

Notes from Mousehold Heath Working Group

Mon 15 August 2011

14:00 – 16:00 Wymer Room City Hall

Present:

Cllr David Bradford, Chairman (DB)
Cllr Stephen Little (SL)
Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton (JB-C)
Chris Southgate (CS)
Margaret Bush (MB)

Bob Clark (BC)	Asset & City Management
Lenny Stamp (LS)	Neighbourhood Manager, North
Nigel Hales (NH)	Mousehold Heath Warden
William Stewart	Mousehold Heath Warden
Paul Holley (PH)	Natural Areas Officer

1. Apologies

Cllr Jenny Lay

2. Matters arising

(i) The Pavilion

Bob Clark had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on the Pavilion building. He discussed the negotiations that had taken place with Blue Sky Leisure (the company that runs Zak's restaurants) over the renewal of their lease on the Pavilion.

CS said that the Norwich Society felt that the Pavilion deserved some kind of listing, and that any repairs carried out should be sympathetic to the building's character. It was confirmed that the planning service was considering the local listing of buildings and that the Pavilion might be a possible candidate for this.

MB had asked the County Archives if they had any original plans for the Pavilion building.

The Conservators' Working Group reiterated that they were not prepared to consider the sale of the building.

ACTION POINT: BC to provide schedule of works required to repair the Pavilion.

In response to a question from MB, BC said that there were no plans to impose a vehicle weight restriction on the access route to the Pavilion. MB and CS felt that there should be some control over the size and weight of vehicles using the access route, which BC agreed to discuss with Blue Sky Leisure.

DB thanked BC for his update on the Pavilion, and BC left the meeting at this point.

(ii) Other matters arising

MB provided some examples of non-live ammunition found during the recent authorised metal-detecting survey at Mousehold Heath.

Off-road cycling: NH updated the off-road cycling situation. There had been a recent reduction in activity, and WS felt that the temporary 'permitted access area' had helped the situation by providing an area where off-road cycling would be tolerated.

CS said that new users were visiting the site, and the situation was not ideal as no longer term solution to the issue had been found. SL asked if the 'permitted access area' was signed. DB replied that it was not, but the fact that the by-laws were now displayed on site gave the Mousehold Heath wardens more power to move on unauthorised cyclists from other parts of the site.

In response to a general query on Norwich City Council's by-laws, LS said that they were not consistent across different sites, and that preparing realistic prosecutions under them was very difficult.

DB felt that the present 'containment' policy, whilst not a permanent solution to the problem of unauthorised cycling, was perhaps the least bad option.

Vinegar Pond: PH said that the outcome of a funding bid from the Froglife charity should be received in September; this might fund the construction of a new wildlife pond at Mousehold, and/or help fund work on the existing Vinegar Pond. NH had obtained an estimate of £26,000 for re-lining the Vinegar Pond. SL asked if more quotes could be obtained, and added that any works on the Vinegar Pond should be carried out before the frogs returned to breed next February.

ACTION POINT: PH to inform Conservators of funding bid outcome when known.

LS and NH outlined a recent incident where a volunteer had taken water to refill the small pond near the Vinegar Pond without prior approval. His trailer had collapsed on site, raising a possible safety issue. DB reiterated that no private vehicles were to be brought onto the site without prior permission, and that in such cases where approval had been granted the vehicle must be escorted by one of the Mousehold Heath wardens.

Mottram Memorial: NH said that the stolen plaque had been retrieved by the police. The plinth had been inspected and made safe, although it looked an eyesore due to the damage caused by the vandals. A new plinth would cost c. £4,500. Various options for replacing the plinth were discussed; CS suggested that the Conservators provide suggestions for replacing the memorial to the Norwich Society – this was agreed.

ACTION POINTS:

- (i) Conservators to provide suggestions via CS.
- (ii) NH to arrange removal of existing damaged plinth and to put up an explanatory sign

Ranger's House: JB-C suggested asking local residents what they felt should be done with the Ranger's House; could a group be formed to look after it?

JB-C also reported that Anglia in Bloom had been impressed by the restoration work undertaken at the Cavalry Track.

Britannia Road car park: LS outlined options for managing the problems caused through drivers of customised cars gathering in the car park at night. The main focus would now be to try to move activity further away from the houses on Britannia Rd that had been affected by problems such as excessive noise. DB approved the suggested closure of the car park entrance closest to the houses. A speed-reducing hump within the car park could also be considered. CS offered to discuss with Tourism and coach drivers' representatives to ensure that they were happy with any proposed arrangements.

ACTION POINT:

LS to obtain costings for proposed measures and to prepare a report for the next full Conservators' meeting on 7 October 2011.

Site management issues: PH and WS reported that the vegetation cutting work carried out in early 2011 had been successful despite a delay caused by the extreme winter weather. It was proposed to order more work for winter 2011/12.

It was agreed to accept a limited, regulated use of herbicide on a trial basis to control scrub re-growth arising from works such as the recent Cavalry Track project and heathland restoration.

3. Date of next meeting:

To be arranged. The next full Conservator's meeting would be at 14:00 on Friday 7 October.