

**THE HEATH & HAMPSTEAD SOCIETY**  
**DRAFT/Minutes of the 127th Annual General Meeting held at**  
**St. Stephen's, Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead on Wednesday 25 June 2025 at 7.40pm**

Members of General Committee present: Lord Mance (President), Marc Hutchinson (Chair), Maureen Clark-Darby (Treasurer), Amory Fathi (Secretary), John Beyer, Gordon Curtis and Andrew Haslam-Jones (Vice-Chairs), Latoya Austin, David Castle, Frank Harding, Vicki Harding, Robert Linger, Maddy Raman, Thomas Radice, Jeff Waage and John Weston (Members of General Committee)

Apologies were received from Jessica Learmond-Criqui,

**1. Approval of Minutes**

The draft Minutes of the 126th Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 12 June 2024 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be approved and signed by the President.

**2. Election of Lord Mance as President**

RESOLVED that Lord Mance be duly re-elected President for a further term of one year.

**3. Chair's Report**

The Chair of the Society presented his report for 2024-2025. The text of the report is appended to these minutes.

**4. Treasurer's Report**

The President invited the Treasurer to report on the Society's Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023, which had been examined by Fisher Phillips LLP, Chartered Accountants, and which were then tabled.

The Treasurer reported as follows:

The major item of difference between the Society's 2023 Financial Statements and those for 2024 was that the Society received a bequest from the late Martin Humphery, resulting in a new restricted fund of £10,000. This item could be seen on the face of the Statement of Financial Activity.

Turning then to the key numbers: Membership has reduced but nevertheless remained sustainable year on year, standing at 2,004 at the end of 2024, of which over 500 were life memberships. Membership subscriptions, including the related Gift Aid, were down by just under 10% in 2024, this reduction being due to timing differences and Royal Mail problems.

Donations: General donations for the year were slightly down. Most donations were Gift-Aided, and the Society will recover the Gift Aid element.

The Society's running costs have decreased by 10% during the year. The newsletter costs decreased in 2024 by just under 16%, partly due to the reduction in membership and members opting to receive a soft copy.

The Society incurred an operating surplus for the year of £12,713, increased by the paper surplus on its investment of £112, which gave a total surplus for the year of £12,825.

Unrestricted funds had a surplus in the year of £2,408, while restricted funds had a surplus of £10,305.

The Trustees had reviewed the Society's accounting policies and decided no changes to these policies were required.

As at 31 December 2024, the Society's capital and reserves were in a satisfactory position, standing at £73,166 of which £36,139 were held in unrestricted funds and £36,973 in restricted funds.

As explained by the Chair, the Society's trustees propose that membership subscription rates should increase in 2026, broadly in line with inflation. It had been 11 years since subscriptions were last increased.

RESOLVED that the Society's Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024 be adopted.

#### **5. Appointment of Auditors**

The President thanked Fisher Phillips LLP, Chartered Accountants, for acting as the Society's auditors for the three last financial years. He then proposed their re-appointment as the Society's auditors for the current financial year.

RESOLVED that Fisher Phillips LLP, Chartered Accountants, be re-appointed as the Society's auditors for the current financial year.

#### **6. Subscription Rates**

The Chair noted that, after 11 years at current levels, the trustees were proposing a 50% increase in annual subscription rates to sustain the Society's work. Adjusted for inflation, the standard £20 rate would now be £28, and while a larger increase was considered to future-proof funding, it was felt such a large increase might deter annual renewals. The proposed rise to £30, with proportional increases for other categories, is expected to generate an extra £5,000-£6,000 annually through Gift Aid.

RESOLVED that there should be an increase in the Society's membership subscription rates for 2026 as set out in the Notice of Annual General Meeting.

#### **7. Determination of the Limit on Free/Discounted Memberships**

The Chair confirmed that the trustees recommend no change to the existing limit of 200 free or discounted memberships, which was approved by members in 2019.

RESOLVED that there be no change to the current limit.

#### **8. Election of Officers and other Members of the General Committee**

##### Officers

Following receipt of nominations, the President proposed the re-election of Marc Hutchinson, Maureen Clark-Darby and Amory Fathi

RESOLVED that each of them be re-elected to the following offices:

Marc Hutchinson – Chair  
Maureen Clark-Darby – Treasurer  
Amory Fathi – Secretary

General Committee Members

Following receipt of the nomination, the President proposed the re-election of John Weston for a second term of three years.

RESOLVED that John Weston be elected as proposed.

The President noted that Latoya Austin, Vicki Harding, Jessica Learmond-Criqui and Maddy Raman would continue the terms for which they were elected. Frank Harding (Chair of the Plaque Selection Panel) may be appointed by the General Committee, after this Annual General Meeting, to a vacancy on the General Committee. The Chairs of the three Sub-Committees are trustees and members of the General Committee, but they are appointed from time to time by the General Committee, not elected. Professor Jeff Waage is also appointed, not elected, as a trustee and member of the General Committee in his capacity as the Society's representative on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

**9. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**10. Camden New Journal**

The President invited Dan Carrier, a senior journalist from the Camden New Journal to make a short presentation about the future of this local newspaper.

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm.

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After a short break, the Chair introduced former Society Vice-President Helen Lawrence who gave an illustrated talk on her recently completed project of editing the journals of Henry Sharpe.

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Chair

Date:



## **Chair's Report to AGM 2025**

Good evening, everyone.

Those of you who read my notes in last year's newsletters might have expected that this would be my last ever report to members as Chair of the Society. Those of you who read my notes in this year's newsletters will know for a fact that this will not be my last report, although it may be my penultimate one.

I have served as Chair for 11 years now, and the time has come to find my successor. So far, we have not received any suitable applications, but we are, among other things, advertising the post through recruitment agencies such as Charityjob and nurole.

Some members may find it surprising that none of the existing General Committee wishes to put themselves forward for the role. But many on our General Committee are full-time working professionals, and my predecessor, Tony Hillier, who served for 12 years as Chair, never served on the General Committee prior to his election, and, in fact, was brought in from outside the Society in circumstances where there were some serious internal disagreements at General Committee level.

If I were to list my apparent achievements as Chair - and rest assured, I'm not about to - one has been so to manage the Society's affairs that we have largely avoided these sorts of needless personal disagreements, with informed collegiality, but by no means unanimity, governing our committee decisions and relationships.

Let me offer you one example of where, having already heard its preliminary discussions, I doubt the committee in question will reach a unanimous view. Those of you who visit the Grade 2-listed Pergola in Golders Hill Park will know that part of it is sealed off. The pergola was built by Lord Leverhulme in 1906 for the entertainment of his guests at his grand new residence at what is today Inverforth House. Leverhulme founded the Anglo-Dutch food and consumer products consortium Unilever, and he became extremely wealthy, charitably gifting the land for the site of what we now know as Queen Mary's House at Whitestone Pond. The pergola, which was extremely costly to build, used a novel form of concrete under its oak superstructure. And, as today's visitors know, it is literally falling down. The City, since taking it over in 1989, has done what it can to make do and mend but the fact is, if the structure is to be saved, a very large capital investment of several million pounds will be needed. The question for our Heath Committee is, should this sum of money be spent on what is essentially an ornament - albeit a very popular one, not least for weddings and films - or should the pergola be gracefully left as a century-old ruin, and the funds, assuming they could be found, spent on more urgent or worthwhile Heath projects. There are many arguments for and against saving the pergola in its existing form, and we will support the City in trying to find an eventual solution.

All of which brings me to the most important matter facing the Heath over the coming years. Since ownership and trusteeship of the Heath was transferred to the City in 1989,

Secondly: How will capital projects, like the Dams Project or the athletics track project, be funded in future years?

And thirdly: What are the risks to the Heath and its management as a result of the adoption of the new funding model?

As of this evening, I am reasonably confident that these questions can and will be answered to our satisfaction. I cannot say exactly what the answers will be, but we and the City realise the grave risk of reputational damage to the City if the Heath, as London's most famous and popular green open space, is seen, in whatever terms, to become neglected, as it famously was in the dying days of the old GLC.

John Beyer, Chair of the Heath Committee, and Heath Committee member Professor Jeff Waage have, with great diplomatic and organisational skill, led the stakeholders' negotiation with the City over these past months, and I and the Society are very grateful to them.

Mindful of the fact that you, as members, have already received two full reports of the Society's activities over the past year - the trustee report in the Society's accounts and my report in the May newsletter - I will focus, in tonight's verbal report, on particular events and milestones.

When I sit down to draw up this report, I am usually thinking in balance sheet terms with a view to listing the Society's recent failures against its successes, although I am happy to say there is always a credit balance. What is unusual, if not unprecedented in this past year, is that we have so far enjoyed only successes, and several of them unexpected.

In the planning area, we have had two successes in which we have played either the major or a significant part:

The first is that the new Camden Local Plan shows that the Society's comments - on fringes of the Heath, Heath-side properties and building height at Murphy's Yard - have been acknowledged, if not reflected in the proposed policy. In particular, Camden has accepted the concept of the Green Corridor which will connect five Camden Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (known as SINC's) which lie along a habitat corridor identified in the 2021 Camden Policy Map. Planned housing developments on three Camden Site Allocations, which lie along the Corridor's proposed path, Murphy's Yard, Regis Road and West Kentish Town Estates, provide the linking green infrastructure that will create habitat "stepping stones" between SINC's, and allow the rich biodiversity of Hampstead Heath to extend into residential areas, bringing more wildlife experiences, with their health benefits, into local green spaces.

Our thanks go especially to Professor Waage for his leadership on this long-running project.

Secondly, the rejection by Islington Council of the planning application for the so-called 27-storey Archway Tower, although the Mayor of London has called the decision in for

This annual general meeting sees the retirement of a number of trustees and committee members from their positions. It would be invidious and misleading to list them according to their achievements because the work each has done for the Society is not comparable with the work of their colleagues. So, let me mention them in alphabetical order.

David Castle served for 11 years as a Vice-Chair of the Society and as Chair of the Planning Committee which he first joined as a member in 2012. He decided to step down from these roles in October 2024 but, until today, remained a member of the General Committee. We are immensely indebted to David for his expert service (he both taught the subject and practised as an architect) to the Society and Hampstead over such a long time. When I took over as Society Chair 11 years ago, I asked David how long he was prepared to serve as Chair of that committee. He replied, "about three years". We are so grateful that he changed his mind! We are equally grateful now that he has agreed to continue to serve as a member of that committee.

Andrew Haslam-Jones has served on our Town Committee since 2016 and became its Chair in 2018, at which point he also joined the General Committee as a Society Vice-Chair. The fact that he is a practising solicitor has been immensely helpful to his committee and the Society, given that so many of the problems faced in the town are legal ones, or at least have a legal context. Andrew and his family are moving away from Hampstead and so Andrew has decided to retire as Chair of the Town Committee with effect from today, although he has kindly agreed to remain on that committee for the immediate future.

He has worked very hard as its Chair and, solely through his personal and persuasive endeavours, has been recently successful in recruiting new and active members to that committee. Our newsletters record the many achievements, great and small, of his committee during his chairmanship, in many of which he was personally involved, although he would always give the credit to others. If asked, he would say the most important committee achievements have included the South End Green slip road project, the opening up of the public space at Oriel Court, the sensitively executed roadworks at the west end of Whitestone Pond, and managing to keep pubs and retail outlets in Hampstead in compliance with the licensed framework opening hours. He would like to thank the Society's members for their support on so many town initiatives, and to encourage them to stay actively involved.

The General Committee has appointed a new member to the Town Committee, Peter Kohl, who has very kindly agreed to become its acting Chair until we find a permanent successor.

I want to thank Andrew on behalf of the Society and personally for everything he has done for it and for me. In particular, when faced with a legal problem, I greatly appreciated being able to share it with him and getting thoughtful, informed and prudent advice. Andrew, you will be much missed, and we wish you and your family well in your life away from Hampstead.

Are there any questions?