpernorthmill.org.uk



OBM Milling About

Strutts Autumn Market:

OBM took part in another bustling Autumn Market event in October. Volunteers were on hand with information about Belper 250, (a year-long programme of events to mark several key anniversaries for the town in 2026), selling the Belper 250 limited edition calendar and general OBM updates. Our marvellous mill model was on display too, at various events proving to be a great talking point.

OBM is incredibly grateful to our friend and supporter Jacqui Davis for so generously donating this to us and, of course to the wonderfully talented Deborah Calladine – Jones, for creating this miniature masterpiece.



Belper 250- Strutts' Anniversaries:

This year is the 250th anniversary of Belper's epic role in the industrial revolution.

Throughout the year a variety of events will celebrate the 300th birthday of Jedidiah Strutt and mark the 250th anniversary of his first mill in the town.

OBM is heavily involved in these plans. Walks, talks, exhibitions and events will happen throughout 2026. Residents and visitors to the town will be able to make wonderful memories and help to ensure these celebrations will make history themselves.

For more information and a detailed calendar of all the events already planned can be found here: www.belper250.co.uk

OBM volunteers were on duty in store at the Co-op Strutt Street during October and November.

OBM Volunteer Christmas Social:

Our Christmas Social took place in mid-December at No 28. A lovely festive spread and a chance to meet up and say thank you to everyone who helps in every way. Roger, our Chair, thanked everybody for all the hard work and dedication to get us this far and we now await the prospect of a new future ahead, depending upon the decisions made regarding the mills.

For other talks, tours & treats visit:



www.belpernorthmill.org.uk



belperhistoricalsociety.co.uk



**DERWENT
VALLEY
MILLS**
WORLD HERITAGE SITE

www.derwentvalleymills.org

Thanks for reading!

Newsletter comments or contributions are all welcome at ourbelpermills@gmail.com

Newsletter produced with grateful acknowledgement to Belper North Mill Trust, Phoebe McMillan, Carol Brewer, Jill Walden and all our contributors.

Please sign up, 'follow', 'like' and share

www.ourbelpermills.co.uk

@ourbelpermills