

Item 7

Mousehold Heath Conservators Committee
13 January 2012

Notes from Mousehold Heath Working Group

Mon 14 November 2011

14:00 – 16:30 Wymer Room City Hall

Present:

Cllr David Bradford, Chairman (DB)
Cllr Stephen Little (SL)
Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton (JB-C)
Chris Southgate (CS)
Margaret Bush (MB)

Nigel Hales (NH) Mousehold Heath Warden
William Stewart Mousehold Heath Warden
Paul Holley (PH) Natural Areas Officer

Mr Tim Holt-Wilson (TH-W), Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership and Tim Mellors (TM), Norwich City Council Cycling & Landscape Development Officer were also present for their respective items

1. Apologies

Cllr Jenny Lay
Lenny Stamp

2. Mousehold Earth Heritage Trail

TH-W outlined the role of the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership and the potential project at Mousehold Heath. Funding for the project had recently been approved by the Norfolk Biodiversity Fund, the first time they had supported an earth science based project.

The main emphasis of the project would focus on Mousehold Heath's notable geology. There would be links to Mousehold's biodiversity, including management work that would benefit both geology and wildlife, and local history. There might also be a possible link to the work of the late Prof. Brian Funnell of UEA, who had once produced a booklet on Mousehold's geology.

The project would have five main outputs:

1. Research into Mousehold's geodiversity, including identifying sites of specific interest that could be enhanced and/or interpreted to visitors. This would involve consultation with local interests.

2. Practical site work alongside the Mousehold Wardens and Mousehold Heath Defenders. Some small-scale way-marking could be included in this.

3. Interpretation.

4. Identification of management requirements.

5. Production of an evaluation report for the geodiversity and biodiversity outputs.

TH-W foresaw the following roles for the bodies involved in the project:

Mousehold Heath Conservators – approving the project

Norwich City Council – facilitating works

Mousehold Heath Wardens, MH Defenders & other volunteers – carrying out practical management works

Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, Heathland topic group – providing advice

TH-W and Jenny Gladstone would co-ordinate the Geodiversity Partnership's input.

Some project ideas suggested so far included:

- Interpretation that could be linked to other organisations' websites and be downloadable
- Guided walk to launch the project
- Creation and/or management of small-scale exposures to demonstrate Mousehold's geology

TH-W suggested arranging an exploratory site visit for any Conservators who wished to attend.

Cllr SL felt that the project fitted in with the Nature Improvement Areas concept and proposals to re-create heathland locally.

MB outlined some of her recent historical research on Mousehold Heath.

CS pointed out that an earth heritage trail had been identified in the management plan; the project under discussion might also help to raise further awareness of Mousehold that could benefit any future funding applications.

Sub-group members were supportive of the project and the chair and vice-chair gave approval under delegated powers.

It was decided that TH-W should produce a short draft on the project's implications for the Conservators. Cllr DB suggested a draft joint press release to introduce the project. Cllr J-BC recommended that Cllr Gihawi be briefed on the project, especially if St. James' Hollow, which is outside the Mousehold boundary is to be included.

ACTION POINTS:

TH-W: to produce scoping document ready for the next full Conservators' meeting on 13th January 2012

TH-W: arrange visit to Mousehold with the Mousehold Heath Wardens and any Conservators who wished to attend for 13:30 on 6th December 2011

PH: circulate date of field visit

PH: circulate the Geodiversity Partnership's grant application to the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, as this provided a useful summary of the proposed project

3. Norwich cycle network proposals

TM outlined the Norwich Cycle Network proposal and the Sustrans/Big Lottery Connect 2 project. The project had three main aims:

- Planning – to protect routes and obtain developer funding
- To enable a more strategic approach to cycle funding
- To provide better information on routes to cyclists

Maps of the proposed cycle networks were reviewed by those present. The concept, and the suggested major routes were supported by the sub-group members, but Cllr SL, CS and NH all expressed concerns about suggested new routes crossing Mousehold.

ACTION POINT:

TM and NH to further discuss what routes might be acceptable on the Heath.

TM went on to discuss the Connect 2 network in more detail. The plans had had to be revised due to delays with the Deal Ground development, and it was suggested that cycle improvements might be carried out around the Mousehold Heath area instead. The outputs would need to be delivered by 2013.

The working group strongly supported the proposed upgrading of the existing Valley Drive cycle route. TM agreed that Gurney Road needed to be made more cycle and pedestrian friendly, and measures such as interactive road signs and new pedestrian refuges could be provided. The working group supported these measures in principle, but asked for further details.

4. Update on Conservators' working group meeting, 15th August 2011

- NH reported that the official receivers of the Ranger's House had secured the site and removed accumulated debris from the garden. Norwich City Council's Environmental Health section were also due to inspect the property today (14th November).
- An estimate of £2000 – 3000 for a basic refurbishment of part of the Vinegar Pond had been received – this would use bentonite clay pellets as a seal.

CS felt that as the Conservators had already approved the budget, officers had the appropriate authority to proceed with the work; this was approved by the chair and the vice-chair.

ACTION POINT:

PH to check appropriate budget heading for this work

The Pavilion

ACTION POINT:

PH to request an update report from Bob Clarke

- Mottram Memorial: NH had consulted Vicki Manthorpe of the Norwich Society about the memorial. The Norwich Society, the Castle Museum and RH Mottram's daughter had all expressed their preference for the structure to remain as a memorial, and to be repaired but not updated. The Sainsbury Centre had advised that the memorial was on a register of public art, and they also supported restoration, rather than updating, of the structure.

NH said that repairs to the memorial's granite plinth would cost £4000 – 5000. He had investigated the use of a resin alternative to bronze for the replacement plaque to deter future theft attempts.

ACTION POINT:

NH to obtain quotes for both real and imitation bronze plaques.

- WS reported that he had treated excess weed growth on the Cavalry Track and would shortly treat tree stumps there to prevent re-growth.

A man caught illegally riding a motorcycle on Mousehold Heath had pleaded guilty to this and other offences and had been sentenced to 14 weeks imprisonment.

ACTION POINT:

WS to ask Sara Martinez (Communications) if the court case outcome could be publicised.

- Cllr JB-C suggested that Norwich City Council's 'Citizen' magazine could feature an article on 'a day in the life' of a Mousehold Heath warden.
- PH reported that the new changing room building had been damaged during transit and was currently being repaired. As yet, he had still not been informed when the building would be ready for use.

5. Date of next meeting

To be arranged.