

Report for Information

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
12 September 2008
Report of Head of Community Services
Subject Report of the Management Subgroup

Item
4

Purpose

To update the Mousehold Conservators on the work undertaken by the Management Sub group

Recommendations

That the Conservators note the report

Financial Consequences

The works proposed and discussed by the Management subgroup will be met from existing budgets.

Corporate Objective/Service Plan Priority

The report helps to achieve the corporate objective to make Norwich safe and secure, building strong and proud local communities, to ensure the City has a clean and healthy environment and to develop the delivery of our services on a neighbourhood basis.

Contact Officers

Bob Cronk – Head of Community Services
Simon Meek – Green Spaces Manager

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Minutes of Mousehold Heath Conservators Management Sub Group

22 August 2008 14.00 – 16.30 Wymer Room

Present:

Cllr. Bradford (DB) (Chair)
Cllr. Brociek-Coulton (JBC)
Cllr. Bearman (JB)
Malcolm Bryant (MB)
Chris Southgate (CS)
Simon Meek (SM)
Paul Holley (PH)

1. Apologies

Cllr. Little
Cllr. Lay
Bob Cronk (BC)

2. Notes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Outstanding Actions

- Green Spaces Team structure and details circulated to the meeting
- Investigate Hill Farm track bank erosion and involve property services re: stabilisation of the bank.
 - Will Stewart and MB looked at area. Agreed that no immediate action required but need to monitor.
 - Add to annual work programme **(PH)**
- Survey fire brigade access points and produce a prioritised programme for works
 - Previous chief fire officer retired. Nigel Hales has obtained costing for works on dayworks for items identified requiring work by previous officer.
 - Access route into main heathland areas via Hill Farm Track to be a priority, and work carried out subject to cost and approval by Conservators.
 - Prioritised list of works to be produced to guide Conservators decision making for other areas, with advice from new chief fire officer for October management sub-group.**(PH)**
 - Obtain specification from Property Services for works and check **(PH)**
 - Obtain price for the job rather than dayworks **(PH)**
- Arrange meeting with Highways to look at resolving outstanding issues re: Britannia Road car park.

- Nigel Hales, Paul Holley and the tour bus operator met with Highways. Suggested altering entrance width of barriers to facilitate bus access, but leaving in place the rest to prevent cars driving in and out along the full length. Markings or signage to deter people from parking in the bus turning area.
- DB requested that the pedestrian access at the car park leading to the Mottram Memorial be looked into and included as part of this work **(PH)**
- MB raised issue of bank at the back not stopping vehicles onto the heath. Remedial works needed.
- Posts or raised bank to be put in to stop cars driving on the heath, but wide enough so as not to restrict pushchair and wheelchair access.
- Number and height of car park signs to be incorporated as part of the “access hub” design.
- Price for car park works to be put forward at the October Conservators meeting. **(PH)**
- Meeting to be arranged to look at Vinegar Pond project prior to work starting in August to determine how work will be done - involving PH, MB, Defenders and Nigel Hales/Will Stewart
 - Meeting held but MB having problem getting contractors involved.

3. Action Points of Conservators Meeting 13th June 2008

- Duty Mobile Provision
 - SM reported that this facility could be provided, but the cost per call handled out of hours (evenings and weekends) would be £6.50. Such charges could have a significant impact on the Mousehold Heath budget, so Conservators examined other options.
 - Produce procedure to clarify the method for contacting the wardens via the single number and circulate to the Defenders and Conservators.
- Byelaws
 - SM advised that the byelaws could be enforced without them being displayed at the site. CS was not in favour of extra signage that could damage the site's character, but the byelaws could be displayed on the reverse of any existing or new interpretation signs.
 - DB asked if the Council's Legal section advise on this? **(SM)**
 - Copy of Mousehold byelaws to be circulated to Conservators **(PH)**
- Litter/dog bins
 - 16 bins were in the contract and were currently on site.
 - Location plan and cost of emptying to be obtained for the next Mousehold management Sub Group. This with a view to determining

the installation of additional bins, in line with the latest management plan. **(PH)**

- Geophysical survey
 - Mr Scruton's request to undertake a geophysical survey had been agreed in principle by the Conservators.
 - Agreed that it is a one off study.
 - Agreed officers will specify conditions for a specified period to protect the integrity of the site and health and safety of visitors. **(PH)**
- Fun Day 2009
 - Defenders have taken preliminary steps.
 - JB-C: asked that the Conservators should be represented on any organising committee for this event.
 - SM also asked that the Council are represented and have a close working involvement with the group.
- Toilet issues
 - To be discussed at a future meeting.
- Annual tree inspection
 - SM outlined the procedure for tree safety inspections and that they are carried out following standard procedure.
 - Speak with Citizen Services who do the inspections to arrange for Conservator to see the inspection being done. **(SM)**
- Litter picking
 - SM recommended that any problems should be reported directly to City Care.
 - Circulate enquiries number to Conservators and Defenders **(SM)**
- Adaptation of buildings near pitch and putt
 - Details to be circulated **(SM)**

4. Annual Work Programme 08/09

- This was distributed for comments. PH highlighted the well received increase in activities during 2008, especially regarding surveys, events and bracken control, over previous years.
 - Report to next full Conservators' meeting. Including volunteer work party contributions. **(PH)**

5. Current Issues

- Management plan update

- Final proof to be available for checking prior to printing week commencing 25th Aug.
- **BMX**
 - The problem had now escalated to a new area of Mousehold of possibly greater environmental value that receives higher numbers of visitors to the site than the original area. SM asked if Conservators might be prepared to relax policing of the original 'BMX area' to take pressure off the area now being damaged. JB: possibly a mistake to impose a total crackdown in the original area. DB: a holding position was needed to give time for a more permanent solution to be investigated.
 - CS: Conservators should invite Cllr. Blakeway and Cllr. Sands to talk about the issue at a future sub group meeting. **(BC)**
 - City owned land to provide alternative site for this – possibility of sports development funding to set it up.
 - Investigate legal consequences of tolerating use of the original area by cyclists. **(SM)**
 - Advice from other countryside managers with experience of this issue would be sought. **(PH)**
- **Vinegar Pond project:**
 - A need to progress this further if to be carried out this year.
 - MB to continue to explore options and report to PH within 2 weeks to confirm proposal and contractors to deliver it. **(MB)**
 - Any work on the site using machinery and equipment will need to comply with the same H&S and insurance requirements expected from contractors.
 - Malcolm to meet with officers to produce a method statement, specification of materials to be used and costings. **(PH)**
 - If no progress within 2 weeks project to be developed using existing city contractors.
 - SM explained that whoever was doing the work would need to satisfy the Council's insurance and health and safety criteria.
- **Brushcutter**
 - Hoping to purchase brushcutter using Section 17 funding provided by English Heritage for management of the St William's chapel site. **(PH)**
- **St James' Hill steps project**
 - Estimated cost to carry out the work from City Care is £25,000. Need to look at the cost and benefits of the work as part of the forthcoming itinerant/sub group meeting.

6. October Itinerant - Plans

- 24th October 2008 starting at 10.00 or 10.30 followed by sub-group meeting in the afternoon.
- Arrangements to be confirmed nearer the time.
- Suggested items for the route.
 - BMX area
 - Vinegar Pond
 - Firemans route
 - St James Hill steps proposal
 - Zaks' toilets
 - Britannia Road car park
 - Fountain Ground changing rooms (Need to get the key)