



## **Our Belper Mills – Helping to secure a new future for the Mills of Belper**



Weather, time and a lack of action over many years has left the Belper Mills complex, in the heart of the town, in need of some serious attention. Besides its iconic stature and impressive position on the banks of the Derwent, the North Mill holds claim to being the first iron-framed building in the world.

A long-standing planning application by its current owners to convert part of the site remains under consideration years after the plans were submitted and whilst that drags on, so does the damage.



### Cue ...Our Belper Mills (OBM)

Born out of Transition Belper's 'Community Conversation' 2021, the issue of the mills emerged as one of the most significant challenges facing the town and that gave rise to the creation of OBM in 2022.

OBM is a non-political group who work alongside, but independently from, existing interested parties and looks to secure the future of the historic mills with sustainable uses which will reinforce and complement existing businesses and residential communities of the town.

Put simply, its reason for being is... *'To represent the public voice in the process to restore the historic UNESCO world heritage recognised North and East Mills in Belper'*.

Fast forward 18 months and OBM now has a constitution, strong governance, a website ([www.ourbelpermills.co.uk](http://www.ourbelpermills.co.uk)), and a fabulous leaflet giving the full background on the Mills and what's happening at the moment [OBM Leaflet](#).

Today OBM has more than 600 members and 1000 plus followers on social media and is an active project steering group member of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership.

The Partnership, made up of local authorities and a group of other interested parties, believes the proposals in the owner's applications to Amber Valley Borough Council will negatively impact on the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. It also believes the proposals are unlikely to be financially viable.

As the condition of the buildings on the North and East Mills site continues to deteriorate, the Partnership has commissioned its own consultants, through Derbyshire County Council, to produce alternative proposals.

The money for the alternative scheme's development has been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund with match funding from Historic England,

Derbyshire County Council, and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership.

No money has yet been secured for the delivery of the alternative scheme, although the production of a robust funding strategy forms part of the commission.

OBM is keen to ensure that everyone has a chance to have their opinion heard on the future of the Mills and later this summer an online survey is being launched on the alternative plan options. If you want to get involved please keep an eye on [www.derwentvalleymills.org.uk](http://www.derwentvalleymills.org.uk) and on Facebook: @DerwentValleyMillsWHS or Twitter: @DVMillsWHS. And of course, all the details will also be available on [www.ourbelpermills.co.uk](http://www.ourbelpermills.co.uk)

**In the meantime, stay up to date with all the developments going on at the Mills by signing up to be a supporter of Our Belper Mills.... it's free and it's easy @ [www.ourbelpermills.co.uk/contact-us/](http://www.ourbelpermills.co.uk/contact-us/) and, as OBM is the voice of the people, we'll be all the more effective the more people we have on board.**

Better still...why not get actively involved as a member and volunteer to help out in some way? We've grown rapidly in the last year, but we'd love to have more people on hand, able to offer practical help and be part of our hardworking, friendly team. Membership is free and also means that you can vote at OBM meetings and maybe opt to become part of the committee or core team. If that's you then contact us today to find out how you can help and be part of a movement to help restore the Belper Mills.

Website

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Instagram

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