



Mousehold Heath Conservators

2pm – 3.30pm

30 January 2015

Present: Councillors Bradford (chair), Ackroyd, Barker, Gayton, Jones, Maxwell, Little and Price, and Margaret Bush.

Apologies: Councillor Brociek-Coulton, Matthew Davies and Chris Southgate.

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Paul Scruton asked – “Will the broken sign (opposite the Pavilion car park) be replaced by two separate signs, one pointing to public toilets and the other to public car park?”

The head of local neighbourhood services said that this would be discussed by the management sub group.

Mr Paul Scruton asked a further question – “Can you inform me and my neighbours when the fencing at the back of our houses (behind Gertrude Road), which used to separate us from the Mousehold Heath, will be put back? It was removed a few months ago, and leaves us open to attack from burglars.”

The Mousehold Heath warden said that the fence had been removed after it had collapsed. It would not be possible to replace it with the same fencing as it had spikes and would be a health and safety hazard. As the bramble grows back this would form a substantial natural barrier and a replacement fence would therefore not be necessary. In reply to a supplementary question from Mr Paul Scruton, the head of local neighbourhood services said that consideration would be given to leaving gorse as well to ensure no one could go through, and he would report back to the Mousehold Heath conservators on how successful this proved to be.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the meeting held on 19 September 2014 subject to item 5 being amended to read that the Mousehold Heath Defenders

contribution towards the St Williams Chapel interpretation board had been £1000 not £800.

4. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16

The head of local neighbourhood services presented the report. In reply to a number of comments and questions he said that the Trust for Conservation volunteers would concentrate on landscape management and the cost of this would stay at the same level as the previous year. The repairs contingency budget or council balances could be used if there were more significant damage or repairs required to assets. The repair and renewal budget could be used for any substantial work that arises, including replacing car parking bollards etc. He added that work was also undertaken on the heath by the Mousehold Heath wardens which was too detailed to be reflected in the work programme.

The community and neighbourhood manager (North), in reply to a conservator's question, said that the options for the Britannia Road car park resurfacing had been too expensive so the repair of the existing surface would be carried on. Councillor Maxwell said that traffic calming measures would be considered by cabinet the following week which might help the situation.

In reply to a question from Councillor Little, the community and neighbourhood manager (North) said that there were no costs attributed to providing natural wild flowers as this was undertaken in day to day work and the wardens used their contacts to obtain seeds at no cost.

RESOLVED to approve the work programme for 2015-16 and to review its progress after six months.

5. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2015-16

The service accountant circulated a revised report with new figures for the impact of forecast out turn 2014-15 and the forecast balance at 1 April 2015 which had been necessary because of a revised treatment of depreciation.

In reply to a question from Councillor Little, the head of local neighbourhood services said that subject to no major unexpected budgetary items being required, he anticipated that the balances would remain at the same level at the end of the following year.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) approve the forecast balances position set out in paragraphs 3 to 5 of the revised report;
- (2) approve the risk management arrangements set out in paragraphs 5-9;
- (3) approve the 2015-16 budget as set out in appendix A; and
- (4) place a precept on Norwich City Council for the financial year beginning 1 April 2015 as set out in paragraph 12.

6. MOUSEHOLD HEATH UPDATE

The communities and neighbourhood manager present his report.

The changes to cutting on Gilman Road had been introduced following a contractor cutting the wildlife area at the wrong time of year. In future the wardens would undertake all maintenance in this area and this would ensure more flexibility in the budgets to allow them to do the work that is required. He thanked the Mousehold Heath Defenders for their help in respect of identifying camping that was being undertaken and the council's homelessness officers who had helped deal with the situation. He highlighted the work of volunteers on the heath and said it simply wouldn't be possible to do as much work as we did on the heath without this help.

Councillor Price reiterated the thanks to the work done by the volunteers. He welcomed that the burnt out car had been dealt with quickly and efficiently but was worried about contamination from such incidents.

Councillor Little queried whether schools did anything to promote the fact that the heath was such a valuable resource. The head of local neighbourhood services said he would investigate how to promote the heath to schools throughout the city as it was an asset for the city as a whole and not just for schools nearby.

In reply to a question, the head of neighbourhood services said that the agents for the leaseholder at the Mousehold Heath Pavilion would attend the next management subgroup to present their proposals regarding the refurbishment of the toilets.

The head of local communities said that Hope Collins had published a new addition of its new naturalists series on nature in towns and cities. Number 1 to 7 referred to Mousehold Heath and recognised the good work of the Mousehold Heath Conservators in its preservation.

A member of the public said that there had been problems with drainage on the area between Britannia Road to Mousehold Avenue. Work had been undertaken to address this and he wanted to congratulate the Mousehold Heath Conservators for this.

RESOLVED to note the recent and current activities undertaken on Mousehold Heath.

CHAIR