

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
20th June 2014
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Mousehold Heath update

Item

11

Purpose

To provide an update on issues and recent activities at Mousehold Heath

Recommendation

That Conservators 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

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

Management works

1. A variety of management works have been undertaken since the Conservators last meeting. With the start of the bird breeding season at the end of March, this includes a focus on access and facilities work in recent weeks.
2. The wardens with volunteers have removed fly tipped material including asbestos from the rear of gardens backing onto Gilman Road. This was undertaken with advice from the council to ensure it was carried out safely and resulted in a considerable saving of over £22,000 had it been undertaken by contractors.
3. A homeless camper was re-homed after help from the Homeless and Rough Sleeper Officer and who was involved by the Mousehold wardens.
4. Other works that have been completed include:
 - A post has been installed at the corner of the Wingfield Open Space, to prevent vehicle encroachment (ref annual report). This work was completed by one of the regular volunteers, Ian Bell and again indicates the level of input that volunteers are making to the management of Mousehold
 - Roof repairs and outside maintenance works, including painting and decorating, have been completed at the Pavilion
 - An overgrown path leading from the Pitch and Putt Car Park has been cut back by members of Norwich Community Green Gym, allowing easier access to the site along this popular path
 - Some Earth Heritage Trail “point of interest” posts have been replaced
 - Encroaching vegetation on the Cavalry Track has been cut back
 - Ten trees and branches near footpaths have been made safe by the Mousehold wardens, including a large windblown birch tree blocking the Long Valley
 - The Mousehold wardens have been working closely with PCSO's and Police Officers to stop a motorcyclist riding dangerously on the heath
 - The wardens have worked closely with the council's contract development officer to ensure that litter pick bags of litter are collected quickly, to prevent them being torn open by birds and mammals and that grass cutting of paths is to contract standard.

Biodiversity news

5. A number of ecological surveys including plant, bumble bee, bird, butterfly, dragonfly have been completed by members of the community and Mousehold wardens across the site.
 - Two new plant surveys have been started by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders.

Volunteers

6. There has been a total of 410 volunteer hours carried out on the site in the last quarter. These have been completed by the Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Norwich Community Green Gym, f the Mousehold Heath Defenders, a City College Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme group, the Assist Trust, along with a work placement student and volunteers from the community.
7. 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.
8. A regular Mousehold Heath volunteer who was nominated by the Mousehold wardens has won a Norfolk County Council, Community Biodiversity Award, for the work he has undertaken on the heath. The award ceremony is in July.

Events

9. A number of events attracting some good numbers of attendees have been carried out. This includes:
 - A dawn chorus walk organised to mark international dawn chorus week in May. A Mousehold warden and volunteer completed the survey in unfortunately rather wet conditions recording a number of bird species nesting on the site
 - The first of this year's summer events, a moth survey evening, took place on 24 May. Although the weather was poor, twelve moths were trapped with eight species being identified before being released
 - The Mousehold Heath programme of guided walks 2014 is available on the council website.