



Mousehold Heath Conservators

14:30 to 15:20

16 June 2023

Present: Councillors Sands (M) (chair following appointment), Peek (vice chair following appointment), Champion, Francis, Fox, Kendrick, Kidman, and Schmierer and Marion Maxwell (Mousehold Heath Defenders) and John Trevelyan (Norwich Society)

Apologies: Councillor Lubbock and Matthew Davies (Norwich Fringe Project)

In attendance Andy Summers, Head of Environment Services
William Stewart, Mousehold Heath Warden
Councillor Giles, cabinet member for communities and social inclusion

1. Appointment of chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Mike Sands as chair for the ensuing civic year.

2. Appointment of vice chair

Following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Peek as vice chair for the ensuing civic year.

3. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public questions/petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

5. Appointments to the management subgroup

The chair reminded members that the chair and vice chair of the committee sat on the subgroup, as did the representative from Mousehold Heath Defenders and the member of the Norwich Society.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Mike Sands, Peek and Kidman and Marion Maxwell and John Trevelyan to the management subgroup.

6. Management subgroup meeting dates

RESOLVED to agree the following management subgroup dates:

- 1) Friday 28 July 2023 at 14:30
- 2) Friday 17 November 2023 at 14:30
- 3) Friday 16 February 2023 at 14:30

7. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2023.

8. Mousehold Heath Conservators 2022-23 provisional year end outturn

The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion presented the report. He highlighted that there was a slight underspend which could be attributed to a lower cost of Supplies and Services and increased income from Pitch and Putt.

In response to a member's query the head of environment services said he believed the variance for Electricity was due to a rebate, but he would circulate this information to the committee.

A member queried why the expenditure for Grounds General Maintenance was much lower than budgeted for. The Mousehold Heath Warden said that the works had taken place but may have been charged to incorrect cost codes. The head of environment services clarified that the service had also identified areas where there was duplicate charging for services. There had also been less proactive works conducted by Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) but had instead been undertaken by volunteers.

In response to a member's question the Mousehold Heath Warden confirmed that the monies received as sponsorship by external organisations had been for a sponsored memorial bench, that had been installed.

A member queried why there had been no income from the football pitch. The head of environment services said that there had been a booking error which meant the pitch had not been available for members of the public to book. This had now been corrected and a local football club were letting the pitch for their use.

A member asked why the responsive repairs budget had been overspent. In response the Mousehold Heath Warden said that a large number of responsive repairs had taken place, for example the noticeboard had been stolen and needed to be replaced. Vandalism of other infrastructure works had also taken place that needed to be repaired.

RESOLVED to note the Mousehold Heath Conservators 2022-23 provisional year end outturn report.

9. Mousehold Heath Conservators Annual Report 2022-23

The cabinet member for communities introduced the report and thanked the Mousehold Heath Wardens, Mousehold Heath Defenders and volunteers for their hard work in maintaining the Heath.

The Mousehold Heath Warden presented the report. He highlighted that it had been a busy year. A number of surveys had been conducted within the year 2022-23 on the Heath. This included the butterfly survey. The year had been challenging due to the heat and this had impacted the number of butterflies found on the Heath which was an issue reflected across the country. The spring, however, had been positive for butterflies which would help to boost figures. With increasing periods of extreme weather the diversification of different habitats on the Heath will hopefully improve figures over the year.

Over 3000 hours of volunteering had taken place on the Heath by a number of groups and individuals. The Mousehold Heath Warden highlighted that a student from Eastern College had recently completed a work placement with him. The student would be volunteering and was hoping to conduct another work placement in the winter. Through the support of the Conservators the student had been able to complete a number of courses which would help the student with their future employment. The Mousehold Heath Warden said it had been positive to share his knowledge and experience.

The chair asked whether the course that had taken place on using a scythe would be repeated. The Mousehold Heath Warden said that two sessions had taken place to train volunteers to use scythes to conduct a conservation cut of the wildflower meadow. If the demand was there another course could be run.

In response to a member's question the Mousehold Heath Warden said that Norwich High School for Girls had a group volunteering on the Heath each Monday and also held community days for larger groups. Mousehold Infant School had also been involved in volunteering. The Warden was developing engagement with Sprowston High School.

A member commented that following the last meeting that they had been engaging schools to host talks around Mousehold Heath and sustainability and was looking for volunteers to help with this.

In response to a member's comment the chair said that the road closure order that had been in place to try and prevent vehicular antisocial behaviour had expired. The council had applied to the Magistrates Court for an extension, but this had not been granted. The council would be applying for a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to target vehicular antisocial behaviour for the wider city. The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion confirmed that a report would be brought to the July meeting of the cabinet to consider the PSPO, he assured the Conservators that a copy could be circulated.

A member reported that they had received comments from local residents about both the colour of the Vinegar pond and the lack of frogs. In response the Mousehold Heath Warden stated that there had been frogspawn within the pond but this was lower than previous years. This decline had been attributed to the fish that had been found in the pond. A large number of fish had been removed from the pond and relocated but it had been clear that this could remain an ongoing issue and the service would be looking at removing fish in the autumn. The mustard pond, which had been created due to the Vinegar pond drying in summer, had increasing levels of frogs found within it. He said a pond expert suggested that the brown/red

colouration earlier this year was a natural, harmless bacteria, which was increased by dry, sunny weather conditions and natural minerals present in surrounding soils.

In response to a member's query the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion confirmed that the PSPO would not cover damage to the Heath and was specific to vehicular nuisance, however the byelaws dealt with this matter.

A member asked for an update on the progress of the toilet provision as agreed at the meeting on 20 January 2023. The head of environment services said that he would pursue this matter further as this had been delayed. Once the works had started, he would provide an update to the Conservators.

RESOLVED to note the Mousehold Heath Conservators Annual Report 2022-23.

10. Itinerant meeting date

RESOLVED to conduct an itinerant meeting on Friday 1 September 2023 meeting at 14:00 in the car park by Zak's restaurant.

CHAIR