

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
17 January 2014
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Mousehold Heath quarterly activity report

Item

8

Purpose

To provide an update on works and recent activities at Mousehold Heath.

Recommendation

That Conservators note and comment on current activities that have been undertaken on Mousehold Heath.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority City of character and culture.

Financial implications

Any financial implications arising from this report will have or will be met from approved budgetary provision

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Kendrick – Neighbourhoods and community safety

Contact officers

Lenny Stamp, Communities and neighbourhood manager - north	01603 213218
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Background documents

None

Report

Management work

1. Heath land restoration has continued with the cutting and burning of encroaching scrub at the Ant Hills adjacent to the pavilion and areas adjacent to the Vinegar Pond. This has been supplemented with five days Higher Level Stewardship funded work on the heath land areas adjacent to the Pitch and Putt course and the Wingfield Open Space, undertaken by contractors under the supervision of the Mousehold Heath wardens.
2. Footpath and emergency access maintenance works, notably on St. James Hill and along Gilman Road, have been continued by community volunteer groups and the wardens.
3. The Anthills and Desert conservation areas have been cut and cuttings removed by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Norwich Norse contractors and Mousehold Heath wardens, to conserve and enhance wild flower abundance and diversity.
4. Twenty nine trees and branches near footpaths have been made safe by the Mousehold Heath wardens after storm damage.
5. A number of improvements have been made around the Pavilion including, dead and overhanging vegetation has been cleared from around the buildings, the external walls and windows of the toilets have been washed and two areas have been planted with bulbs to improve the aesthetic value by a TCV group and Mousehold wardens, the works to upgrade the toilets has yet to be started.
6. A number of cases of graffiti have been reported by the Mousehold wardens and have been removed by contractors from furnishings, the band stand and changing rooms.
7. The Mousehold wardens have worked closely with the Council's neighbourhood officer and contract officer to cut paths so that large scale fly-tipping along Gertrude Road is accessible and can be removed by contractors.
8. Works for refurbishment of the Pitch and Putt car park were completed including the removal of old posts and replacement with new hard wood bollards including the re-grading of the soil mound on the perimeter of the car park securing encroachment by vehicles.
9. A number of contract failures have been reported to the contracts officer including conservation cuts not being carried out and bin bags not being collected and left on site. These will continue to be monitored.
10. Contract specifications for the conservation cut at Gilman Road have now been agreed to ensure access is available to the cut and collect machine, this was resolved in conjunction with Norse and the council's contract officer with volunteer help to re-establish access under the Lime trees surrounding the Gilman Road open space.

Volunteers

11. There has been a total of 1669 volunteer hours worked on the site in the last quarter. These have been completed by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Norwich Community Green Gym, members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, a City College Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme group, the Assist Trust, a twenty strong Natural England Land Management Team group, along with a work placement student and volunteers from the community.
12. These works have significantly contributed to the implementation of objectives set out in the Management Plan, along with increasing community involvement in the many projects being undertaken on the site.

Events (number in attendance in brackets)

13. This year an additional Norwich HEART Heritage walk was organised by the Mousehold Wardens. Tim Holt-Wilson led the first on Saturday 14th September, focusing on the site's geo-diversity and how people have influenced the landscape through the William's Chapel and the Kett's Rebellion. Both walks were fully booked with over sixty people attending.
14. Guided walk for RSPB Strumpshaw staff and volunteers led by the Mousehold wardens (30).
15. Fungi Foray Walk led by Dr Tony Leech, recording forty four species and adding ten new species to the site list (34).
16. Launch of Annual Report on St. James Hill, attended by members of the Conservators, Norwich Society, TCV and Norwich Community Green Gym (20).
17. Illustrated talk to Open academy and visiting dutch students by the Mousehold wardens (50).
18. A walk led by MHW for the Horning Ladies Walking Group (12)
19. Guided walk for the George Borrow Society led by the Mousehold wardens (4)

Interpretation

20. A draft copy of the interpretation panel for St. Williams Chapel is being developed and a draft incorporating a suggested "Mousehold style" will be circulated for comments at the end of January. The intention is for the panel to be completed by the end of March and funded from the 2013-14 budget.
21. Once this is completed the interpretation panel for the area adjacent to the Pitch and Putt car park will be developed with a target date for completion of the beginning of June.