

Report for Information

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
7 October 2011

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Report of Report of the head of local neighbourhood services

Subject Mousehold heath progress report

Purpose

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

Recommendations

That the Conservators note the report's contents.

Financial Consequences

This report is for information only; it is intended that any costs have been, or will be, met from existing budgets.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority Safe & Healthy Neighbourhoods, and the service plan priority to ensure that Norwich has a clean & safe environment.

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

Mousehold Heath management plan, 2008-2013 and annual work programme 2011/12.

Report

Activities and management works undertaken

1. Since the last meeting on 24 June 2011, volunteer activities (including practical work, flora and fauna surveys and attendance at events) at Mousehold have involved 300 people and totalled 1,331 hours. This level of activity at Mousehold could well be unprecedented for any three month period.
2. Guided walks and other events have been generally well supported this year, and have included moth evenings, bat evenings, fungal forays and a Heritage Open Day walk. Additional walks or activities have been organised for specific groups, including Norfolk County Council's adult education services and Forest Schools. The Open Academy's Environment Day was also attended on 24 September.
3. In addition to practical tasks involving the Mousehold Heath Defenders, BTCV and the Community Green Gym, the Assist Trust's clients have recently been taking part in regular work sessions.
4. The GNDP funded heathland recreation project on the Open Academy sports field is making progress, with heather and other heathland plants starting to appear.
5. A gale in September brought down or damaged several trees at Mousehold. Most of these were cleared up by the Mousehold Heath wardens using their chainsaw, thus reducing expenditure on contractors and enabling hazards to be made safe more promptly.
6. Both the Mousehold Wardens and the Mousehold Heath Defenders have organised comprehensive winter work programmes, and further heathland management work is planned.

Issues arising

7. Further gorse fires occurred, although not as many as in the previous three month period. The creation of fire breaks last winter proved effective at containing the extent of the fires, and most of the very flammable old gorse has now been brought into management which should further lessen the fire risk in future.
8. Measures to uphold the by-laws, especially regarding unauthorised motorcycling continue, and a court case involving a persistent offender is scheduled for October.
9. Work has started on compiling the 2012/13 annual work programme, and a draft should be available at the next full Conservators' meeting.
10. Discussions have taken place with the owners of Zak's Restaurants regarding repairs to the pavilion building and the extension of the lease.

11. Work on installing the new Fountain Ground changing rooms building is scheduled to begin on 3 October.