



NORWICH City Council

Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators

Committee Date: 17/03/2023

Report Title: Mousehold Heath management update 22 December 2022 to 5 March 2023

Portfolio: Councillor Giles, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing

Report from: Head of Environment Services

Wards: Catton Grove and Crome

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To provide a quarterly update on activities on Mousehold Heath relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath management plan objectives.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Conservators note the contents of the report

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.

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.

Report Details

1. The report details the work, activities and issues arising on, and relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath management plan objectives.
2. The objectives 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.

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

AI30/02 TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

1. Four dead, dying, dangerous and windblown trees and branches, spotted during patrols and reported by members of the community, have been made safe and cleared by the Mousehold wardens.

MC81/01 VIEW FROM MOTTRAM MEMORIAL

2. Scrub has been cleared to retain historic views of the city and conserve open habitat biodiversity.

ML60/01 NORFOLK CONSTABULARLY

3. The Mousehold Wardens continue to liaise with police officers regarding any anti-social behaviour.

MP00/01 SITE PRESENCE

4. Mousehold wardens have continued to patrol the heath, focusing on areas with anti-social behaviour issues.
5. A Mousehold warden spoke to campers who declared themselves homeless. The Pathways Norwich team were immediately contacted, and a member of the Pathways team made contact with the campers to organise accommodation.

6. Any litter found during patrols and work parties, has been removed on an ad hoc basis, to keep the site safe and clean.

RH35/01 ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES CRIME

7. Two bollards at the Mousehold Avenue end of Gilman Road, which were vandalised and stolen, have been replaced by Norfolk County Council.

Objective C: To ensure that Mousehold Heath is clean and well maintained.

ME04/01 LITTER PICKING

8. Large amounts of litter have been removed from areas where scrub and leggy gorse has been cleared, including a large flat-screen T.V.

ME01/02 BOLLARDS

9. One wooden bollard in the Pavilion car park, has been re-installed by Mousehold warden and a work placement student.

ME04/03 FLY TIPPING

10. A number of fly tipping items were removed from the Pitch and Putt car park and the slip road at Britannia Road, including garden waste and building materials. Items found are removed and disposed of by NCSL's EPA crew.

ME12/01 REMOVE GRAFFITI

11. An attempt has been made by the Mousehold wardens to remove a large amount of graffiti on the trees in the Gurney Road area. Further attempts to remove the graffiti will be made by the Mousehold wardens.

ME41/01 MAIN PATHS

12. Eleven paths have been maintained by brush cutting and raking vegetation to allow easy access to the site.

ME44/02 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF PUBLIC CAR PARKS

13. Britannia Road car park has been resurfaced after advice from county council highways team

ME01/01 GATES, FENCING AND BARRIERS

14. A stolen vehicle was driven through the wooden access gate at Beech Drive. A temporary repair has been undertaken, until a permanent replacement can be fitted.

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

MH04/01 GLADE MANAGEMENT MAINTAIN

15. The Mustard Pond glade has been conserved by cutting and raking encroaching vegetation.

MH31/01 SCRUB AND TREE REMOVAL

16. Invasive scrub has been cut and cleared to restore and conserve important heathland and grassland habitat, in line with the Natural England, Higher Level Stewardship Agreement (HLS) and the Mousehold Heath Management Plan.
17. The Mousehold Heath Higher Level Stewardship agreement has been extended for five years until 2028 and now concludes at the same time as the Mousehold Heath Management Plan 2018 - 2028. This will provide funding to support important Acid Grassland and Heathland habitat and biodiversity works, set out in the management plan objectives. Many HLS agreements have been extended with potential for current agreements to enter the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) in the future.
18. Over two hundred saplings have been moved from heathland and grassland habitat and re-planted in a developing woodland adjacent to Gilman Road by volunteers, under the supervision of a Mousehold warden.

MH39/01 BRACKEN REMOVAL

19. Large areas of bracken were cut, pulled, raked and removed from heathland, grassland and woodland glade habitats by volunteers and the wardens. This task is crucial to conserving nectar rich heather species and complying with the Mousehold Heath HLS Agreement.

MH39/03 COMMON GORSE REMOVAL

20. Old and leggy common gorse have been cut, chipped and removed to make habitat piles, from heathland/grassland areas, to conserve heather, grasses, western gorse and other dwarf shrub species.
21. Mousehold Heath Defenders have cleared a large area of old, leggy gorse, near the Vinegar Pond, during volunteer work parties.
22. A woodchipper course has been organised for Mousehold Heath and Fringe Project volunteers. The old, leggy gorse which was chipped was previously cut and stacked in the Gilman/Gertrude Road area. Managing and chipping this old material reduces fire risk across the site.

MH60/01 VINEGAR POND

23. After the prolonged intensive hot weather conditions experienced this summer, the water quality and level in the pond has now improved to normal conditions.

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

AT50/01 VOLUNTEERS GENERAL

24. A total of 624 community volunteer hours have been undertaken on the site between 22nd December and 5th March by the following groups;

- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Norwich High School for Girls
- Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Natwest and Aviva corporate groups.
- Harford Manor School volunteers
- Many individual volunteers from the community

25. Volunteering has provided an opportunity for the community to become involved with the management of the heath, to increase their understanding of the projects being undertaken, the importance of the heath and to engender a sense of ownership and pride in the space.

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

ME06/03 INFORMATION PANELS

26. The public notice board was stolen from the Pitch and Putt public car park on Gurney Road. The old board was made of metal and thought to have been stolen for scrap metal value. A new notice board has now been installed made from recycled plastic to mitigate future theft.

Consultation

27. None

Implications

Financial and Resources

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 and Budget.

28. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources at this time

Legal

29. None

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	The Mousehold Wardens will continue to work with Norfolk Constabulary to ensure that the Heath is a safe place to visit
Children and Adults Safeguarding	Safeguarding is a priority for the Mousehold Wardens, and they will continue to signpost vulnerable individuals to the services that they require.
Environmental Impact	The Mousehold Wardens will continue to improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife to enhance the biodiversity of Mousehold Heath.

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Financial	Failure to adequately plan and monitor activities could result in insufficient resources being available to deliver the aims and objectives of the Management Plan	Ensure that sufficient management information is available to continue management and maintenance programme
Operational	Failure to adequately plan and monitor activities could result in insufficient resources being available to deliver the aims and objectives of the Management Plan	Ensure that sufficient management information is available to continue management and maintenance programme

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Legal	The Council cannot comply with its legal duty to ensure that buildings are safe for users to access	Ensure that sufficient management information is available to continue management and maintenance programme

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

30. This report is for members to note the activities on Mousehold Heath since the last committee meeting.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

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