

## **Report for Information**

**Report to** Mousehold Heath Conservators  
13 March 2009

**ITEM**

**Report of** Head of Community Services

**10**

**Subject** Report on recent management activity and events at  
Mousehold Heath

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### **Purpose**

To provide an update on recent management activity and events undertaken at Mousehold Heath since the December 2008 Conservators meeting, and on progress towards achieving the objectives of the Mousehold Heath Management Plan.

### **Recommendations**

That the Conservators note the contents of the report.

### **Financial Consequences**

This report is for information only, and any costs have, or will be met from existing budgets.

### **Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities**

The report helps to meet the strategic priority Safe & Healthy Neighbourhoods, and the service plan priority to ensure Norwich has a clean and safe environment.

### **Contact Officers**

Paul Holley, Natural Areas Officer

01603 212343

### **Background Documents**

Mousehold Heath Management Plan, 2008 – 2013. Note that numbers and headings in brackets following items in the report below refer to the appropriate management plan objective.

# Report

## Conservation Management Work

1. Over the review period (early Dec - end Feb), 26 work parties totalling 1,355 volunteer hours have taken place. These involved the Mousehold Heath Defenders, BTCV, other volunteers and the Mousehold Wardens, and concentrated mainly on scrub clearance and other heathland management work (4.5, *Habitat Management – Lowland Heath*).
2. Three small ‘scrapes’ have been created on areas burnt by vandals in 2008. The humus layer has been stripped away to expose the mineral soil beneath and encourage regeneration of heathland plants; the results will be monitored, along with previously scraped areas, which are showing good re-colonisation by heather and other heathland plants (4.5, *Habitat Management – Lowland Heath*).
3. Work on the Vinegar Pond will be discussed as a separate item (4.8, *Habitat Management – Vinegar Pond*).
4. The high level of survey, recording and monitoring activity achieved in 2008 will be continued in 2009. The Common Bird Census will resume from 15 March with both the butterfly and dragonfly transect monitoring starting on 1 April. The general invertebrate survey commissioned in 2008 has continued, with the recording of animals (such as snails and woodlice) that can still be found during the winter period. This survey is expected to conclude in June, with a report available shortly afterwards (5.1, *Site Monitoring*).
5. The area of St. James Hill which was opened up in 2008 by felling encroaching trees is being monitored, and management proposals are in preparation (5.1, *Site Monitoring*).

## Estate Management Work

1. The track leading to Zak's restaurant (The Pavilion), which was in a poor condition, has been re-graded. Advice has been sought from City and Asset Management on a more permanent engineering solution for this track (4.11, *Visitor Infrastructure*).
2. The easy access path from Britannia Road car park to the viewpoint on St. James Hill has been rebuilt by CityCare (4.11, *Visitor Infrastructure*).
3. Work to re-define and re-grade the Britannia Road car park will commence shortly, along with new bollards to prevent vehicles encroaching onto St. James Hill (4.11, *Visitor Infrastructure*).
4. The Mousehold Heath Defenders have continued with the opening up of the historic Cavalry Track on St. James Hill (4.11, *Visitor Infrastructure*).
5. A safety tree inspection has been carried out, and the works identified will be undertaken out shortly. Trees and shrubs encroaching on Zak's Restaurant and the Gents' toilet block have also been cut back (4.7, *Habitat Management, Woodland*).

6. There has been an increase in serious fly-tipping incidents at Mousehold, with three in one week (21 – 28 February) alone. Most of the recent incidents appeared to have occurred at night, and thus were not witnessed.
7. An exercise to capture the grounds maintenance contract items being delivered on Mousehold Heath has been undertaken, in preparation for the re-provisioning of the CityCare contract.
8. A review of litter/dog waste bins at Mousehold Heath has been undertaken. The provision and location of bins was found to be generally satisfactory, and sustainable with current resource levels, but a small number of bins will be re-located (4.11, *Visitor Infrastructure*).

## **Events**

1. The Mousehold Heath Defenders organised a Winter Solstice event on 21 December 2008 and a Twelve Night Walk on 4 January 2009. The Mousehold Wardens assisted with arrangements for a Norwich School cross-country run on 10 January (4.10, *Visitor Management*).
2. The Mousehold Heath Defenders and Green Spaces are again planning a full programme of events throughout 2009. These include a conservation management walk on 15 March, a Health Walk on 20 July and the Mousehold Funday on 26 July; details of other events will be available at the Mousehold Conservators' meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March (to be heard as separate item) (4.10, *Visitor Management*).
3. The Mousehold Wardens are organising a programme of educational activities for children and young people, with a Wildlife Watch Day planned for 19 July (4.11, *Visitor Infrastructure*).

## **Other Recent Work**

1. The Section 17 Agreement for the management of St. William's Chapel is being reviewed by the Council's legal section, and should be approved shortly (4.9, *Management of the Historic Environment*).
2. Work has started on a discussion paper for an Interpretation and Design Plan for Mousehold Heath (4.10, *Visitor Management*).
3. Linked to the Interpretation Plan, work has started on reviews of both the Way-marked and Orienteering Trails, with the intention of refurbishing them and promoting their use by visitors (4.10, *Visitor Management*).

Paul Holley, Natural Areas Officer  
Telephone: 01603 212343  
Email: [PaulHolley@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:PaulHolley@norwich.gov.uk)