



NORWICH City Council

Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators
Committee Date: 21/01/2022
Report Title: Mousehold Heath Management Update
31 August 2021 to 14 January 2022

Report from: Parks and open spaces manager

Wards: Crome/Catton Grove

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To provide an update on the activities on the heath relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath Management Plan objectives between 31 August 2021 to 14 January 2022.

Recommendation:

It is recommended to note the content of the report.

Policy Framework

The Mousehold Conservators Mousehold Heath Management Plan 2019-2028 has eight objectives, which are:

- 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.

This report meets objective A to ensure Mousehold Heath is a welcoming place for people to visit.

The Council has three corporate priorities, which are:

- People living well
- Great neighbourhoods, housing and environment
- Inclusive economy

This report meets the great neighbourhoods, housing and environment corporate priority

This report helps to meet theme 7 climate change and green economy of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

Report Details

Objective A: To ensure Mousehold Heath is a welcoming place for people to visit.

AI00/01 GREEN FLAG AWARD

1. Following a mystery shopper judging in the summer the heath maintained its Green Flag status.

AI30/02 TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

2. The second six monthly tree safety survey of the year was completed by the wardens, identifying twenty-eight dead, diseased, dying and dangerous trees and branches due to high winds and adverse weather conditions, requiring work to manage tree safety risk. All the work was completed by the wardens, with two specialised pieces of being addressed by a Norwich City Council (NCC) arboricultural officer and Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) tree teams.
3. The highway verges of Gurney Road were assessed by NCC as per the council's tree risk management schedule. The inspection identified a number of trees requiring work to be carried out. The work was specified by NCC and completed by NCSL tree teams.
4. Warden patrols and reports from visitors to the site identified nine dead, dying, dangerous and windblown trees and branches that were dealt with by the wardens.

ML00/03 CONCESSION BRITANNIA ROAD

5. A licence for a concession at Britannia Road public car park was granted as there was a vacancy following the previous trader terminating their licence. The concession offers a selection of traditional food, cold and hot drinks. Food will have seasonal themes and vegetarian and vegan options.

Objective B: To protect Mousehold Heath and ensure that it is a safe and secure place to visit.

MC50/01 MOUSEHOLD PAVILION

6. Year three of the pavilion maintenance programme was discussed at the Mousehold Conservators management sub-group on 9 November 2021. A quotation received for the roof repairs identified in the condition survey was £3,000 in excess of the approved budget for the work. Covid 19 has resulted in an increase in the cost of materials.

MP00/01 SITE PRESENCE

7. Three tents, which it was evident had been abandoned, were removed. The locations were adjacent to St. James Hill, adjacent to the Rangers House and at a central point of the heath.

10. A camper van driver has also advised of the byelaws and asked to leave the site.

ME01/01 GATES FENCING AND BARRIERS

- 11 Six sections of old metal rail spiked topped fencing was removed from Hill Farm track public car park due to its decayed condition and before it became a hazard.

ME01/02 BOLLARDS

12. Two wooden bollards were replaced around the perimeter of Britannia Road car park due to decay.

ME04/01 LITTER PICKING

13. Litter from camp sites and areas where vegetation has been cleared was removed by NCSL and the wardens.

ME04/02 LITTER BINS

14. Three damaged litter bins that had their outer covers replaced with black ones instead of green ones, as per the contract standard, have been changed to ensure consistency across the site. The bins were located at the Wingfield Open Space, the Fountain Ground and Hill Farm Track public car park.

ME04/03 FLY TIPPING

15. NCSL Environmental Protection Act (EPS) crew removed and disposed of fly tipped items from Britannia Road slip road and Mousehold Lane. The waste included garden waste and building materials.

ME06/03 INFORMATION PANELS

16. The 'no overnight parking' sign at Britannia Road public car park was replaced as the old one was damaged.

ME12/01 REMOVE GRAFFITI

17. Graffiti was removed from two lamp posts on Valley Drive and the band stand at the Fountain Ground.

ME41 PROVIDE/MAINTAIN PATHS

18. Gilman Road, Gurney Road, Mousehold Lane and Britannia Road paths and cycle routes have been flailed maintaining open access.
19. Thirteen paths have been maintained by brush cutting and raking vegetation, to maintain access. The work was carried out by the wardens with the help of volunteers at Gilman Road Open Space, the Wildflower Meadow; Mustard Pond Glade, in front of the pavilion and St William's Chapel.
- 20 Scrub encroaching on the accessible path and other paths on St James Hill was cut back to improve access to the Mottram Memorial.

ME44/02 CAR PARK SURFACING

21. The Pitch and Putt, Gurney Road and Britannia Road public car parks has had surface regrading works carried out.

Objective E: To improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife to enhance the biodiversity of Mousehold Heath.

MH04/01 MAINTAIN GLADES

22. Wildlife/Mustard Pond glade had encroaching vegetation cut, raked and removed from site.

MH12/01 MAINTAIN ACID GRASSLAND

23. The annual autumn conservation cut of the Anthill and Wildflower meadow was completed by the wardens and volunteers.

MH31/01 SCRUB AND TREE REMOVAL

24. Invasive scrub and birch trees in the heath area were cut and removed to restore and conserve this important habitat in accordance with the higher level stewardship agreement.
25. Tree poppers were used to remove birch saplings in open, low growing heathland areas by wardens and volunteers.

MH39/01 BRACKEN REMOVAL

26. Large areas of bracken were cut, pulled, raked and removed from heathland, grassland and woodland glade habitats by volunteers and the wardens. This summer task is crucial to conserving nectar rich heather species and complying with the higher level stewardship agreement.

MH39/03 COMMON GORSE REMOVAL

27. Invasive common gorse has been cut and removed from heathland areas to encourage the development of the heather, western gorse and other dwarf shrub species.

Objective H: To promote Mousehold Heath to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and a sense of pride.

MI60/01 EVENTS

28. Two ROOTS environmental education and play, one Enchanted Wood Forest School environmental activity and two Tribe environmental play activities took place, organised through Norwich City Council Events Team. These sessions increase the enjoyment, knowledge and interest of nature and the heath for young people.
29. Two heritage open day walks about geodiversity and history took place on 17 and 19 September 2021, jointly led by a local geologist, historian and the wardens.

Objective G: To provide opportunities for local communities to be involved in all aspect of our work.

AT50/01 VOLUNTEERS GENERAL

30. A total of 1613 volunteer work hours have been contributed to work on the site in the last quarter by the following groups:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- The Assist Trust
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
- Natwest, Norfolk County Council, Open Reach and Crown Commercial Corporate Groups
- Good Gym Norwich
- Two City College students groups
- Norwich High School For Girls
- Many individual volunteers from the community.

31. A Community Wildlife Workshop on Friday 10 December, covered an introduction to winter birds and other biodiversity on the site. This was led by a local expert and a warden. Four people attended the event, viewing 15 species of bird and other wildlife.

Implications

Financial and Resources

32. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.

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