



MOUSEHOLD HEATH CONSERVATORS

2pm – 4.35pm

30 March 2012

Present: Councillors Bradford (chair), Little (vice chair), Matt Davies and Chris Southgate

Also present: Jack Jarvis (Mousehold Heath Defenders) and Raymond Cann

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton, George, Henderson and Lay; and, Margaret Bush and David Cannon

1. MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED,

- (1) to note the resignation of Marya Parker, representing the BCTV, and to record the committee's gratitude to her for her contribution to the Mousehold Heath Conservators;
- (2) that the meeting was not quorate and that any decisions would need to be confirmed at the next meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2012.

3. BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT

The finance control manager presented the report and answered questions.

During discussion the committee welcomed the format used in presenting the accounts figures. In response to a question the finance control manager assured the Conservators that any underspend on the budget from the previous financial year would show as an income stream in the accounts for 2012-13. He confirmed that the budget was "still sound" but cautioned that there could be some costs arising from the failed green spaces contract earlier in the year. If this was the case it would be reported to a future meeting.

The head of neighbourhood services referred to the work programme and suggested that the management sub-group should have the authority to agree expenditure between meetings of the Conservators.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the current budget monitoring position;
- (2) devolve powers to the management sub-group to agree expenditure between meetings of the Conservators, subject to it being in accordance with the work programme and reported to the next meeting of the Conservators.

4. MOUSEHOLD HEATH UPDATE REPORT

Request for use of Mousehold Heath

(Paul Dickerson, Survival Outdoor Skills (SOS), attended the meeting for this item.)

Paul Dickerson explained that SOS was established 3 years' ago and that it offered survival skills training, bush craft skills and team building events and training for individuals and organisations in the public and voluntary sector. It was not a commercial operation and the trainers gave up their free time to deliver the courses. The proposal was to deliver courses on Mousehold Heath, using toilet and refreshment facilities at local public houses.

The Conservators then asked questions about how SOS was constituted, its methods of operations and details of the activities on offer. The Conservators considered that they would need to discuss the proposal further but expressed concern that the activities would conflict with other users on the heath; that lighting fires was not a suitable activity on the heath and could set a precedent for less responsible people; and, that it would not be possible to provide a dedicated area for SOS to use.

Matt Davies suggested that there were other privately owned woodlands in the vicinity of Norwich that might be more suitable for the purposes of SOS and that he would be happy to pass on these details to Paul Dickerson.

(The representatives of SOS left the meeting at this point.)

The chair said that the management sub-group would consider the proposal to use the heath at its meeting on 28 May 2012 and gave assurances the Mousehold Heath Defenders would be consulted if the sub-group was minded to recommend that the SOS's proposal be approved.

Earth Heritage Trail

The natural areas officer presented the report. A mock-up of the leaflet was displayed and discussion ensued. The Conservators requested that it was carefully proof read and that the date was inserted. The natural areas officer assured the Conservators that the information on the leaflet was authoritative and had undergone a peer review by another geologist. The Conservators suggested that the leaflet

could be part of a suite of Mousehold Heath information leaflets with the same house style. It was noted that there would be design costs associated with this approach and therefore £350 was suggested to cover the costs of the leaflet. The Conservators considered that whilst it would be cost effective to print off a larger print run, a small print initial print run would test its effectiveness. A pdf version on the council's website should also be available for people to print off themselves. Laminated copies of the leaflet should be available for people to use whilst on the heath.

In response to a question the natural areas officer said that it was the intention of Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership that the web pages would be hosted on the city council's website.

Site management work

The natural areas officer and the head of neighbourhood services presented the report and answered questions. The committee acknowledged the support provided by the Mousehold Heath Defenders and that 854 hours of voluntary work had been completed. It was suggested that the contract services manager would be invited to the next meeting to explain the interim contract arrangements for street cleaning, ground maintenance and tree work for the next 12 months.

Vinegar Pond project update and proposed new wildlife pond

The natural areas officer said that the pond had been relined in December 2011 and that although a seasonal pond, it was currently full of water and frogs had successfully spawned there. The feasibility study for the location for the proposed new wildlife pond had been completed. A location for the pond had been identified, in a natural dip, and it was suggested that the Conservators visited this on their next itinerant. The site of a nearby World War II bomb crater had been discounted on archaeological grounds.

During discussion the Conservators were advised that funding for the wildlife pond would need to be allocated in the work programme.

Fountain Ground – changing room

The natural areas officer reported that the power supply to the changing rooms was not expected to be connected up until late May or early June.

The chair suggested that there needed to be an official opening when the works were completed.

Mottram Memorial

The Mousehold Heath officer presented a supplementary report which was circulated at the meeting. (The report is available on the council's website.) A piece of the resin was displayed at the meeting.

The chair said that he had received a letter from the Norwich Society, stating that the trustees would have preferred that the memorial was restored to replicate the original bronze panel. However the society did support the proposed inlaid stonework for the

dedication inscription, provided that it kept to the original wording and that a label was added to deter thieves by explaining that the panel bronze-toned resin to deter thieves. The society had also approved a donation of £2,500 towards the costs and commended the Mousehold Heath officer for the work he had undertaken to ensure that the memorial was restored.

During discussion the Conservators noted that the bronze plaque had risen over the years but originally would have been level with the top of the memorial, making it harder to remove. The Conservators also discussed the practicalities of the restoration of the memorial and acknowledged that there could be additional costs in replacing the memorial stone to its site. The Conservators also requested that the stone mason used the same typeface as the original inscription if possible. The stone mason would be asked to provide an example for the Conservators to consider before the work was carried out.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) consider the proposal by SOS at the next meeting of the management sub-group on 28 May 2012 and that if the sub-group is minded to recommend that the Conservators approve the request to ensure that the Mousehold Heath Defenders are consulted;
- (2) grant £350 towards the costs of producing the Earth Heritage trail leaflets as part of a suite of Mousehold Heath leaflets, and delegate to the head of neighbourhood services, in consultation with the chair and vice chair to sign it off for publication and report back to a future meeting;
- (3) ask the contracts services manager to the next meeting of the Conservators to provide an update on the programme of works for the next 12 months;
- (4) note the progress on the Vinegar pond and consider placing the construction of a wildlife pond on the work programme at the next meeting;
- (5) hold an official opening of the Fountain Ground changing rooms when completed;
- (6) ask the chair to write to the Norwich Society to thank it for the donation of £2,500 towards the restoration of the Mottram Memorial;
- (7) agree the sum of £4,508 to restore the Mottram Memorial as set out in the supplementary report circulated at the meeting.

5. MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP REPORT

Pavilion lease and repairs

The Conservators expressed concern that a progress report on the pavilion lease and repairs from asset and city management was not on the agenda for this meeting despite the request from the management sub-group that the relevant officer attended.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to receive the report;
- (2) that a report on the pavilion lease and repairs is considered at the next meeting of Conservators.

6. NORWICH CONNECT 2

The cycling and landscape development officer and the senior planner (transport) updated the Conservators on the progress of the Connect 2 project and said that the traffic regulation orders for the proposed works on Gurney Road had been advertised. The consultation on the proposals for the cycle/footpath and 20mph zone on the north side of Gurney Road had ended on 22 March 2012. Two comments had been received in response but no objections. The Norwich Highways Agency committee would consider the proposals at its meeting on 24 May 2012. Plans were displayed at the meeting. The cycling and landscape development officer and the senior planner (transport) answered the Conservators' questions on the proposals.

Discussion ensued on the proposals. The stakeholders' meeting had been advised that the county council's safety audit had identified concerns regarding the southern termination of the proposed cycle/footpath. The audit recommended that the cycle/footpath be extended along the northern side of Mousehold Avenue to its junction with Gilman Road. The chair pointed out that some intrusion onto the heath might be acceptable in the interests of safety but further consultation with the Conservators would be necessary.

The officers advised the Conservators of the timescale for the scheme and that there would be more consultation in May.

RESOLVED to note that a report on Norwich Connect 2 will be considered at the Norwich Highways Agency Committee on 24 May 2012.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED to agree the dates of meetings for the next civic year 2012-13, with all meetings being held at 2pm on the following Fridays:

29 June 2012
19 October 2012
18 January 2013
15 March 2013

CHAIR