



**Committee name:** Mousehold Heath Conservators

**Committee date:** 15/03/2024

**Report title:** Report from the Mousehold Heath Conservators management subgroup

**Portfolio:** Councillor Giles, Cabinet member for communities and social inclusion

**Report from:** Head of environment services

**Wards:** Catton Grove and Crome

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

To provide an update on the items discussed at the Subgroup meeting on Friday 16 February 2024

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Conservators:

- 1) note the contents of the report and
- 2) agree the following recommendations made by the management subgroup:
  - a. ask the project manager – delivery to:
    - i. Undertake a full survey of the exterior of the building, to assess the conditions of the paint and woodwork; and
    - ii. Ask NCSL to quote for the work with timescales for the start and completion of the work.
  - b. agree to employ Tim Holt-Wilson to undertake the work to collate the information, text and images for the biodiversity trail leaflet.
  - c. agree the use of the Mousehold Heath projects budget to pay for this work.
  - d. ask the Fringe Project officer to obtain a quote from Fish Track to pump out the remaining water and remove the fish when the Vinegar Pond is at its lowest water level during the summer months.

- e. Ask the subgroup to discuss future options for managing the Vinegar Pond for biodiversity and preventing unwanted carp/goldfish from being placed into the pond

## **Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the sustainable and healthy city corporate priority.

This report addresses Deliver a Capital Investment Programme in our parks that will improve visitor experience, maintain our heritage assets and improve community cohesion. strategic action in the Corporate Plan.

## **Report details**

1. The report helps to meet the Mousehold Heath management plan objective(s):

- A) To ensure Mousehold Heath is a welcoming place for people to visit.
- B) To protect Mousehold Heath and ensure that it is a safe and secure place to visit.
- C) To ensure that Mousehold Heath is clean and well maintained.
- D) To manage Mousehold Heath in a way that has a positive impact on the environment.
- E) To improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife to enhance the biodiversity of Mousehold Heath.
- F) To safeguard the historic landscape, archaeological features and buildings of Mousehold Heath.
- G) To provide opportunities for local communities to be involved in all aspect of our work.
- H) To promote Mousehold Heath to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and a sense of pride.

## **Pavilion building – planning-ahead external repainting and decorative repairs**

2. Property services raised the issue that the Pavilion Building will require the external woodwork to be repainted in the near future, including any other decorative remedial work on the external features undertaken.
3. The Mousehold Heath Wardens have indicated that the Mousehold Heath Conservators have been building up a reserve of fund to pay for this type of work. The forecast reserve balance to be carried forward to 2024/25 is £41,841.

4. Following contact from Property Services a copy of the lease of the Pavilion with Zak's has been received by the Fringe Project Officer. Property Services indicated that under the lease the city council/Conservators are responsible for the exteriors. Further investigation is required to understand who is responsible for the maintenance of the doors and windows and the extent of this.
5. Property Services have provided the following information:
  - a. The suggestion is that the Pavilion exterior needs to be redecorated every 7 years. The last time this happened was 2014 / 2015.
  - b. A building condition report carried out by NPS in 2018 has suggested that external redecoration would be due in the next 5 years with a budget estimate of £18000.
  - c. Whilst Property Services have not specifically looked at the building with a view to the condition of the external redecoration, it was suspected that to prolong the life of the existing external component of interesting building built in 1901 discussions would need to be started.
  - d. The suggestion of the scope of work to be included is the redecoration of previously decorated surfaces; preparation to include rubbing down whilst being vigilant to look for rot; any rot found should be repaired by methods of either cut-and-splice or resin repair. Painting of timber with two coats of undercoats and one coat high gloss with similar colours as the current building.
  - e. A budget estimate of between £25000 and £30000 (including scaffolding).
6. The Fringe Project officer have confirmed with procurement, and the works could be awarded directly to Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) even if the value of the work is more than £25,000.
7. The recommendations from the Management subgroup are to:
  - a. Ask the project manager – delivery to:
    - i. Undertake a full survey of the exterior of the building, to assess the conditions of the paint and woodwork; and
    - ii. Ask NCSL to quote for the work with timescales for the start and completion of the work.

### **Biodiversity trail leaflet and next steps**

8. The Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail provides a self-guided trail enabling visitors to discover Mousehold Heath's landscape and geological heritage. This was produced by Tim Holt-Wilson in partnership with the Wardens several years ago. The Wardens have printed colour leaflets of the trail. They are given out to visitors and those attending guided walks.
9. This is the Link to the [Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail | Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail | Norwich City Council](#) on the Mousehold Heath website.

10. As part of the Mousehold Heath management plan, and to compliment and build on the Earth Heritage trail, the next stage would be to produce a Biodiversity trail leaflet.
11. This has been discussed at the November and February Subgroup meetings with Tim Holt-Wilson, who produced the Earth Heritage Trail leaflet, attending the November Subgroup Meeting. Tim Holt-Wilson gave a short presentation about the creation of a Biodiversity Trail Leaflet.
12. Norwich City Council communications team, at no cost to the Conservators, can work with Tim Holt-Wilson and design the layout of the leaflet, and create a PDF version. This can be loaded up on to Mousehold Heath Website.
13. Tim Holt-Wilson has provided a quote for the cost of the information and pictures ready for the communications team to design the leaflet.

Quote from Tim Holt-Wilson for collating the information and associated works:

		<b>Cost</b>
Leaflet Authorship	Five days @ £250/day	£1250
Liaison with designer	Two days @ £250/day	£500
Travel to three meetings	48 miles @ £0.045/mile	£64.80
	Total cost:	£1814.80

14. Funding for the printing of approx. 500 to 1,000 colour leaflets will also be required. It was estimated that this would cost approximately £1,000, however a quote for this would still be needed.
15. The Mousehold Heath Wardens have confirmed that cost for Tim Holt-Wilson to collate the information and produce the text for the leaflet could be paid for from the 2024/25 projects budget (cost centre 421020 2832). The printing of the coloured leaflets could be carried out in 2025/26 and paid from the same budget, or in in 2024/25 if there is enough funding available.
16. One of the Wardens would be overseeing this piece of work and working with Tim Holt-Wilson.
17. Recommendations from the management subgroup are that the Conservators:
  - a. Agree to employ Tim Holt-Wilson to undertake the work to collate the information, text and images for the biodiversity trail leaflet; and
  - b. Agree the use of the Mousehold Heath projects budget to pay for this work.

### **Vinegar Pond – management of the carp/goldfish**

18. As previously reported to the Mousehold Heath Conservators the Wardens have been organising the annual removal of the carp/goldfish from Vinegar Pond, using electrolysis. The most recent removal being in February 2024.

19. It has been recommended by Fish Track and the Environment Agency, who have been removing the carp/goldfish with electrolysis, to pump out the Vinegar Pond in the summer. The pond will need to be at its lowest level so to avoid damage to other wildlife.
20. Fish Track and the Environment Agency recommend that this would be most cost effective and the best option for removing the carp/goldfish. As they are having a detrimental impact on the newt and frog lifecycle and their population. It has been estimated that there are still thousands of fish still in the Vinegar Pond.
21. Recommendations from the management subgroup are to:
- a. Ask the Fringe Project officer to obtain a quote from Fish Track to pump out the remaining water and remove the fish when the Vinegar Pond is at its lowest water level during the summer months.
  - b. Ask the subgroup to discuss future options for managing the Vinegar Pond for biodiversity and preventing unwanted carp/goldfish from being placed into the pond.

## Consultation

22. None

## Implications

### Financial and resources

23. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget
24. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources at this time.

## Legal

25. None

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Equality and diversity	None
Health, social and economic impact	None
Crime and disorder	None
Children and adults safeguarding	The Wardens follow Norwich City Council's procedures.

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Environmental impact	<p><b>Vinegar Pond Fish removal</b></p> <p>The Wardens are working with an approved contractor and the Environment Agency, with all licenses and procedures being put in place</p>

**Risk management**


<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls required</b>
Financial	N/A	N/A
Operational	N/A	N/A
Legal	N/A	N/A

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