

Mousehold Heath Conservators

Date: **Friday, 19 June 2015**

Time: **14:00**

Venue: **Mancroft room**

City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH

Committee members:

Councillor Bradford
Councillor Brociek-Coulton
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lubbock
Councillor Maxwell
Councillor Price
Councillor Raby
Councillor Sands (M)
Councillor Thomas (Vi)
Margaret Bush, The Mousehold Heath
Defenders
Matthew Davies, The Norwich Fringe Project
John Trevelyan, The Norwich Society

For further information please contact:

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Information for members of the public

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For information about attending or speaking at meetings, please contact the committee officer above or refer to the council's website.

Agenda

- 1 Appointment of chair**
To appoint the chair for the upcoming civic year
- 2 Appointment of vice chair**
To appoint the vice chair for the upcoming civic year
- 3 Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence
- 4 Public questions/petitions**

To receive questions / petitions from the public (notice to be given to committee officer in advance of the meeting in accordance with appendix 1 of the council's constitution)
- 5 Declarations of interest**
(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)
- 6 Minutes** **5 - 8**
Purpose - To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2015
- 7 Provisional Outturn 2014 15** **9 - 14**
Purpose - To advise the Conservators with a provisional revenue and capital outturn position for the Mousehold Heath Conservators budgets 2014/15.
- 8 Mousehold Heath annual review 2014-15** **15 - 44**
Purpose - To seek the views of the Mousehold Heath Conservators on the draft annual report for 2014-15 and that Conservators comment on the level of activity during the period of the report and how the report might be used.
- 9 Mousehold Heath update** **45 - 48**
Purpose - To provide an update on issues and recent activities at Mousehold Heath

Date of publication: **Thursday, 11 June 2015**

MINUTES

Mousehold Heath Conservators

2pm – 3.30pm

20 March 2015

Present: Councillors Bradford (chair), Little (vice chair), Barker, Gayton, Jones, Maxwell, Little and Price; John Trevelyan (Norwich Society) and Margaret Bush (Mousehold Heath defenders).

Also present David Bye, Bluesky Leisure

Apologies: Councillors Ackroyd, Brociek-Coulton and Matthew Davies

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2015.

3. Budget monitoring statement April – January 2015

The finance officer presented the report. The head of neighbourhood services said that the figure in paragraph D relating to income from football pitches was a cautious figure and was expected to be closer to budget by the end of the financial year. This was due to the way that income was credited as with season passes, part of the money was taken at the start of the season and part at the end of the season. The usage of the pitches had remained at the same level.

RESOLVED to note the budget monitoring statement April – January 2015.

4. Mousehold Heath update

The communities and neighbourhood manager presented the report and answered member's questions. He said that the interpretation panel for the St Williams Way chapel had been sent to English Heritage and the Ancient Monuments Agency for approval. He did not have a timescale for this but hoped the approval would be granted by late April or early May 2015. He updated members on the volunteering being carried out by residents of Dibden Road hostel. In response to a member's question, he said that he would investigate the possibility of a piece in citizen magazine encouraging volunteers and including contact details for existing volunteer groups, to tie in with the recent work of the scrutiny committee's task and finish group.

A member raised concerns that a constituent had said the two ponds on the heath were being dug deeper and that there were no signs present to warn visitors to the heath of this as a potential hazard. The communities and neighbourhood manager said that he was not aware of any such work being undertaken but would make further enquiries and circulate and information.

The Conservators were given a choice of two signs to replace the damaged car park sign on Gurney Road as shown in the appendix to the report. It was agreed unanimously to use the second option. Members questioned whether a second sign should be ordered to highlight the larger car park on the heath.

The chair gave thanks to those councillors who were standing down at the end of the civic year and also took the opportunity to introduce and welcome John Trevelyan of the Norwich Society to the Conservators as Chris Southgate's replacement.

RESOLVED to note the Mousehold Heath update and to ask the communities and neighbourhood manager to:

- 1) Circulate to the Conservators any information on the digging of the vinegar and mustard ponds,
- 2) progress a replacement carpark and public toilets sign for Gurney Road, using option two in the appendix to item 6 on the agenda,
- 3) Investigate whether there would be any savings if two signs were ordered at the same time, with a view to signposting the larger pitch and putt car park as well,
- 4) calculate the monetary worth of volunteer hours to the Conservators at the end of the financial year; and
- 5) Investigate the possibility of placing an article in Citizen magazine encouraging people to volunteer on the heath.

5. Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item *6 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

***6. The pavilion – Mousehold heath**

David Bye from Bluesky Leisure gave a presentation to the Conservators on the proposed three phase renovation plans to the pavilion building and answered member's questions.

(David Bye left the meeting at this point.)

Sarah Cracknell, surveying technician with NPS Norwich, updated the Conservators on the current lease and their options to progress negotiations.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree in principle to all three phases of the proposed renovations,
- 2) Ask NPS Norwich to progress lease negotiations with Bluesky Leisure; and
- 3) To bring the lease back to the Conservators once agreed.

CHAIR

Report for Information

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
19 June 2015

Item

Report of Chief Finance Officer

7

Subject Provisional Outturn 2014/15

Purpose

To advise the Conservators with a provisional revenue and capital outturn position for the Mousehold Heath Conservators budgets 2014/15.

Recommendations

That the Conservators note the provisional revenue and capital outturn positions.

Financial Consequences

This report states the provisional outturn position for Mousehold Heath Conservators, and the financial consequences are analysed within the body of the report.

Strategic Objective/Service Priorities

The report helps to achieve the council's corporate objective to achieve value for money.

Contact Officers

John Mallaband (Service Accountant)

01603 212583

Background Documents

None

Report

1. The Conservators have requested that budget reports be brought to their meetings on a regular basis. Budget monitoring has been undertaken at the end of each month, and reported to Conservators quarterly.

Revenue

2. Appendix A details the provisional revenue outturn for Mousehold Heath as at the end of 2014/15, and comparison of the provisional outturn against the annual budget. The previously reported (January) forecast figures are also provided for information, with the variance against the actual provisional outturn. Where appropriate, explanations for variances are given in paragraph 3 below.
3. The letters preceding the explanation below cross reference with the corresponding letter in the comments column of Appendix A.
 - A. Entries shown for FRS17/IAS19 adjustments, depreciation, and impairment are technical adjustments required to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards but which do not impact on the council tax (precept) requirement. As such, they are omitted from the calculation of the Conservators' balances.
 - B. The provisional outturn for the various works budgets is an overspend of £7k, owing mainly to:
 - £1.6k of additional unbudgeted heathland restoration work that is funded from unbudgeted income.
 - £3.9k of additional unbudgeted work under day to day repairs. £3.3k relates to external decoration costs at the Pavilion that could not be capitalised and was paid during 2014-15.
 - C. Support service costs and other recharges (including for the wardens' occupation of Heathgate) shows a provisional outturn of a £2.3k underspend, due to lower levels of costs being recharged from support service providers.
 - D. Income shows an overall budget surplus of £4.9k, made up of £4.6k income from an insurance claim that was later paid out to Zaks via premises code 2900 showing an off set of £4.6k. There was also unbudgeted income of £1.6k to fund heathland restoration work & a shortfall in income of £1.2k from football pitches.
4. Overall the budget report shows an underspend of £4.1k against the precept. However, in the calculation of the surplus or deficit attributable to Conservator's balances, the adjustments referred to in note A above need to be applied to the actual expenditure & income incurred of £207k, leaving an overspend of £849.
5. The revenue surplus/deficit attributable to Conservators' balances can be summarised as:

Item	2014/15 £
Net Revenue 2014/15	211,756
Less: Precept 2014/15	(210,907)
= Surplus/Deficit 2014/15	849

Balances

6. At their meeting of 21 June 2013, the Conservators' opted to take up the council's offer to spread a £28,077 pension deficit charge, incurred as a result of a contractor's failure, over ten years. The Conservators' balance will therefore be reduced by the amount of £2,808 (being the third of ten instalments) in addition to the revenue Deficit.
7. The impact of the revenue surplus and pension costs on the level of balances is therefore:

Item	2014/15 £
Balance brought forward from 2013/14	(10,645)
Plus: Revenue Deficit 2014/15	849
Less: Pension costs – 3 rd of 10 instalments	2,808
Balance c/f to 2015/16	(6,989)

8. This level of balances is not unreasonable in the light of the turnover and risk profile of the Conservators' budget and precept, This is less than the level of balances anticipated by Conservators when setting the precept for 2015/16 at their meeting of 30th January 2015 and is not sufficient to meet the pension deficit charges.
9. Conservators may wish to review the 2015-16 work programme should they wish to reduce spend in the year to provide a small increased balance. Alternatively Conservators may when considering their precept for 2016-17, wish to review the anticipated budget and risk profile and assess the precept and provide for any (small) increase in balances.

Capital

10. The position on capital is as follows:

Item	£
Rangers House balance b/f	- £118,767
The Pavilion	£18,001
Balance of receipts c/f	- £100,766

Summary

11. The Conservators' financial position at the end of the 2014/15 financial year appears satisfactory, in that it is not inconsistent with the financial planning, budgets, and precept for 2015/16.
12. To maintain this position for the current and future financial years, Conservators will need to continue to keep a firm grasp of income and expenditure and ensure that the level of future precepts takes account of the need to maintain a prudent minimum level of reserves and the future impact of the remaining instalments of the pension deficit costs.

Budget Monitoring Report			Year: 2014/15		Period: 12 (Mar)				
421020		Mousehold Heath Conservators			Neighbourhood Services				
Approved	Current		Budget To	Actual To	Variance	Forecast	Forecast	Notes	
Budget	Budget		Date	Date	Outturn	Outturn	Variance		
		EXPENDITURE				P10 January	P10 January		
		Employees							
65,925	65,925	1405 Salaries Full Time	65,925	64,630	-1,295	65,016	-909		
7,536	7,536	1406 Salaries Employer PF Contrib'ns	7,536	8,714	1,178	8,776	1,240		
4,108	4,108	1935 Pension Added Years share	4,108	4,291	183	4,108	0		
6,095	6,095	1939 Pension Deficit Recovery share	6,095	6,290	195	6,290	195		
0	0	1948 FRS17/IAS 19 Adjustment	0	-6,719	-6,719	0	0	A	
1,045	1,045	1990 Employee/Liability Insurance	1,045	346	-699	346	-699		
84,709	84,709	Subtotal Employees	84,709	77,552	-7,157	84,536	173		
		Premises							
4,000	4,000	2100 General Repairs & Maintenance	4,000	4,230	230	4,464	464	B	
2,000	2,000	2600 Grounds General Mtce & Upkeep	2,000	3681	1,681	5,538	3,538	B	
75,855	75,855	2651 Grounds Maintenance contract	75,855	76,094	239	75,855	0	B	
4,239	4,239	2655 Treeworks	4,239	4,253	14	4,239	0		
598	598	2810 Electricity	598	1,097	499	952	354		
750	750	2850 Water Charges Unmetered	750	0	-750	0	-750		
750	750	2853 Sewerage Charge Metered	750	0	-750	0	-750		
6,238	6,238	2875 Contract Cleaning	6,238	6,454	216	6,238	0		
0	0	2900 Fire Insurance Buildings/Conts	0	4,625	4,625	15	15	D	
94,430	94,430	Subtotal Premises	94,430	100,433	6,003	97,301	2,871		
		Transport							
1,260	1,260	3080 Car and Cycle Allowances	1,260	874	-386	930	-330		
1,260	1,260	Subtotal Transport	1,260	874	-386	930	-330		
		Supplies & Services							
450	450	3370 Equipment - Purchase	450	453	3	543	93		
450	450	3371 Equipment - Repairs/Maintenance	450	409	-41	474	24		
290	290	3399 Stationery Recharges	290	0	-290	0	-290		
190	190	3550 Clothing and Uniforms General	190	169	-21	183	-7		
300	300	3570 DPP Printing Costs	300	0	-300	0	-300		
100	100	3710 Telephones General	100	0	-100	0	-100		
190	190	3715 Mobile Phone Rentals & Calls	190	148	-42	0	-190		
0	0	3901 Insurances Other	0	224	224	0	0		
960	960	3910 Advertising General	960	1,467	507	1598	638		
2,930	2,930	Subtotal Supplies & Services	2,930	2,870	-60	2,798	-132		
		Capital Financing							
3,250	3,250	5701 Depreciation (Operational Assets)	3,250	1,719	-1,531	3,250	0	A	
0	0	5704 Impairment (Non-Op Assets)	0	-98	-98	0	0	A	
3,250	3,250	Subtotal Capital Financing	3,250	1,621	-1,629	3,250	0		
186,579	186,579	Subtotal EXPENDITURE	186,579	183,350	-3,229	188,815	2,236		
		INCOME							
		Receipts							
0	0	8063 Insurance Costs Recovered	0	-4,610	-4,610	-4,610	-4,610	D	
-3,000	-3,000	8123 Football	-3,000	-1,730	1,270	-2,076	924	D	
-13,000	-13,000	9039 Other Rents	-13,000	-13,000	0	-15,600	-2,600		
-1,800	-1,800	9132 Catering Concessn Pitch & Putt	-1,800	-1,800	0	-2,160	-360		
0	0	7097 Government Grants: Specific	0	-3,655	-3,655	-2,622	-2,622		
-2,070	-2,070	7099 Government Grants: Non-Specific	-2,070	0	2,070	0	2,070		
-19,870	-19,870	Subtotal INCOME	-19,870	-24,795	-4,925	-27,068	-7,198		

		INDIRECT						
		Centrally Managed						
0	0	P100 Programmed Maint (ES/Prop Grp)	0	909	909	0	0	B
14,000	14,000	R100 Day to Day Reps (ES/Prop Grp)	14,000	17,968	3,968	14,000	0	B
	14,000	Subtotal Centrally Managed	14,000	18,877	4,877	14,000	0	
		Recharge Expenditure						
4,426	4,426	4040 CDS IT Services Recharge	4,426	3,322	-1,104	4,426	0	C
5,147	5,133	5022 CDS HR Services Recharge	5,133	4,600	-533	5,133	0	C
1,814	1,814	5024 Property Services Recharge	1,814	1,659	-155	1,849	35	C
7,258	7,487	5026 CDS Finance Services Recharge	7,487	6,905	-582	7,487	0	C
6,036	6,221	5044 CDS Management Support	6,221	6,018	-203	6,221	0	C
1,388	1,508	5047 CDS Comms + Research	1,508	1,687	179	1,508	0	C
5,087	5,087	5097 Recharge from AHOs/One Stop	5,087	5,134	47	5,087	0	C
31,156	31,676	Subtotal Recharge Expenditure	31,676	29,324	-2,352	31,711	35	
45,156	45,676	Subtotal INDIRECT	45,676	48,201	2,525	45,711	35	
211,865	212,385	Total Mousehold Heath Conservators	212,385	206,756	-5,629	207,458	-4,927	
		Adjustments						
		Total Mousehold Heath Conservators		206,756				
		FRS17		6,719				
		Depreciation		-1,719				
		Net Revenue 2014/2015		211,756				
		Precept		-210,907				
		Provisional Position at 31st March 15		849				

Report to Mousehold Heath conservators
19 June 2015
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Mousehold Heath annual review 2014-15

Item
8

Purpose

To seek the views of the Mousehold Heath Conservators on the draft annual report for 2014-15 and that Conservators comment on the level of activity during the period of the report and how the report might be used.

Recommendation

That the Conservators comment on the report and consider how it may be used to promote Mousehold Heath and the work of the Mousehold Heath Conservators

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

Lenny Stamp Communities and neighbourhood manager	01603 213218
Will Stewart Mousehold warden	01603 213110
Nigel Hales Mousehold warden	01603 213310

Background documents

None

Report

1. The Conservators have requested that an annual report be prepared.
2. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of management works undertaken during the course of the year, to highlight the level of voluntary activity, the range and numbers of events, walks and a summary of any biological surveys undertaken. Conservators have also requested that the report contains a forward looking section.
3. Conservators agreed that this be presented to Conservators at the June meeting annual, as it would coincide with the financial out turn report.
4. Officers have drafted the annual report for 2014-15 which is attached at appendix 1 and have incorporated information requested at the meeting in June 2014 for the previous years report.
5. Conservators are requested to comment on the content of the report, how they might wish it to be used to promote Mousehold heath and the work of the Conservators and the City Council.

Mousehold Heath annual report 2014 to 2015 (draft)

Forward

To be provided at a later date by the Chair

Introduction

Mousehold Heath is a unique area made up of 88 hectares (184 acre) of woodland, heathland and recreational open space within Norwich. Mousehold has played an important part in the history of Norwich and it is a designated Local Nature Reserve. It is important both for its wildlife and as a place where people can unwind from the pace of city life.

In Tudor times, Mousehold Heath stretched as far north as South Walsham and was 22 miles round. The surviving remnant of the heath was given to Norwich City Council (then known as the local corporation) by the Dean and Chapter, to look after on behalf of the citizens of Norwich.

This was officially recorded in 1884 by Parliament in an agreement called the Mousehold Heath Confirmation Act and a body called the Mousehold Heath Conservators was formed to govern the heath. The Mousehold Conservators is comprised of city councilors, representatives of professional bodies and members of the public and meets four times a year, to oversee the management and protection of Mousehold Heath.

The Conservators also prepare an annual report which provides an overview of the work of the Conservators, any changes to the heath or new biological records and an opportunity to look forward and reflect on changes, opportunities and issues that the heath faces. The report also highlights the level of voluntary activity as well as the numbers of events, walks and surveys undertaken.

The work of the Mousehold Conservators

The management of Mousehold Heath is guided by a management plan with the current plan approved in 2013. This seeks to balance the important ecological value of Mousehold with an equally important recreational site within an urban area.

The main management objectives for Mousehold Heath are therefore to:

- ensure that the area is managed effectively
- maintain and enhance its wildlife and historic value
- promote and enhance people's access to and enjoyment of the site.

The challenge therefore is to balance these important and at times conflicting objectives.

The Conservators agree an annual work programme and budget in January each year for the following financial year and monitor the implementation of this plan at its meetings.

The management plan and further details of the work of the Mousehold Conservators can be found on the Norwich City Council website.

This annual report provides an overview of the work of the Conservators, any changes to the heath or new biological records and an opportunity to look forward and reflect on changes, opportunities and issues that the heath faces.

The report also highlights the level of voluntary activity as well as the numbers of events, walks and surveys undertaken.

Conservation management

Heathland management

Lowland heathland is a scarce and threatened habitat and only a sixth of the heathland that was present in England in 1800 now remains. However, Britain still has 20% of the world's total area of heathland and this makes it important to conserve the existing heathland, and look for opportunities to extend them. The Government UK Biodiversity Action Plan for Lowland Heathland includes targets for establishing more lowland heathland to provide space for wildlife.

Similar declines have been seen in acid grassland habitat. Both of these habitats that can be found on Mousehold and provide a home to a high number of scarce and threatened species. Heather is an important nectar source for many insects such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies. A survey of solitary bee and wasps found a number of scarce and threatened species found on heather and bare ground inhabiting the heath and butterflies such as Small Heath, Small Copper, Common Blue and Green Hairstreak are only found in the heathland and acid grassland areas.

One of the priority management objectives is to address the reduction of open heathland and acid grassland across the site which has reduced in size in the last 40 years. Of the total area of 88 hectares, only 8.66 hectares of Mousehold is covered by heathland.

In 2012 Norwich City Council secured on behalf of the Mousehold Conservators, grant funding from Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS), to restore and conserve areas of heathland and acid grassland over a 10 year period. Presently, large areas of heathland on the site are in poor condition. The HLS 'restoration of lowland heath' option is aimed at restoration of important biodiversity action plan habitats that are not

currently in good or favourable condition, supporting the implementation of management plan objectives 7.1 and 8.1.

£30,600 was awarded paid as equal annual payments until 2022. In addition, further grant aid of £1138.00 was awarded for capital works. This funding has been allocated to restoring heathland and acid grassland areas by removing scrub, grinding stumps and stripping humus, giving heather seeds in the seed bank a chance to grow. This has resulted in existing heathland areas being enlarged and linked up.

The grant funding has enabled the Conservators to access specialist contractors to achieve this objective as part of the HLS agreement.

Work in 2015/16 will continue the ongoing habitat conservation and improvement and future management will increasingly move from heathland restoration to maintenance as areas in the agreement are restored.

A Natural England Lead Advisor, who is overseeing the agreement, recently visited the site and was pleased with the progress of the works to date.

Woodland Management

Mousehold today, is largely covered in secondary woodland and scrub, consisting mainly of oak, birch, with rowan and sycamore, species which readily invade heathland suffering a decline in their management.

There has been a large amount of woodland management work carried out on Mousehold by the wardens and by volunteers. Appendix 1 provides further information on progress on the woodland management objectives.

Tree Management

Due to exceptionally high winds experienced throughout parts of 2014-15, an above average number of tree works were carried out by the Mousehold Heath Wardens to make dangerous trees safe. Tree surveys carried out by the Mousehold Wardens in August 2014 and March 2015 identified a total of 87 trees (46 in August and 41 in March) that were next to paths that were dead, dying or dangerous and requiring, in some cases urgent attention or ongoing monitoring.

A total of 167 individual pieces of work were carried out to trees to make them safe during the year. Tree inspections are now carried out on a six monthly basis by the Mousehold wardens, along all well used paths and cycle ways.



Map 1 – Location of trees close to paths requiring management or monitoring



Mousehold Warden clearing wind-blown birch blocking path

In February the council's tree gang cut back overhanging branches on Mousehold Lane as a result of our ongoing tree inspection programme.



Norwich Norse contractors working along Mousehold Lane

Infrastructure

Residents and visitors use Mousehold extensively, for dog walking and other informal recreation such as running or jogging, casual ball games and picnics.

The site contains an extensive network of paths, many of which are informal in nature and come and go over time. More formal waymarked paths also exist many of which radiate away from the main car parks.

Whilst visitor facilities at Mousehold are limited the focus of the management plan is to retain the naturalness of the site and accommodate and support appropriate access.

Work completed during the year includes regular annual works such as surface re grading of the public car parks on Britannia Road and Gurney Road as well as one of improvement including:

- **Bollard replacement** - eleven hard wood bollards were replaced surrounding the public car park at the pavilion, Gurney Road
- **Benches** - three replacement benches were installed on Gilman Road open space.
- **No parking signs** - were installed opposite the entrance to Britannia Road car park to improve access and the turning circle for the Tour Bus.



The Norwich tour bus now has a greater turning circle once impeded by parked cars until signs were installed

Activities and events

Whilst Mousehold Heath is used considerably for informal recreation, the Conservators have continued to ensure the heath is available for appropriate events and activities organised by the council and other organisations as well as events organised directly by the Conservators that will widen residents understanding and knowledge of the heath's history and wildlife.

Events and activities carried out during the year included:

- **Guided walks** – a record number of guided walks were organised and led by Mousehold wardens for specific groups and members of the community throughout the year including walks for Norwich MIND, Norwich Family History Group, Norfolk's Women's Trefoil Guild, Norwich Garden's and Norwich Society. A total of 51 people attended these walks
- **Summer Walks Programme** – these set out to increase involvement, understanding and enjoyment of the site led by the Mousehold wardens and local naturalists. 12 walks were carried out including walks on bats, fungi, a dawn chorus, butterflies, management and wildlife, 2 community wildlife watch and 5 moth survey evenings, attracting 111 members of the community.
- **Mousehold Heath Fayre** – organised by the Mousehold Heath Defenders organised on the Fountain Ground attracting over 500 members of the community
- **Armistice Day** - An Armistice Day ceremony of remembrance, at the Airmen's Memorial, Gurney Road, was organised by the Mousehold Heath Defenders on 11th November 2014.
- **Winter solstice** - a Winter Solstice celebration organised by the Mousehold Heath Defenders
- **Norwich HEART Heritage Weekend Walks** – a geological themed walk was organised in conjunction with the wardens, together with a social and landscape history walk focussing on the stories of St. William's Chapel and Kett's Rebellion.
- **Norwich City Council Events** - Norwich City Council organised or promoted Playdays during the school summer holidays on the Fountain Ground, a bandstand concert and cross country runs for local schools.



Community Wildlife Watch Walk on St James Hill

Volunteering and involvement:

Considerable volunteer activity is promoted and supported on the heath by the Mousehold Wardens to help implement the management objectives and to widen understanding and enjoyment of the site. A significant number of volunteer activities took place during 2014-15 taken place. The following groups undertook work this year:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Norwich Community Green Gym
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- The Assist Trust
- Norwich City College Duke of Edinburgh group
- UEA student group
- Easton College Foundation student group
- Easton College work placement student
- Hartford Manor special needs team
- Many individual volunteers from the community.

The work carried out has been varied and includes clearing scrub and dead vegetation from around the pavilion toilets (see photographs below), heathland management such as sapling pulling, scrub clearance and bracken bruising or pulling to reduce the extent of bracken across the heath; litter picks, path and emergency access route maintenance; woodland ride management; the removal of burnt (from fire damage) and old leggy gorse; maintaining the Earth Heritage Trail points, tree work; scrub management on St James Hill, maintaining the Cavalry Track route; cutting and raking the Anthills acid grassland.

A staggering 3944 volunteer working hours were carried out during the year.

The Conservators would like to thank all the volunteers that have contributed their time and effort in improving Mousehold Heath for people and wildlife during the year.



Bollard installation to prevent vehicle access onto Gilman Open Space



Maintenance works carried out to the Earth Heritage Trail



Autumn cutting and raking of the wild flower glade adjacent to the wildlife pond to increase ground flora



Maintenance work around the Pavilion



St James Hill, pathway maintenance.

Challenges and successes

Gilman Road Open Space and the Desert conservation area

During the year, a review was undertaken of the management of the open space and conservation area at Gilman Road which has led to a number of improvements.

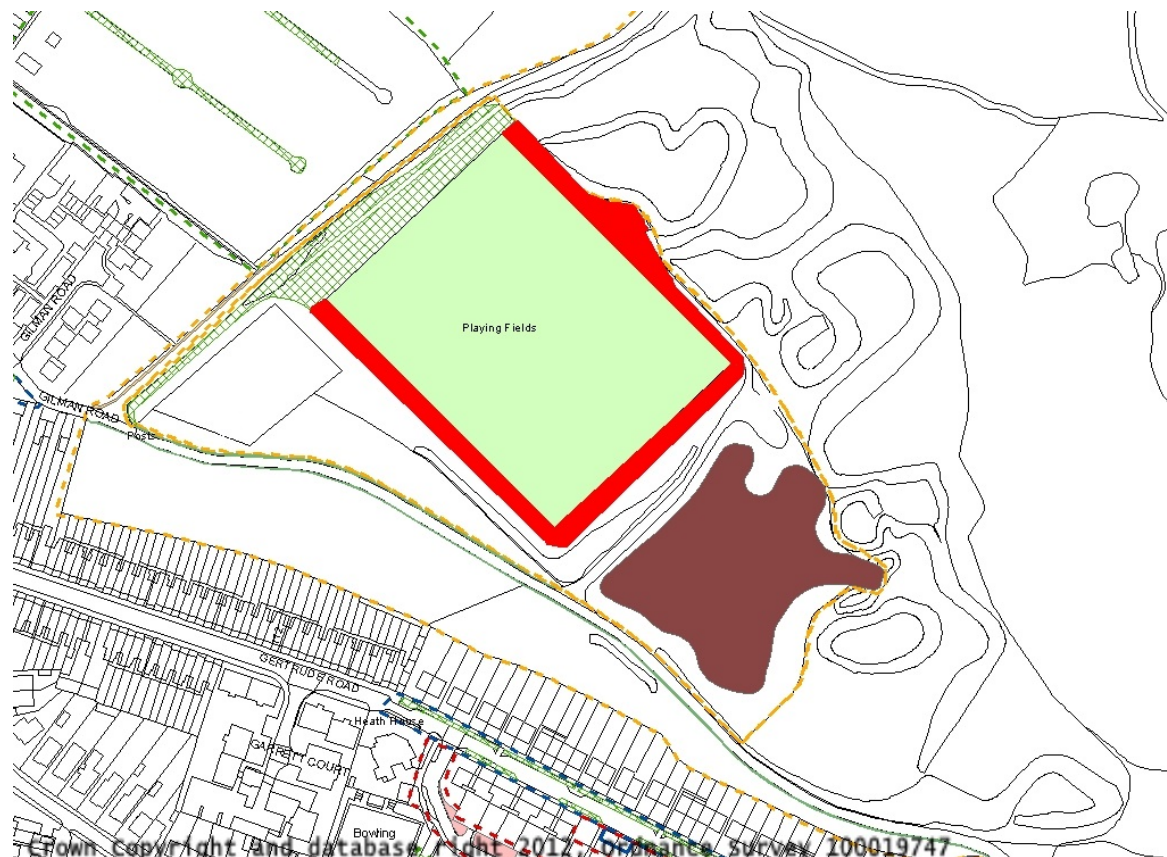
Map 2 shows the Desert (highlighted in brown) which is an acidic wild flower meadow where an annual conservation cut is carried out in October. The management of this site has been incorporated into the HLS funded works and carried out by specialist contractor under the guidance of the Mousehold wardens.

The area highlighted in red surrounding the open space at Gilman Road was previously managed as vegetation cut and this also is now maintained under the HLS scheme with additional volunteer help.

The area marked in green was previously managed as a sports field until 2014.

This has now been changed to a conservation cut that will improve the site for wild flowers and grasses associated with acidic soil conditions thereby improving the biodiversity on the site.

The area marked with green squares has been retained as a vegetation cut.



Map 2 Gilman Road conservation area

As well as leading to improvements to the biodiversity of this site, the changes have also resulted in £6772.00 available to be used for other works on Mousehold.

Education

The Conservators ongoing development of environmental education has continued this year.

An example is the continued Forest School activities with pupils from Mousehold Avenue infants, which continues to be popular with the pupils.

Additional Forest School activities involving George White middle school pupils started this year, forging a new relationship between the Mousehold wardens and School.

These activities increased involvement, understand and enjoyment of the site to over 150 children on a regular basis.

A number of community based Wild4 Wellies activities, regularly took place, providing environmental education and play for children.



Sprowston Beaver group taking part in an environmental activities day

Other works on Mousehold

Push the Pedalways

Push the Pedalways forms part of the council's plan to improve cycling facilities in the city and the Norwich cycle network.

This programme includes the eight-mile "pink pedalway" which provides a connection between Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital and UEA, through the city centre, to Heartsease.

Part of the route touches on Mousehold and during the planning and development of the programme, the Mousehold Conservators were consulted on the proposals.

As well as changes to Gurney Road, sensor lighting is being installed along Valley Drive between Gurney Road and Heartsease Lane in 2015.

Looking forward

As the Conservators enter the third year of the current five year management plan a number of key areas of management will continue.

The restoration and improvement of the acid heath and grassland plays a vital role in the management and re-creation of this internationally vulnerable habitat and the wildlife that it supports. The HLS funding has been vital in enabling the Conservators to achieve this.

Equally important is the work to management Mousehold's woodlands and for both of these habitats, the commitment and enthusiasm from volunteer community groups and organisations, who play such a large part in making this possible.

The access infrastructure and facilities also require continued maintenance and the main access points will be reviewed during 2015-16. Whilst major change is neither needed nor affordable the management plan indicates the need to improve these "access hubs" where required.

Opportunities to work in partnership with community groups and organisations will continue to be explored. One such community partnership is presently being formed with Dibden Road Hostel, where participants of a 'Jumpstart Project' have just started to carry out voluntary site management tasks, such as litter picking to help bring structure to their lives and give them the skills, to help them back into working life as well at the same time, bring improvements to Mousehold.

Public walks and talks continue to be popular and are promoted through an annual programme available on line, local press, what's on, the council's events leaflet and the Tourist Information Centre.

To ensure a safe, positive and enjoyable visitor experience on going monitoring of the site is carried out including the reporting of anti-social behaviour, site repairs, tree surveys and works.

With Mousehold acting as a vital haven for wildlife and recreation contained within the urban area, the balancing of use of the site for recreation with its importance for biodiversity remains a day to day challenge.

During 2015-16, the Conservators will be considering the appearance and facilities that the main access points from car parks should contain.

Continued financial challenges remain and as in previous years, the Conservators will be mindful of this when agreeing the annual work programme and setting the annual precept.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Ecological surveys and species monitoring

Butterflies

Two Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (BMS) transect surveys were completed weekly, between April and October. The BMS is the largest and longest running (started in 1976) biological survey in the country. Data is collected from over 1,200 sites in the UK, with 29 sites surveyed in Norfolk. Butterflies are uniquely placed amongst British terrestrial insects and other invertebrate groups to act as indicators of the state of the environment. The results of the surveys are used by the national government to assess the impacts of climate change and the progress of governmental policy initiatives such as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) schemes. Not only are butterflies biologically suitable as indicator species, having rapid lifestyles and, in many cases, high sensitivity to environmental conditions, but the recording and monitoring volunteer and datasets built up by Butterfly Conservation and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, enable accurate assessment of their trends.

On a site basis, the surveys provide important data to site managers to monitor/determine habitat conservation and management, record new species and increase understanding and enjoyment through community involvement.

An additional Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (BMS) transect survey was completed between April and October. 547 butterflies were recorded on this transect, mainly in the recently managed and restored areas of the Anthills and heathland.

There were 468 butterflies recorded on the transect undertaken on the Weston side of Gurney Road – a good number considering the poor weather conditions. These numbers hold up well against 2013 numbers which was one of the best years in living memory nationally. Over 50 members of the community were involved in the surveys.

Despite annual weather fluctuations and national population changes the number of butterflies on the site is increasing as shown by Appendix 2. This upward trend suggests that habitat changes, through the restoration of open, early successional habitats, such as heathland, acid grassland and woodland glades - resulting in increased sunlight and nectar producing plants - is having a positive effect on the abundance and diversity of butterfly species.

Appendix 3 and 4 show how correlations can be seen between habitat management and butterfly abundance in specific transect sections.

Appendix 5 shows the variation in butterfly numbers with habitat types with section 8, 9,10 being through shaded, secondary woodland.

The site list now stands at 25 butterfly species (See Appendix 6)

Moths

Four public moth evenings, along with ad hoc surveys were completed, with 33 people attending. 100 moths were recorded during the survey, including 28 new species to the site. These ranged from the large and colourful Elephant Hawkmoth (*Sphinx ligustri*), which thrilled the participants on 19.07.14 and True Lover's Knot (*Lycophotia porphyria*), an attractive species closely associated with heather.

These surveys have resulted in the site species list rising to 205.

Birds

A Common Bird Census (CBC) survey was carried out by the Mousehold wardens with the help of volunteers. 30 species of bird were recorded as having breeding territories based on the CBC methodology. This number was roughly the same as previous years (see Appendix 7).

Plants

A monthly plant survey on St. James' Hill was carried out by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders and a Mousehold warden.

Two further monthly surveys in the new pond/hawthorn glade and the desert wildflower area, have been carried out by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, recording a wide variety of nectar providing wild flowers. See Appendix 8 and 9 for species lists.

Bumblebees

A monthly survey was carried out by a member of the Defenders and a Mousehold warden on St. James Hill. The transect recorded a number of bee species, including Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*), White-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lucorum*), Re-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*) and Common carder bee (*Bombus pascuorum*). Bee numbers increased along the transect route in 2014, suggesting that habitat management work, such as, opening up the Cavalry Track and clearing scrub on St James Hill to conserve grassland, is having a positive effect.

Dragonflies

Monthly surveys recorded 12 species of damselfly and dragonfly. These included the first site records of Norfolk Hawker (*Aeshna isosceles*) dragonfly (see photo), a rare and local Red Data Book species confined to Norfolk and North Suffolk Broadland. It's nearest recorded breeding site is Thorpe Marshes so they are presumably venturing up to the heath to feed on the abundance of insects in open habitats.



Photo: Sean Locke

Norfolk Hawker dragonfly (showing its diagnostic features of green eyes and yellow triangle on its abdomen) - recorded on the site for the first time

Appendix 2: Table showing progress on woodland management objectives set out in Management Plan 2008 – 2018

Management Plan objective/Project name	Area	Work undertaken/to be undertaken	Work carried out by	Date start/finish
9.2 (i): Create rides and glades	The Dip/Hawthorne glade	Has been cut back and restored over the last 4 years. A new pond was installed in November 2012 and wild flower seed spread in spring 2013. The glade is presently a flower rich habitat which is cut and raked annually in Autumn, removing dead material to increase sward diversity and easy access. Flower surveys are currently being undertaken by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders who have recorded over 40 species.	Green Gym, TCV, Mousehold Defenders, Mousehold wardens.	Restoration work to finish March 2016. Annual cutting/raking ongoing.
9.2 (iv): Increase amount of available dead wood habitat	Whole site	During glade restoration, tree safety works, heathland restoration, etc., large amounts of dead wood are left in piles to provide habitats for wildlife. In recent years this has greatly increased the amount of available dead wood, which is particularly important when considering the young age and lack of dead wood when comparing the site to older woodlands.	Mousehold wardens, volunteer groups, contractors.	Ongoing.
9.2 (vi): Monitor spread of Sycamore and other non-native invasive species	Whole site	Sycamore: This species is increasing across the site. In managed areas seedlings and saplings are removed. In secondary woodland, young Sycamores could be managed by a Woodland Grant Scheme, and by Easton College and other volunteers groups, to reduce their impact on native species. Laurel: a recent survey has found a significant increase in Laurel across the site. This is particularly concerning	Easton College and other volunteer groups, Mousehold wardens. Mousehold wardens, Green Gym, TCV. Mousehold wardens	2015 – 18. After HLS felling has finished. March 2015. Ongoing. Ongoing monitoring.

		<p>when considering the damage and cost of controlling Laurel in nearby Lion Wood. All Laurel will be mapped and removed by March 2015.</p> <p>Rhododendron: A large specimen near Gilman Road has been monitored with no evidence of it spreading.</p>		
9.2 (v): Retain creepers such as honeysuckle and ivy on trees.	Whole site.	<p>Creepers have been left (unless safety considerations dictate otherwise), with good quantities along Gilman Road and on paths near Vinegar Pond. There has been an increasing trend in associated butterfly species such as White Admiral and Holly Blue. Breeding birds such as Song/Mistle Thrush and winter migrants such as Redwings and Fieldfares have been recorded feeding on their berries.</p>		Ongoing.
9.2 (iii): Identify key specimen trees and woodland features such as Beech Drive.	Whole site	<p>Specimen trees such as Turner's and Mother Oak, Giant Redwood, etc., have been identified and any required protective measures (i.e. log boundary around Turner's Oak to protect it from car tyre compaction), have been put in place. These trees are monitored on a regular basis.</p> <p>Beech Drive: this picturesque avenue has been encroached upon by scrub. This will be cut back in 2015, to conserve views, allow easy access and help dry out the surface by allow sunlight to penetrate. A large Beech tree dying due to a fungal infection, has resulted in light penetrating ground level, allowing nectar bearing plants to grow, and a woodland glade to naturally develop. A large number of butterfly species including the</p>	<p>Mousehold wardens</p> <p>Prison Work Party, Mousehold wardens</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>2015. Ongoing.</p>

		scarce White Admiral, have subsequently been recorded in the new sheltered micro climate. It is recommended that new planting of Beech is not undertaken unless a large number of mature trees are lost and the avenue structure is compromised.		
9.3 (vi): Coppice area.	Area of dense, mainly hawthorn woodland adjacent to Gilman Road	A 0.5 – 1ha area of woodland has been identified (see map) for coppicing. Actively managing and opening up this area should help to reduce anti-social activity taking place as well as increasing biodiversity.	Easton College, TCV, Green Gym, Mousehold wardens.	2015 – 2018, after HLS felling has finished.
Tree Safety Inspections	Whole site	Due to the age and structure (pioneer birch being replaced by high canopy oak trees) of secondary woodland, there has been, and will continue to be, an increase in tree management required, especially adjacent to highways and paths. The Mousehold wardens have recently implemented a new 6 month tree inspection survey, which takes a pro-active approach to tree/public health & safety. 70 dead, dying and dangerous trees and branches were identified, with over 150 tree jobs undertaken in the last 4 months to make the site safer for members of the community.	Mousehold wardens, Tree contractors	Every 6 months. Ongoing.

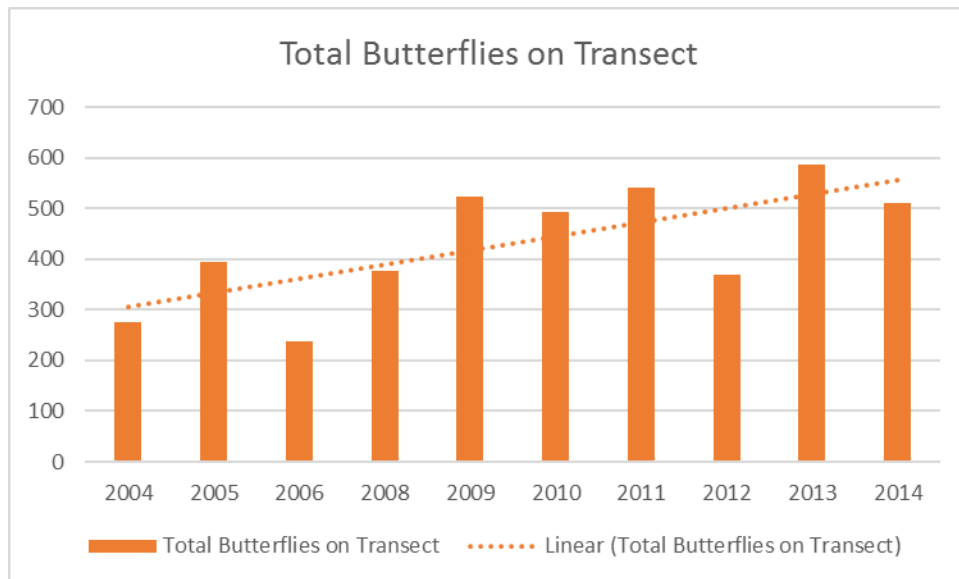


Chart showing the increase in total number of butterflies recorded, as shown by the trend line, when taking into account annual variations

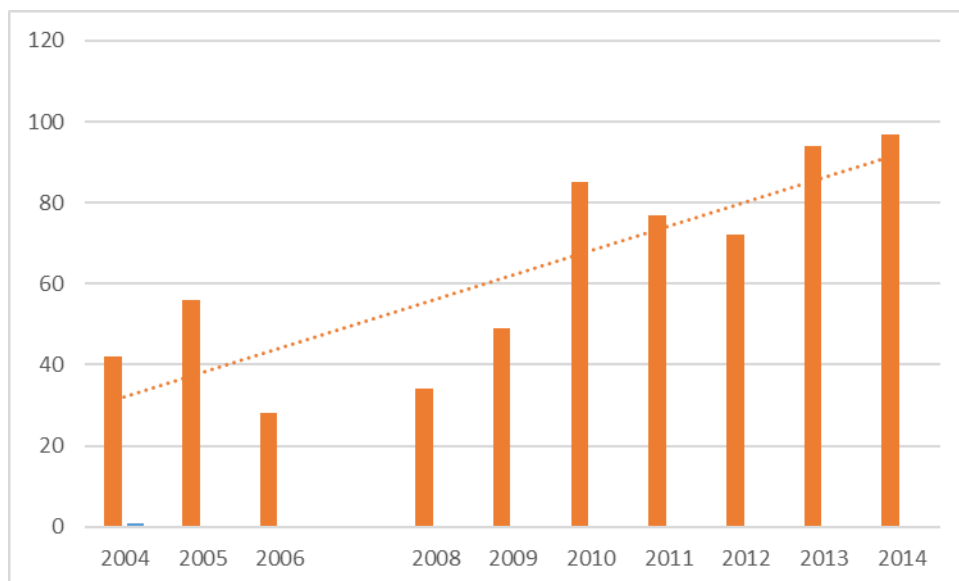


Chart showing the increase in number and upward trend of butterfly numbers in section 1 of transect survey. This appears to be a correlation between habitat changes as this new pond glade section has seen scrub clearance since 2009, resulting in more light and increased ground flora in recent years

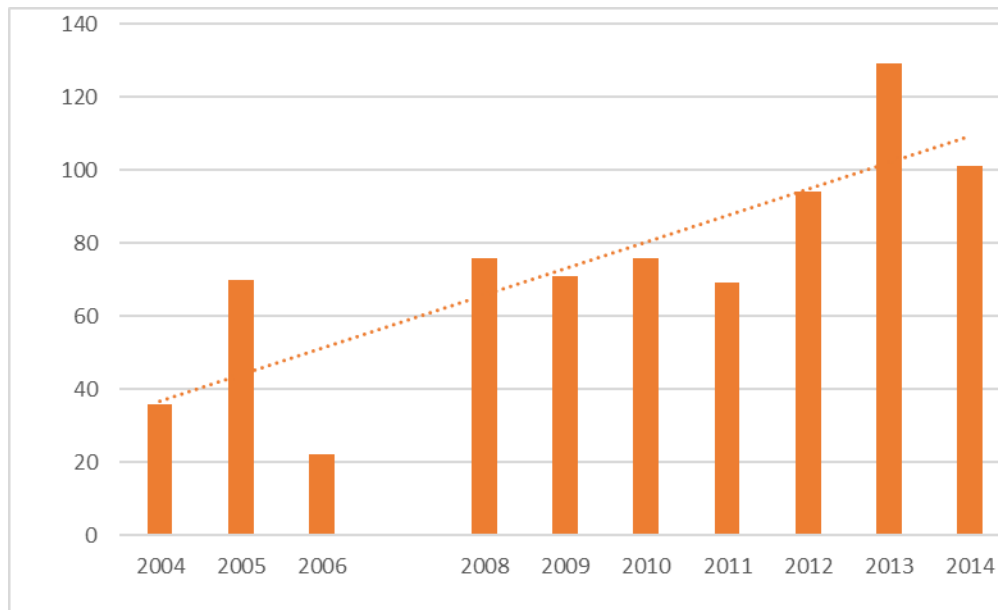


Chart showing increase in total number of butterflies recorded in section 5, which has seen an increase in heathland/acid grassland conservation management since 2008.

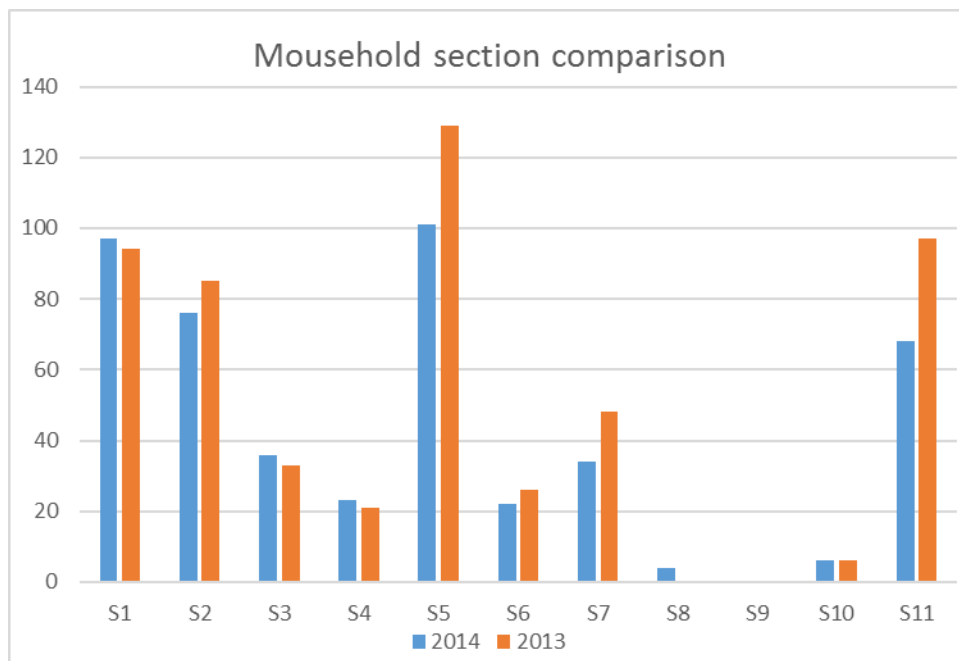


Chart showing variation in butterfly abundance in different transect sections. Sections S8, S9, S10 are through shaded secondary woodland.

Appendix 3: Table showing a list of butterfly species recorded during 2014-15		
Species	Distribution/Status	Habitat: Egg/Caterpillar Foodplants
Comma, <i>Polygonia c-album</i>	Resident	Hop, Common Nettle, Bramble etc.
Essex Skipper, <i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	Resident	Various grasses; Cocks-foot, Creeping Soft-grass and Tor grass.
Small Skipper, <i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	Resident	Grasses; Yorkshire Fog and Creeping Soft grass.
Large Skipper, <i>Ochlodes venata</i>	Resident	Various grasses.
Common Blue, <i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	Resident	Open habitats. Legumes.
Holly Blue, <i>Celatrina argiolus</i>	Resident	Holly, Ivy and variety of other plants.
Small Copper, <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	Resident	Open ground. Common and Sheep's Sorrel.
Green Hairstreak, <i>Callophrys rubi</i>	Resident. Local.	Heathland. Gorse and Broom.
Brown Argus, <i>Aricia agestis</i>	Resident. Local.	Common Rock-rose
Large White, <i>Pieris brassicae</i>	Resident	Brassicas and Crucifers.
Small White, <i>Pieris rapae</i>	Resident	Brassicas and Crucifers.
Green-veined White, <i>Artogeia napi</i>	Resident	Damp, grassy and flowery places. Various Crucifers.
Orange-tip, <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	Resident	Crucifers.
Purple Hairstreak, <i>Neozephyrus quercus</i>	Resident	Oak trees.
Gatekeeper, <i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	Resident	Various grasses.
Meadow Brown, <i>Maniola jurtina</i>	Resident	Various grasses
Ringlet, <i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	Resident	Various grasses, shrubs and bramble.
Peacock, <i>Inachis io</i>	Resident	Common Nettle.
Painted Lady, <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	Migrant	Thistles.
Red Admiral,	Resident. Migrant	Common Nettle.

White Admiral, <i>Limenitis camilla</i>	Resident. Vulnerable.	Woodland glades. Honeysuckle.
White-letter Hairstreak, <i>Satyrus w-album</i>	Resident. Endangered.	Elms.

Appendix 4: Table showing the Common Bird Census (CBC) Survey results for 2014-15

Number of territories recorded along transect – P&P car park to St James Hill, Spring 2011	Number of territories recorded along transect – P&P car park to St James Hill, Spring 2012	Number of territories recorded along transect – P&P car park to St James Hill, Spring 2013	Bird Species Recorded.	Number of territories recorded along transect - P&P car park to St. James Hill, Spring 2010.	Number of territories recorded along transect – P&P car park to St James Hill, Spring 2014
17	12	17	Blackbird	22	17
9	4	6	Blackcap	6	11
9	9	10	Blue Tit	12	15
8	13	13	Chaffinch	16	13
6	5	6	Chiffchaff	3	12
2	3	4	Coal Tit	2	2
2	2	2	Common Whitethroat	2	2
6	10	6	Dunnock	4	8
1	1	0	Garden Warbler	0	0
2	4	2	Goldcrest	4	3
1	1	0	Goldfinch		21.03.14
0	2	2	Greater Spotted Woodpecker	3	3
11	9	9	Great Tit	9	10
0	3	1	Greenfinch	3	2
1	1	2	House Sparrow	1	4
1	2	2	Jay	2	2
5	2	2	Long Tailed Tit	6	2
1	1	1	Mistle	1	1

			Thrush		
29	40	22	Robin	29	30
2	4	4	Song Thrush	3	6
0	0	0	Sparrowhawk	1	0
2	1	1	Tree Creeper	2	3
1	1	1	Willow Warbler	2	1
28	28	20	Wren	19	23
			Other species recorded without evidence of territories -		
25.03.11 15.05.11	07.05.12	29.04.13	Kestrel	17.03.10, 19.04.10, 26.04.10,	12.04.14, 29.04.14
23.03.11 02.06.11	12.05.12	29.04.13	Magpie	31.03.10, 19.04.10.	29.04.14, 03.06.14.
			Marsh Tit	26.04.10	
		17.04.13 18.04.13 14.05.13 21.05.13	Carrion Crow		

Appendix 5: List of plant species recorded on the Desert Wildflower area by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders in 2014

White Clover, (*Trifolium repens*),
Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*)
Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*)
Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*)
Slender Trefoil (*Trifolium micranthum*)
Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium holosteoides*)
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
Smooth Cat's-ear (*Hypochoeris glabra*)
Daisy (*Bellis perennis*)
White Bryony (*Bryonia dioica*)
Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)
Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
Large-leaved Lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*)
Cleavers (*Galium aparine*)
Buddleia (*Buddleja Davidii*)
White Dead Nettle (*Lamium album*)
Bramble (*Rubus* spp)
Upright Hedge-parsley (*Torilis japonica*)
Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
Common Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)
Black Horehound (*Ballota nigra*)
Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
Hedge Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)
Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex sanguineus*)
Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*)
Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon pratensis*)
Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
Prickley Sow Thistle (*Sonchus asper*)
Mare's-tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*)
Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*)
Dove's-foot Crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*)
Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)
Small-flowered Buttercup (*Ranunculus parviflorus*)
Silverweed (*Potentilla anserine*)

Ox-eye Daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*)

Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*)

Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*)

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
19 June 2015
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Mousehold Heath update

Item

9

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 during the last period.

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

Lenny Stamp Communities and neighbourhood manager	01603 213218
Will Stewart Mousehold warden	01603 213310
Nigel Hales Mousehold warden	01603 213310

Background documents

None

Report

Site management

A resident from Gertrude Road was caught fly tipping a considerable amount of household waste adjacent to Gilman Road from his back garden. He was challenged by the Mousehold Heath Wardens and told this was illegal and he would be liable to prosecution if he did not remove it immediately. Arrangements were made for the resident to gain access with a vehicle to remove the items from site and a follow up warning letter was sent by the Environmental Protection Team.

A camper was seen on two occasions - once adjacent to the Rangers House and again adjacent to Gilman Road. The Mousehold wardens advised the individual on a number of times that this was against the byelaws. Norwich City Council's rough sleeper/single home coordinator was contacted and after some persuasion from the local PCSOs, the camper moved on.

Litter picks have taken place involving Norwich Community Green Gym and JumpStart Project volunteers.

A number of BMX jumps have been removed by the Mousehold wardens and an Easton College work placement student.

Asset management

The changing room building on the Fountain Ground sports pitch was vandalised, with sky lights in the roof smashed and the outside of the building graffitied. An adjacent litter bin was also set alight and these incidents were reported to the police who are monitoring the situation. The costs of the repair fall below the insurance excess and will be met from the Mousehold budget.

Tree and natural area management

The two six monthly tree surveys were completed covering all main public footpaths, identifying 87 trees needing monitoring, safety works or urgent attention.

23 windblown, dead, dying or dangerous trees have been made safe, cut up and removed from near paths and high amenity areas with help from Green Gym and an Easton College Student.

The large Tree of Heaven has now been removed adjacent to the pavilion by the tree contractor.

Access works

Repairs were carried out to Hill Farm Track, by TCV volunteers and Mousehold wardens, who repaired a large hole that had been created by erosion from heavy rain.

Works were undertaken by the TCV adjacent to the Rangers House, to remove scrub for the completion of the Push the Pedalways project linking up Gurney Road to Heathgate.

Fly tipping was removed from the Gilman Road area by volunteers from Dibden Road Hostel and JumpStart Project.

Maintenance to paths and the Cavalry Track, on St. James Hill, were carried out by TCV. This involved cutting back and removing overgrown vegetation which was making access difficult.

Promotion and Interpretation

The interpretation panel for St. Williams Chapel has now been installed.

Volunteers

There have been a total of 440 volunteer hours on site in the last quarter.

These have been completed by:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Norwich Community Green Gym
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- The Assist Trust
- Hartford House Engage Group
- An Easton College work placement student
- Volunteers from the community.
- Dibden Road Hostel JumpStart Project participants.

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.

Surveys:

A number of bee, butterfly, flower, moth and dragonfly surveys have been carried out by members of Mousehold Heath Defenders, Green Gym and individuals from the community, collecting important data on the site's biodiversity. All records are forwarded to county recorders and Norfolk County Council's, Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service.

Events

A range of events to increase understanding and enjoyment of the site, have been organised or hosted on the heath in the last period, these being:

- A number of Forest School environmental education activities.
- A community wildlife watch walk
- Dawn bird survey walk to celebrate International Dawn Chorus Day.
- Moth survey evening
- Norwich School Cross Country Run

