



## MOUSEHOLD HEATH CONSERVATORS

2pm – 4pm

29 June 2012

Present: Councillors Bradford (chair following appointment), Little (vice chair following appointment) (part of item 11 below only), Ackroyd, Lay and Price; and Margaret Bush

Apologies: Councillors Bremner, Brociek-Coulton and Henderson, and Matthew Davies, Debbie Murray and Chris Southgate

### 1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Bradford as chair for the ensuing civic year.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Little as vice chair for the ensuing civic year.

### 3. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2012.

### 4. NEW CONTRACTS (ORAL UPDATE)

(David Mingay, the contracts services manager, attended the meeting for this item.)

The contracts services manager explained that the council had awarded Biffa the temporary grounds maintenance contract when the previous contractors went out of business. The contract was going well, although due to the extremely wet weather grass cutting had been delayed in April and May of this year. The council was in the process of preparing specifications for the tender process for the new contract to come into effect from 1 March 2013.

During discussion, the contracts services manager, together with the head of local neighbourhood services, answered members' questions. Members were advised that councillors could report concerns about ground maintenance through the usual channels and members of the public could contact the council's customer contact centre by telephoning 0344 980 3333 or through the council's website ([www.norwich.gov.uk](http://www.norwich.gov.uk)).

Discussion ensued in which members raised their concerns about the need to address the problem of restricted visibility caused by overhanging trees on the corner of Britannia Road and Gurney Road; the management of trees on the heath; and allowing wildflowers to grow to encourage bees and other insects. The Conservators were advised that the natural habitat of the heath was subject to an agreed management plan. The specifications for the grounds maintenance contract for Mousehold Heath included maintenance of historic footpaths, the Fountain ground, conservation and litter clearance. The majority of the natural areas conservation work on the heath was provided by the Mousehold Heath Defenders and other volunteers. The contracts services manager acknowledged that the contractors had mistakenly cut a pathway to follow a desire line on Britannia Road and confirmed that this was not on the contract specification and had been addressed. The contractors had a dedicated member of staff to oversee the contract on the heath.

**RESOLVED** to note:

- (1) the report;
- (2) ask the head of local neighbourhood services to arrange for new members of the Conservators to meet with the natural areas officer or the Mousehold Heath officers to discuss the management of the heath as a natural area.

## **5. BUDGET MONITORING**

The finance control manager presented the report and answered questions. He confirmed that the budget was in line with the forecast at the previous meeting and that the surplus from the previous financial year would be carried forward.

The head of local neighbourhood services said that the large amount of work undertaken by the two wardens and volunteers meant that the budget went further than it did previously. In response to a question, he explained that due to an anomaly the Conservators had not been charged with staffing accommodation costs in previous years but would be subject to costs for the Mousehold Heath officers' use of offices at Heathgate. He would ensure that, as the office accommodation was shared with housing services, only proportionate and appropriate costs were re-charged to the Conservators.

**RESOLVED** to note the provisional outturn position and balance carried forward to 2012-13.

## **6. EXTENSION OF GURNEY ROAD FOOT/CYCLE PATH INTO MOUSEHOLD AVENUE**

The city growth and development programme co-ordinator presented the report and together with the design, conservation and landscape manager, answered questions. The county council's safety audit provided a good case for a shared pedestrian and cycle use on the path along the northern side of Mousehold Avenue to its junction with Gilman Road. This would require a 1m width strip of land, 75m in length to be taken from Mousehold Heath. It was anticipated that the new cycle path would

increase the number of people using this route. Local Transport Plan funding had been identified for this scheme.

Margaret Bush confirmed that the Mousehold Heath Defenders did not object to the scheme and said that the loss of this tiny part of the Heath would resolve the problem and improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians at this location. However she sought reassurance that the land would remain in the ownership of the city council and the influence of the Conservators.

The city growth and development programme co-ordinator outlined the proposed timetable for the works commencing in September 2012.

**RESOLVED** to approve the proposal to extend the existing footway along the north side of Mousehold Avenue, between Gilman Road and Gurney Road, by approximately 1m width onto Mousehold Heath for an approximate 75m length, subject to the stipulation that this land remains in the ownership of Norwich City Council and the influence of the Conservators.

## **7. MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP REPORT**

The head of local neighbourhood services presented the report which comprised the minutes of the last management sub-group meeting held on 28 May 2012. He explained the terms of reference for the sub-group which met four times a year to consider the day to day business of the heath and to endorse decisions that the head of local neighbourhood services made under delegated powers in consultation with the chair and vice chair.

### **Earth Heritage trail update**

The head of local neighbourhood services referred to the report and apologised that Lenny Stamp, community and neighbourhood manager (north) was unavailable to attend this meeting. He confirmed that the leaflet would be a Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership publication rather than the council's. Councillor Little was liaising on the lay out of the leaflet.

### **Staffing**

The head of local neighbourhood services explained that the neighbourhood teams had been reorganised. The Mousehold Heath officers were in the team managed by the community and neighbourhood manager (north) who would be the main contact for general matters regarding the heath and would attend meetings of the Conservators in future. The natural areas officer provided a more specialised citywide function and therefore would be part of the council's citywide services. Paul Holley, the natural areas officer, would still contribute to the conservation and advise on land management matters in relation to the heath.

### **Other business**

Margaret Bush pointed out an error in the report (minutes of the sub-group meeting held on 28 May 2012) and said that in relation to the Connect 2 proposal for Gurney Road / Mousehold Avenue she had suggested a "formal" agreement to ensure that any future proposal with an impact on the heath was subject to full consultation and

to ensure that land remained in the ownership of the city council and the Conservators.

**RESOLVED** to note the report and the actions agreed at the management sub-group meeting on 28 May 2012.

## **8. RECENT ACTIVITIES AT MOUSEHOLD HEATH**

The head of local neighbourhood services presented the report and answered questions.

An amendment to the report was noted to correct the title of the “Lord Mayor” in paragraph 4 by deleting “Lady” and replacing with “Lord”.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** to note the dates of formal meetings of the Conservators for the new civic year 2012-13 to be held at City Hall at 2pm on the following Fridays:

19 October 2012  
18 January 2013  
15 March 2013

## **10. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of item 3 below on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

## **11. ZAKS RESTAURANT (THE PAVILION) MOUSEHOLD HEATH (PARA 3)**

The head of local neighbourhood services presented the report and, together with the finance control manager, answered questions.

**RESOLVED**, having considered the report:

- (1) that the option proposed by NPS, set out in paragraph 15 of the report, is the preferred option;
- (2) to delegate the decision to the head of local neighbourhood services, in consultation with the chair and the vice chair, subject to:
  - (a) consideration of the use of capital receipts to mitigate the impact of reduced revenue income in future years;
  - (b) notifying all Conservators of the proposed decision to allow further comments to be taken into consideration.

CHAIR