

NEWS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE

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Support for ‘the man in the mill’ – Gayle Mill

Cultura Trust has received a grant from the Peter Sowerby Foundation to employ Stuart Parsons, Gayle Mill’s ‘animateur’, for the coming year, and thereby reach more people through the mill’s social capital for learning about the value of traditions to modern rural life.

Following a programme of work, including providing COVID-safe public access, Gayle Mill recently reopened to the public. Now Cultura can announce that the man at the heart of the mill has a secure future until the summer of 2022.

Stuart Parsons has become the face of Gayle Mill – for visitors, volunteers and partners. The grant from the Peter Sowerby Foundation provides Stuart and the mill with the certainty of knowing he can plan ahead and develop its capacity as a resource for learning and wellbeing. The grant covers the twelve months from August 2021 to July 2022.

Stuart described what the grant means:

“Gayle Mill has come to mean a lot to me as it shares its stories and significance. It means different things to different people – for some it is about inspiring a career in almost-forgotten trades; for others, it stirs memories and helps them enjoy life. The uncertainties of the pandemic have overshadowed our ability to look ahead beyond a few weeks, so the grant from the Peter Sowerby Foundation has provided timely support to be relevant through challenging times for all of us.”

Graham Bell, Director of Cultura, added:

“Gayle Mill has been at the forefront of technology and rural traditions for countless generations. But it’s true worth is not just in what it was but what it is – in the true spirit of tradition, that it keeps being relevant to each successive generation. Stuart has found his place with the mill as storyteller, broker, mentor and enabler. The grant directly supports Stuart but through him many others will benefit as we look forward to people being encouraged to experience, to try, to learn, to share.”

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Notes for Editors

Gayle Mill dates from 1784, working for over 200 years as an outstanding example of the UK's industrial evolution. It closed in 1988 but re-opened 20 years later, preserved and fully operational, and opened to the public by Cultura Trust. The charity was founded in 1965, working with communities and volunteers on education and training in traditional skills upon which cultural heritage relies. The Trust's priority is to demonstrate that cultural heritage has a role in society, especially in contributing to the local economy, climate action, employment and wellbeing.

The Mill is open Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday from 10am until 4pm. Guided Tours take place every hour on the hour. Visitors can turn up at the mill without prebooking but under COVID-safe restrictions, numbers are limited so to be assured of places, visitors are asked to call [01969 629348](tel:01969629348) or email crafts@gaylemill.org in advance.

The Peter Sowerby Foundation was established in 2011 to direct the personal wealth of Dr Peter Sowerby as grants to organisations that met the philanthropic objectives of Peter and his wife, Ann. The Foundation awards grants in the areas of healthcare innovation; education & learning; and, community & the environment. The founder, Peter Sowerby, was one of the leading entrepreneurs focussed on the use of data in health. <https://petersowerbyfoundation.org.uk>

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Gayle Mill
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