

MINUTES

MOUSEHOLD HEATH CONSERVATORS

14:00 – 15:30

19 September 2014

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

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

1. Public questions

Mr Paul Scruton referred to a letter he had submitted and asked a number of questions.

The Head of local neighbourhood services said that these matters would be considered under the management sub group item later on the agenda.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2014.

4. Budget monitoring statement April – July 2014

The finance control officer presented the report. The Head of local neighbourhood services said that most of the work programme was undertaken during the autumn and winter months, hence there was little budgetary activity to report.

RESOLVED to note the budget monitoring statement for April to July 2014

5. Mousehold Heath update

The Head of local neighbourhood services presented the report, which reflected the ongoing partnership working of the wardens with outside groups.

The Mousehold Heath warden said that the main thrust of the work carried out over the summer was heathland and bracken management. The clearing of scrub had shown to be beneficial to bees and had led to an increase in ground flora. Tree inspections had identified 60 tree jobs which need to be carried out over the next

three months. In response to a question from a conservator, the Mousehold Heath warden said that there had been few incidents of motorcyclists using the heath; but if an incident was reported, the police were always called quickly as they were mindful of public safety.

It had been a good year for lack of fires which was partly due to heavy rain. A campaign had been run by the Fire Service called 'Conserve, don't kill it' explaining the damage that fire causes to the heath.

He suggested that as the Geoffrey Goreham memorial bench had been badly damaged and had to be removed, the memorial plaque could be transferred to a picnic bench close to the memorial bench site. At the suggestion of a conservator, the Mousehold Heath warden would investigate if a plastic replica of the plaque could be made to deter metal thieves.

The chair thanked the Mousehold heath Defenders for a contribution of £800 raised by the Mousehold Fayre, to help towards the St William's Chapel interpretation board. The Mousehold Heath warden thanked the Mousehold heath Defenders and Councillor Brociek-Coulton for organising the fayre and said that it had been a pleasure to see so many people using the fountain ground in such a positive way.

The Eid al Fitr prayer event had been very popular with around 700 participants attending. It was suggested that a more suitable site be found for this event next year as parking had proved to be a problem with this volume of visitors.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) note the update of activities on the heath;
- (2) ask the Mousehold Heath wardens to transfer the Geoffrey Goreham memorial plaque to a picnic bench close to the site of the memorial bench;
- (3) ask the Head of local neighbourhood services to bring an update of the annual work programme and expenditure to the next meeting of the Mousehold heath conservators

6. Notes from management sub group and itinerant meeting

The head of local neighbourhood services presented the report.

Conservators discussed the use of the Britannia café car park and raised concerns that the car park and the adjacent road were being used by commuters who worked in the city. The head of local neighbourhood services said that restricted parking had been enforced at Earlham Park and Eaton Park. The Mousehold Heath Warden said that the car park is well used by those enjoying the heath for organised walks, picnics and by volunteer groups so imposing a time limit on the parking could prove problematic.

In response to the questions raised by Mr Paul Scruton, the chair confirmed that a public toilet would be maintained at the pavilion and NPS Norwich Ltd had been asked to ensure that this happened. The Head of local neighbourhood services said

that maintaining the size of the outside eating area was an integral part of the lease of the pavilion and said that the area was meant for joint use by patrons of the restaurant and those using the heath.

Relating to the size of lorries using the access track and the car park, the chair said that under the terms of the lease that this was a public car park. The Head of local neighbourhood services said that the informal surfacing of the car park was not ideal for marking parking bays and he would ask NPS Norwich Ltd to investigate other options.

The Mousehold Heath warden said that although the planting of beech trees on Beech Drive had been discussed in the past by the Conservators, the thinning of the trees had created a natural glade which was important for biodiversity in the area. When discussing the spread of chestnut minor disease, a member commented that it was important to keep leaf litter removed to help to reduce the effects of the disease over the winter months. The Mousehold Heath warden said healthy trees should be able to fight off the disease but he would look at burning leaves throughout the year rather than composting them.

RESOLVED to ask the Head of local neighbourhood services to: -

- (1) consider both the application and implications of imposing restricted parking on the St James car park; and
- (2) highlight within the work programme which elements are woodland management.

7. Dates of next meetings

RESOLVED to note the following schedule of future meetings of the Conservators, all to commence at 2pm –

Friday, 19 December 2014
Friday, 20 March 2015

And the following schedule of future meetings of the Conservators sub group, all to commence at 2pm –

Friday, 5 December 2014
Friday, 6 March 2015

CHAIR

