

# **Minutes of Headingley Development Trust Annual General Meeting, held via Zoom on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**35 members were in attendance; 6 members and Patrick Morrello, auditor, sent apologies**

## **Introduction**

Isobel Mills - Co-Chair (with Matthew Hill) - welcomed those present to the first (and hopefully last) AGM to be held via Zoom, noting that the 2020 AGM was possibly one of the last in-the-flesh meetings that some people had attended.

### **1 Minutes of the 2020 AGM**

These were approved as a correct record.

### **2 Overview of the year**

Isobel drew attention to the Annual Report which highlighted the range of activities and projects that did manage to happen, noting that in a year marked by loss and grief there had been some bright beacons of hope and joy.

There had been changes on the HDT Board. Having said goodbye, most reluctantly, to Helen Seymour, Richard Norton, Sarah Johal and Helen Pickering, the Board was joined by Lucy Graham, Claude St-Arroman and Liz Jeffery. Noting that it is tough being part of a new Board at any time, and tougher still when meetings are all virtual, she expressed her gratitude to all Directors and especially the newest ones for their resilience and humour. It was to be hoped that this evening marked the end of one way of working and the start of another, that other being about creativity and making a difference

Drawing from the lessons of lockdown a number of ideas have emerged that are likely, with member's agreement and support, to guide HDT going forward. They include very specific themes: 15-minute neighbourhoods, green space, (or the lack of it), environmental sustainability and quality, and mutuality. One example that brought those together was the overwhelming support for the car-free outdoor living provided by HEART through the summer and early autumn. It was clear that the hunger for social interaction has not gone away. Rather, there is a longing for the "right kind" of human contact, and that is precisely what drives us to have hope.

### **3 Presentations on Zero Carbon Headingley and Headingley Farmers Market**

The first of four presentations were given by members on key areas of HDT's work:

- **Zero Carbon Headingley** – Matthew Hill summarised the work done during ZCH's second full year. Now with in excess of 150 members there had again been a focus on transport and travel, informed by surveys of local residents to identify transport priorities and by another HGV count on the Otley Road. These had identified the need for more safer walking and cycling routes and the extension of the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods concept. A virtual workshop on 15 Minute Neighbourhoods as part of the Headingley Festival of Ideas had been very successful and identified a number of projects which are now being worked up.

The group had also begun work on a Greening Up Headingley initiative and had successfully rolled out its Student Housing Energy Efficiency certification with Unipol. It was hoped to run the car-free street fair again later in the year.

- **The Headingley Farmers Market** – Gill Redfearn described the up and down year the market had faced. During the first national lockdown the market had had to close – although Swillington Farm had stepped in and offered a market collective allowing some stall holders to sell their goods via the farm. After lots of work to reconfigure the market to make it Covid-secure for visitors, staff and the stall holders the market returned to much acclaim in July and then ran very successfully through the remainder of the calendar year – attracting up to 800 people including lots of new people as well as regulars. Subsequently, the post-Christmas national lockdown meant the market had to close again (but is hoping to re-open in April 2021). A new social media person has been appointed and done a great job publicising the market and there are now Facebook and Instagram pages to complement the existing website and Twitter feeds. Gill finished by thanking all the volunteers and staff for the huge amount of work that had gone into making the market not just safe but very successful during the challenging year. More people are needed to join the team and they will be publicising this request through forthcoming newsletters.

#### **4 Presentations on HEART and The Headingley Greengrocer**

Following an open discussion that thanked the speakers and noted how important the market was to both long term residents and to people who were new to the area the next two presentations were given.

- **HEART** – Mike Bird, Centre Manager, described HEART's year. After a positive start to 2019-20, including a record breaking February and a move to put staff on permanent contracts the month before, the first lockdown led to the closure of the building, the furloughing of staff and a move to on-line activities. A crowdfunding exercise raised over £2,500 and HEART successfully applied for various COVID grants and loans. As lockdown eased over the summer the outside space was opened up, becoming a real focal-point for the community and gathering praise for the safe, welcoming and comfortable environment that was created. Throughout a challenging year the staff and volunteers provided wonderful support and generated lots of ideas, many of which were implemented. While HEART is currently closed again the plan is for a gradual re-opening in line with the national roadmap. Events to celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will build on the successful use of the playground in 2020.
- **The Headingley Greengrocer** – Helen Seymour described the very difficult start to the financial year with the manager leaving and trading levels that didn't provide the confidence to replace him. Members of the Board stepped in to take on many of the tasks. Then Covid 19 hit, with the shop needing to be completely reorganised - initially with staff serving from the door and then later again with protective screens to keep staff on the tills safe. Throughout all this the staff worked incredibly hard and we were pleased to be able to begin a bonus scheme for senior staff to reward them for taking on extra tasks without a manager. The shop is now in a very different situation: trading is strong, with a growing customer base and extended stocklines include organic produce. Kathy Beels was appointed manager in September, and the shop has introduced a scheme so that local charities involved in delivering food parcels benefit financially from our success.

During the discussion, members gave their approval of and thanks for all that had been done, and there were discussions about how HEART might adapt to facilitate both on-line and physical meetings, how the co-worker space (PULSE) would re-open, on the role of deliveries in the Greengrocer's pandemic response and on the longer term plans for the Greengrocer.

## **5 Financial overview**

Alan Beswick (Society Secretary) provided an overview of what had actually been a strong year financially for the Trust. Overall it had earned revenues of just shy of £750,000 and made a surplus of £46,000 in the year (up from £140 in 2019). The Headingley Greengrocer had provided the bulk of this surplus (£42,000) with HEART making a small loss of £2,000 after receipt of COVID-related grants, loans and a repayment holiday from its Headingley Investment Fund (HIF) interest payments. This strong financial performance meant that our balance sheet increased by over £50,000 to £632,701. Looking ahead it was clear that 2021 would be another challenging year for HEART but with a strong balance sheet to underpin us we would be looking for opportunities to invest the circa £52,000 of HIF funds that are currently uninvested.

## **6 Approval of Accounts and Appointment of Auditors**

Following a discussion on the financial presentation and questions about the sources of funds that HEART had been able to access the Accounts were approved and the auditors, Third Sector Accountancy, were reappointed for the year ahead.

## **6 Elections to the HDT Board**

Matthew Hill took over the chair at this point and introduced the people standing for election or re-election to the Board. The following were elected unopposed to the HDT Board for a three-year term:

- Hazel Dimsdale
- Liz Jeffery
- Ed Manley
- Isobel Mills
- Georgia Murphy

The Board also intend to co-opt Katy Hockridge for the year ahead.

Finally Matthew announced that Alan Slomson would be standing down at the end of his three year term. Alan was thanked for all of his efforts – his financial acumen in particular would be much missed.

## **6. Discussion and closing remarks**

Isobel Mills returned to the chair and welcomed the new directors and asked the meeting whether having heard from the speakers there were other ideas that they felt we should consider. To begin she suggested she was interested in views on an interesting written question that had been put to the Board by a member who was unable to attend and which went to the heart of what HDT was all about and asked difficult questions about legitimacy. The member had asked why in its March newsletter HDT had stated that it supported opposition to the recent planning decision relating to Leeds Bradford Airport. The member noted that this was not in line with the stated purposes of the Trust (set out in our Society Rules) and that it could be argued that supporting the decision was more conducive to achieving the

purposes of the Trust than opposing it. Before throwing it open to the meeting the Chair noted that the Board had supported the request for a Public Inquiry on the basis that they agreed with the view that this would be an appropriate way to ensure that all the evidence on such a complex issue is fully aired. Notwithstanding the relatively narrow scope of the Society Rules the Chair also noted that many of the Trust's activities over the last decade have encompassed a broad range of economic, social and environmental actions implicit in attempting to deliver our vision of Headingley as a sustainable, balanced community that is welcoming and neighbourly, offers a good mix of housing, has a successful and diverse local economy, and is an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Several members responded and the views expressed were strongly aligned with the idea that decisions concerning the airport have a fundamental impact on the *'attractive place to live, work and visit'* aspects of our vision and that this is a legitimate area to wish to see all evidence brought forward and discussed.

The meeting then went on to consider other areas that HDT should get involved in and amongst other things there was support for the idea of developing a Library of Things community sharing service.

At 8.30 the Chair closed the meeting by once again thanking those who had attended, and all HDT's other members, for their support, and stated the Board's confidence in HDT for the future.