



National Mills Weekend 7th – 8th May 2022

Support Pack

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National Mills Weekend

Mill Support Pack 2022

I. General Information

National Mills Weekend 2022 is taking place over the weekend of **7 & 8 May**. This year's theme is ***New Life for Old Mills***.

There is no charge for participating, and taking part is a great way of helping to increase awareness and support for your mill, both within the local community and further afield. To participate, all you need do is to open your doors to visitors over that weekend – for either day or both.

Many mills open for free, some ask for donations (eg. for mill repairs or for a charity) and others charge an entrance fee - the choice is yours. In order to make the best of the weekend we recommend that you:

1. Make sure your entry on our website (www.spab.org.uk/mills/national-mills-weekend) (<https://www.spab.org.uk/mills/visit-a-mill>) is up-to-date and accurate. Contact the Mills Section with any changes or information for new entries
2. Plan any special events or joint work with other mills or local partners
3. Promote your National Mills Weekend event
4. Give us your feedback after the event: visitor numbers, photographs, ideas and suggestions – to help us share your success and plan for next year.

How we can help

Promotion

As well as managing the National Mills Weekend webpages and providing information to our members, the Mills Section will promote National Mills Weekend through press releases to national and regional media, and through social media. In the past we achieved over 100 mentions of National Mills Weekend in the press, including coverage in major national outlets, and in 2022 we aim to do even better.

Support pack

This support pack includes:

- A guide to planning events
- A guide to promoting your open day(s)
- A template press release (in Word format)
- A branded poster that you can customise (in Word format)

Other resources

- Branded balloons

Available on request (email millsinfo@spab.org.uk)

In addition to the information in this pack, we are here to help with any questions about the weekend, further advice on promoting your open day or help with designing and printing posters.

For further information, please contact us.

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2. Events & Activities

All you need to do to take part in National Mills Weekend is to open your doors to visitors on 7th and/or 8th May this year. For those mills that are anyway open at that time, organising special activities over that weekend can help attract more people.

While there is no obligation to follow any theme, we recommend that you consider running activities or events to fit either with the **New Life for Old Mills** theme or with Real Bread Week. Your feedback tells us that others do value the theme and it helps to make the day more memorable for all concerned.

New Life for Old Mills

How you interpret the theme is up to you – you can focus on the history of the building itself and what it was used for, the people connected with it, the mill's importance to the village or town...

As well as displaying photographs, drawing or paintings, you might find copies of historical documents such as illustrated newspaper articles or mill sales particulars to put on show. These can often be found at the local/county libraries and archives, and many images and other resources are also available from the Mills Archive (www.millsarchive.org).

We are also inviting everyone to share images of their own mill repair project on our social media channels. Let us know about recent, but also repairs to your mill in the past that has helped to make it possible for people to see, appreciate and enjoy today. Please also let us know if your mill has been affected by recent storms or if you are planning to open your mill to the public during this year's National Mills Weekend for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic.

Don't forget to make sure you have the copyright permission to publish any images you are using and ensure they are accurately attributed.

Including activities and events is always a draw for visitors. These might include:

- **Milling** demonstrations
- Hands-on **milling** using a hand quern
- **Displays** of images from the mill throughout the years or images showing any repairs or alterations to the mill
- **Baking** demonstrations, perhaps working with a local bakery, and **bread tasting**
- Baking **workshops** if you have the facilities – again you could work with a bakery in your area to offer these
- A bread making **competition** – get people to bring their loaves for judging on your open day.
- **Displays** explaining the milling process and the journey from grain to bread
- **Competition** to guess the number of grains of wheat in a jar or the weight of a sack of flour

Some mills arrange less directly mill-related attractions, such as craft demonstrations, plant sales, live music and even vintage car displays to help draw the crowds.

Resources

For general information and guidance on running events, please see:

- **Covid guidelines:** <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- **Cabinet Office:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events/the-can-do-guide-to-organising-and-running-voluntary-and-community-events> for guidance on organising voluntary events
- **Health & Safety Executive:** <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm> for information on risk assessments and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/> for guidance on running events
- **Food Standards Agency:** <http://www.food.gov.uk/> for information on food hygiene and safety regulations
- **Your local council** will also have advice – check their website or ring them for more information

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3. Promotion

The Mills Section will promote the weekend centrally, through our own media contacts and communication channels. However, to make the most of the event and to attract the greatest number of visitors to your mill, we also recommend that you **do some of your own promotion locally**. Listed below are some suggestions and guidance, if you need any further advice, please don't hesitate to contact us.

I. Media

A really good way to promote your event is through local media – all you need is a simple press release and a good quality photograph. What to include:

Press release

The media is always looking for stories of relevance or interest to their audience, and most news desks will be very pleased to receive a good press release – that is, one that does much of the work for them.

It is better to have a shorter, informative news item highlighting the main points (e.g. name and location of your mill, the days and times it is open, and any further information such as things to see, timings for activities or directions) than a long essay. Your press release will also have a better chance of success if you have a particular feature to note, such as:

- An **anniversary**, e.g. your mill is 200 years old this year, or it's 15 years since your local trust took it over
- A **celebrity** is involved e.g. a local TV personality or noted sportsman has agreed to open the event/draw the raffle/award rosettes etc
- A **'first'**, e.g. it's the first time you're taking part in the weekend, or the first time you'll be open since vital works were completed or a new feature installed
- A **local link** with other organisations, e.g. you have organised a vintage rally with your local car club, or are raising money for a local charity
- A **human interest story**, e.g. one of your volunteers has won an award, or a descendant of a past miller has contacted the mill
- A **project** or fundraising initiative, e.g. this year you are collecting money over the weekend to help towards bringing your mill back to working order/replacing sails/etc, or you are preparing a grant application and consulting the public

Note: You should send the press release by email. It is easier for journalists if you send your text in the body of your email, rather than as an attachment.

Our template press release which accompanies this pack may help to get you started. If you'd like us to check your final press release before you send it out, please get in touch.

Photographs

Offering one or two clear, good-quality, high-resolution digital photographs will greatly increase your chances of the story running in the print media. Ideally, include a picturesque general view of your mill and a photograph of people (volunteers, visitors etc) in front of or

inside the mill. Make sure that you have permission from the photographer and, if children are pictured, from their parents, to send the photograph out for media use.

Note: You can either attach the photographs to your email, or just give details of what is available and how (e.g. contact details or file-sharing link).

If possible, try to take some pictures on the day(s) itself so that you have images to use for next year's promotion.

Don't forget to make sure you have the copyright permission to publish any images you are using and ensure they are accurately attributed.

Who to send it to

Have a look at a copy of your local newspaper(s), or check their website: there will be contact information for the newsdesk. You might also target the journalist who covers your particular area or village, or one who has shown interest in your mill in the past. If in doubt, ring the paper and ask them who would be the best contact.

Don't forget your local radio stations, which are also important. When targeting radio you need to make sure that you, or someone from your organisation, is available to be interviewed about the mill and the event.

You may also want to send out your release to regional television. It is most likely to be of interest to them if the mill has recently undergone some work or has never been open to the public before. In such cases they may be interested in a 'preview' ahead of the weekend. They could also be interested in filming during the weekend itself if you are planning a major event. If you would like more advice on working towards TV coverage, please get in touch.

The SPAB Press Office has contact information for local media around the country, so if you're not sure who to contact, give us a ring.

When to send it

Timing is very important. Make sure that you send out your release early enough. This will usually need to be *the week before the week* of National Mills Weekend (i.e. w/c 25th April) but it is worth ringing your local newspaper to check what their copy deadline is – particularly with weekly publications.

2. Other publicity

Event listings

Make sure that you include details of your opening days in all the *free* listings you can find. Local newspapers will often have both printed and online versions, and there may also be local events websites for your area. Other possible listings include your local council and parish newsletters. There may also be printed event leaflets or programmes for your area. Some may also offer only *paid* advertising: if you have an advertising budget, contact them to check for rates and offers, and be sure to ask about any special rates for community groups and charities.

Posters

Posters are also available to download from www.spab.org.uk/mills/national-mills-weekend and can easily be customised digitally, as follows:

1. Click inside the text box (where it says 'Add details ...')
2. Replace the existing text with your own information, including the name and location of your mill, the days and times it is open (these important details perhaps in **bold**) plus any further information such as things to see, timings for activities or directions. If possible use 'Gill Sans' as your typeface for the text, or if not available use another sans serif typeface (e.g. Arial)
3. To add a photograph/image:
 - i) Go to Insert\Picture\From file and select your image to insert it
 - ii) Format the image as needed, and remember to add a credit if required

Check locally for places to display your poster. Libraries, museums, council offices, churches, tourist information centres, village halls and schools may all have notice boards for local events, and it is worth asking shops and local businesses too if they would allow you to display something in their shop window or on their counter.

Balloons

We have eye-catching red National Mills Weekend balloons to help draw attention to your mill on the day. Let us know if you'd like some (and, ideally, approximately how many you would like) and where to send them, and we'll do our best to supply them.

Social media

If you would like to share your own mill repair project, then the SPAB Mills Section wants to see your photos, join the hashtag #Millsweekend and tag @SPABMillsSection. Promote your mill opening event via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and get your supporters and volunteers to do the same. Copy others from your local area in your tweets and ask them to retweet details. We'll of course retweet every National Mills Weekend event we see – find us at @ukmills

Spread the word

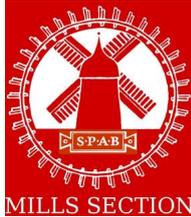
Contact people you work with, other historic sites, museums, local history groups etc. Send them an email with information on your event and ask them to circulate it if they can. Some organisations will have mailing lists for their members and may well be happy to include your event if it is relevant to their interests.

3. Pair up with other mills

If there are other mills in your area taking part, consider joint events and promotion, or at least make sure that they know when you are open.

Visitors may want to visit more than one mill, and will welcome suggestions of where else to go, interesting walks to go on etc. Highlight any suggestions in your event details and consider teaming up with other mills to produce flyers or issue joint press releases.

This will both improve visitor experience and help create a buzz around the weekend. Other places may also be interested in linking in with what you are doing – such as a local museum, an industrial site or your local library.



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4. A request from us to you

We would really love to receive good images from you after the event as they can help us when we promote National Mills Weekend in future. Any attractive view showing the mill and visitors clearly could be useful. Let us have a few pictures and we'll get in touch if we decide we'd like to use them at any stage.

Also, it would be great if you would assist us by promoting Mills Section membership to visitors on the day. Membership fees help us to help you, by supporting our work which includes offering repair grants, running training courses, providing free technical advice, campaigning against harmful development, organising National Mills Weekend and much more.

Thank you.

Contact us:

Silvia McMenamin, SPAB Mills Section Administrator

millsinfo@spab.org.uk

020 7456 0909

PRESS RELEASE EXAMPLE:

[MILL NAME] OPEN FOR NATIONAL MILLS WEEKEND ON [DATE]

[Mill name] will be open to visitors from [time] to [time] on [day(s)] as part of National Mills Weekend. [Add a short summary of any activities/events]

National Mills Weekend is the annual festival of the UK's milling heritage, and the chance for everyone to explore their local windmills and watermills.

[Mill name] is a ... [include information about your mill: what kind of mill it is, when it was built, any interesting facts]

The weekend is coordinated by the Mills Section of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

If your mill does not normally open to the public, make this clear:

National Mills Weekend is [the only time/one of x occasions/the first time] the mill will be open [this year/in xx years]. It is the chance for local people to look inside and find out more about the role of the mill in local life over the centuries (*tailor this with specific information if you can*)

If you are taking part in 'Millwrighting – Past and Present':

This year National Mills Weekend is celebrating 'Millwrighting – Past and Present', and highlighting the [building/people/importance] of our mill. [Mill name] is contributing with [details of your event (see section 2 of the Support Pack)].

If you are organising tours or activities not covered by this year's theme:

Visitors to the mill will get the chance to [add details of what you are planning, e.g. guided tours, children's activities, etc.]

Add a quote from your organisation or a local supporter:

[Name, position] said: "[e.g. National Mills Weekend is a fantastic opportunity for people to explore their local heritage, and we look forward to welcoming visitors]"

Further information on [Mill name] can be found on the mill's website at [your website].

[and/or include any other information e.g. need to book in advance for activities]

Information on mills open nationwide can be found on the National Mills Weekend website at <https://www.spab.org.uk/mills/national-mills-weekend>

Further information and images

Don't forget to make sure you have the copyright permission to publish any images you are using and ensure they are accurately attributed.

Images available:

[give titles/descriptions]

Contact:

[Your name and contact details – include a daytime phone number and an email address if possible]

Notes to editors

1. National Mills Weekend runs every year in May. It has been organised by the SPAB Mills Section since 1984, and is part of a Europe-wide festival of milling heritage during May.

2. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) was founded by William Morris in 1877 to care for and preserve the UK's architectural heritage. The Mills Section of the SPAB was founded in 1931 to protect and promote windmills and watermills.

Also consider adding a note about who runs your mill (a trust, friends group, etc)