**Minutes of the AGM of Monken Hadley Common Trust (“MHCT”) on 16.10.23**

The meeting commenced at 7.35pm with 19 members and 2 guests in attendance.

1. **Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies were received from Les Bedford, Bill Boyes, John Hall, Roger Headey (all trustees) and Richard Peart.

1. **Chairman’s Report.**

\*Andrew Walker (AW) introduced himself as Chair. He has been involved since 1995 and played a part in creating The Friends of Hadley Common (“The Friends”) in 1997; since then, he has held the roles of Treasurer, Secretary and Chair. AW explained that MHCT replaced The Friends charity and the old trust headed by the churchwardens. \*This AGM replaces the Friends’ AGM and that of the Commoners. The changes were made as a result of the 1777 Act being outdated. A new Act of Parliament, The Monken Hadley Common Trust Act 2012, was required to establish the new trust. It is believed it was one of the very last statutes of the late Queen’s reign.

\*On 01.12.22 ownership of Monken Hadley Common was transferred by the churchwardens to MHCT. The Friends’ charity will shortly be wound up and all its remaining assets transferred to MHCT. Those members of The Friends who were contactable were invited to become members of MHCT.

\*The main purpose of the new Act is to preserve, protect and improve the Common for the benefit of the public having regard to the requirements of good forestry and the conservation of flora and fauna. Any development is prohibited.

\*The trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a members’ charity which is both incorporated and a trust. The members elect the trustees and the trustees appoint the officers ie. a secretary, treasurer, two curators and a membership secretary to attend to the business of the trust.

1. **Trustees Annual Report for period 31.05.22 to 31.03.23 and receipts & payments accounts for the same period.**

\*The Treasurer, Phil Harding (PH), took the meeting through the said report and each section of the accounts, both of which are required by the Charity Commission to be in a prescribed format. Copies were made available to members both before and at the AGM.

\*The accounts cover only the 4 months period between 01.12.22 and 31.03.23 as prior to the December date the old trust was in charge.

\*Receipts included £14,388 from the sale of investments and payments included £6,202 for the purchase of investments. As at 31.03.23 the value of the assets was £162K but owing to the behaviour of the markets in recent times they are now worth £156K.

\*Outside the accounts period the trust spent £5K on the footpath beside Hadley Common Rd and £4K on bollards along Camlet Way to prevent incursion by motor vehicles. A donation of approx. £13K was received from the Friends so there are now funds to invest.

**Questions from the floor:** William Pumphrey commented that the income from wayleaves seemed low. PH explained that this was because it was for a 4 months period only.

AW proposed a vote of thanks to PH who has had to deal with a lot more admin than would normally be the case because of the setting up of the new trust. The proposal was seconded and PH received a warm round of applause.

1. **Curators’ report.**

\*The Curators’ report had been sent to members in advance & copies were made available at the meeting.

\*Roger de la Mare (“RDLM”) addressed the meeting stating that he would not read the report of over 3 pages line by line. Nonetheless he gave a comprehensive summary on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis.

\*He emphasized that most of the work was done by volunteers numbering between 15 & 20. They were diligent, dedicated & versatile, engaging in sawing, lopping, snipping, digging, painting & collecting rubbish etc.

\*RDLM explained that there are some quite fragile ecosystems on the common. Old trees are vulnerable to changes in the climate and disease. Some of the volunteers were rather close to a falling beech tree recently. The crash was dramatic & alarming. The need for engaging tree surgeons was increasing with the growing number of falling trees. Thus, it was vital to boost membership & income.

\*Fire-setting was becoming a frequent problem. The Fire Brigade had had to be called several times. Oak processionary moth nests & caterpillars posed a risk to health when found near paths & the schools as fibres & filaments irritated eyes, throats & skin. Removal of nests was a new cost to be borne. Ash dieback will become a new blight. Recently hornets & their nests have been seen. The exotic species pose a threat to pollinators.

\*Great crested newts were found in Gladsmuir Pond in 2020, but a search for them in March 2023 was inconclusive.

\*RDLM went on to describe liaison with various utility companies. In his last act as a curator, Peter Davies persuaded UK Power Network to pay £1500 in compensation for frequent disturbances over the last 4 years caused by work to remedy leaking oil from casing to electricity cables.

\*He mentioned a meeting with the School Principals concerning the traffic congestion on Camlet Way at setting down & picking up times. The trust had offered to consider licensing land so that coaches could park off road.

\*The licence to the Hadley Angling & Preservation Society was renewed for another 21 years. Meetings were held with Enfield Council regarding the proposed Parkgate Crescent Flood Alleviation Scheme. The trust cooperated with Ilona Domnitch, an opera singer who lives locally, in putting on 2 classical music concerts by the lake in the summer.

\*Finally, RDLM referred to the curators’ draft 5 years Management Plan. It is on the website & people are invited to comment by 17-11-23.

There were no questions for the curators.

AW offered thanks to both curators & requested that recognition of the Conservation Volunteers’ contribution be noted in the minutes. He also requested a special vote of thanks to Peter Davies (“PD”) who was retiring as a curator after 13 years.

1. **Retirement & Election of Trustees.**

The Secretary, Gary Chambers (“GC”), referred to & read the note on the AGM Notice regarding Les Bedford having given notice of retirement & Barbara Taylor (“BT”) retiring by rotation in accordance with the Constitution, but offering herself for re-election. Furthermore, the trustees were proposing the election of John Eldred, a long-time volunteer & leading member of HAPS.

At this juncture AW paid fulsome tribute to Les Bedford as a trustee of the Friends & an important member of the Common’s Management Committee for many years. Les’ attention to detail in relation to maps & rules was without compare & his IT knowledge invaluable as regards the website etc. Les has agreed to stay available to help as & when required. AW has some gifts for Les which he will deliver shortly.

AW also took the opportunity to acknowledge Peter Davies’ retirement as curator. Peter had provided many years of wise, calm & collected counsel, which at times others had struggled to emulate. AW remarked that in his nearly 30 years as a committeeman every time it was necessary for someone new to step up it had been managed, but Peter was one of the very best recruits. An engraved tankard & an enlarged framed postcard of the Common from yesteryear were presented to Peter in recognition.

AW turned back to the election of trustees. Sandy Headey proposed the election of John Eldred & re-election of Barbara Taylor. Peter Davies seconded the same & the meeting agreed, with no objections. No-one else sought election.

1. **Any Other Business.**

The trustees proposed a minimum of £25pa as the membership fee & GC asked the members to vote on the proposal. It was carried with no votes against.

AW congratulated Jonathan Hewlings on his appointment as Curator in place of PD & welcomed him as a new officer.

Finally, BT complimented AW on doing an excellent job as Chair, referring to his welcoming Board members into his house for meetings. The trust members joined BT in thanking AW for his contribution.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Dated 23rd October 2023.

Gary Chambers,

Secretary to the trustees.