



## MOUSEHOLD HEATH CONSERVATORS

**2.00 p.m. – 5.10 p.m.**

**18 June 2010**

**Present:** Councillors Bradford (in the Chair following election), Bearman (Vice-Chair following election), Brociek-Coulton, Lay and S.Little, Mr M.Bryant, Mr C.Southgate, Mr D. Cannon Ms M.Parker

**Also Present:** Several members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders and public were also in attendance

**Apologies:** Councillors Divers and Lay and Matthew Davies

### **1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Bradford as Chair for the ensuing Civic Year.

### **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Bearman as Chair for the ensuing Civic Year.

### **3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

#### **Pathways on Flower Meadow**

On behalf of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, Gill Webb asked why the usual pathways on the Flower Meadows had not been cut this year.

The Natural Areas Officer said there had been some teething problems with the handover of the new contract but the work would be done shortly.

**RESOLVED** to note the position.

#### **Permission for Picnic Bench**

On behalf of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, Gill Webb asked if the Mousehold Heath Conservators would grant permission for, and if the Council would place, a picnic bench that the Defenders wished to donate to be located in the newly cleared area near to the Pavilion.

In response to a question, Gill Webb said the bench would be similar to the one already situated on St. James Hill or would be made of concrete.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) give permission for the Mousehold Defenders to donate the picnic bench subject to the bench reaching the necessary safety standards and for the exact specifications of the bench being provided at the next meeting of the Mousehold Heath Sub-Group Meeting;
- (2) ask the Natural Areas Officer to provide Malcolm Bryant from the Mousehold Defenders with the cost of the bench installed at St.James Hill;
- (3) agree that once the specifications have been approved, the Council would install the bench.

**Litter Bins**

On behalf of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, Gill Webb asked if more litter bins would be placed on Mousehold Heath.

The Green Spaces Manager said a review of the litter bins on the Heath had taken place the year before and as a result a bin was moved to a more useful location. The existing contract was based on a cost per bin. Any additional bins or the relocation of existing bins would have to be funded from the Conservators' budget.

**RESOLVED** to ask the Green Spaces Manager to monitor the current situation to consider if any bins need to be re-located.

**Weed Killer – Dead Bracken**

On behalf of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, Gill Webb asked if weed killer had been used on the bracken on the Heath as there were areas where the bracken had died in a way that had not been seen before. There was a policy of no poisons to be used on the Heath.

The Green Spaces Manager said that the Council were aware of the policy and said no herbicides or pesticides had been used on the Heath. The Natural Areas Officer said the Mousehold Heath Wardens had reported that the gorse could have been damaged by this year's late frost but he was not aware of what would have caused the bracken to die.

**RESOLVED** to ask the Natural Areas Officer to report back to the Mousehold Heath Conservators if the cause of death of the bracken becomes apparent.

**Fast Food Vendor**

On behalf of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, Gill Webb asked for clarification as to why the request for a fast food vendor to operate from the Britannia Road car park had been declined.

The Natural Areas Officer said the matter had been referred to the Chair of the Conservators and the decision had been based on a previous application when Zak's Restaurant had objected to the application.

The Chair asked the Conservators to consider if this course of action was appropriate for future applications. Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of alternative vendors operating on the Heath.

**RESOLVED** to:-

- (1) ask the Green Spaces Manager to clarify with the Asset Management Officer on the terms of the lease currently held by Zaks and if it restricts a different vendor's right to trade.
- (2) refer the matter to the Mousehold Heath Management Sub-Group for further discussion.

**Permission for Survey- Brickfield**

On behalf of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, Margaret Bush asked if the Mousehold Heath Conservators would grant permission for a ground geophysical survey to be carried out on the Brickfield site by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit. This would be done by computer and no machinery would be involved.

**RESOLVED** to grant permission for the survey to be carried out on the condition that Margaret Bush:-

- (a) notifies the date of the survey to the Mousehold Heath Conservators once it is set;
- (b) supplies the Mousehold Heath Conservators with the results of the survey.

**Permission for Metal Detector Use**

On behalf of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, Margaret Bush asked if the Mousehold Heath Conservators would grant permission for use of a metal detector in an area of the Heath near Gilman Road where musket balls had previously been found. She advised members of the history of this area and said any damage would be very limited. If permission was granted, this would take place in the winter.

In response to a question in regards to what would happen if artefacts were found, she said that she would ask the Norfolk Archaeological Unit or other professional bodies to be involved at every stage to ensure the investigations were carried out properly. The investigations would not be publicised.

**RESOLVED** to note that although the use of metal detectors is generally prohibited on the Heath, that permission be granted on this occasion on the condition that Margaret Bush:-

- (a) notifies who will be carrying out the metal detecting and the date to the Mousehold Heath Conservators once it is arranged;
- (b) supplies the Mousehold Heath Conservators with the results of the investigation.

#### **4. NEW COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGER**

The Green Spaces Manager introduced Carol Jones to the Committee, the newly appointed Community and Neighbourhood Manager for the Mousehold Heath area under the Council's new Neighbourhood Team.

In response to a question, the Green Spaces Manager said that the Mousehold Heath Wardens would continue to be managed by the Natural Areas Officer until the autumn. Carol Jones would be working with the Natural Areas Officer over the summer.

**RESOLVED** to ask the new Community and Neighbourhood Manager (East) to update the Mousehold Heath Conservators with the full details of her role within the remit of the Conservators at the next full meeting on 17 September 2010.

#### **5. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2010.

#### **6. 2009 – 2010 BUDGET OUTTURN**

The Finance Control Manager presented the report which provided the outturn financial position for the Mousehold Heath Conservators budget for 2009/10. He said an under spend of £10,773 had been carried forward to the next financial year.

In response to questions, the Green Spaces Manager said as there was a small budget for trees, they would be utilising the under spend to carry out priority tree safety work. The Management Sub Group would discuss any necessary day or maintenance works and unless it was required for any emergency works, then a contingency amount of £5,000 should be kept. The Finance Control Manager said that if any large emergency works were required then it may be possible for funding to be sourced from elsewhere in the Council.

**RESOLVED** to:-

- (1) note the report;
- (2) ask the Arboricultural Officer to prepare a report on the proposed tree works on the Heath for consideration at the next meeting of the Mousehold Heath Conservators;
- (3) delegate the authorisation to prioritise the Work Programme and examine the projects in hand to the Management Sub-Group.

#### **7. REVIEW OF ACTIONS**

##### **Traffic Calming at Gurney Road**

In his capacity as a substitute member of NHAC (Norwich Highways Agency Committee), Councillor Little said that due to the recent change in national

government, the future of the NATS (Norwich Area Transport Strategy) survey was uncertain as it was linked to the Joint Core Strategy which had been delayed for a few months.

The Green Spaces Manager referred to an email he had received from the Council's Transportation Manager. She had advised that following the 20mph in residential areas pilot project, NHAC had asked for a comprehensive review of speed management policy on all categories of roads within the city. Until that review was completed, which could take up a year, no new speed management works would be considered. The request for measures at the Gurney Road / Britannia Road junction would be noted and considered as part of that review.

The Transportation Manager referred to the interactive speed indicators that had recently been installed in Gurney Road by the safety camera partnership to highlight drivers of their speed and to record speed data which could be used to identify problem areas. The monitors were installed in areas where complaints had been received about speeding and would only be in place for a few weeks before being moved to other sites.

A member expressed concern that the study would only be concentrating on the junction with Britannia Road and said the full length of Gurney Road should be considered as a risk.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) note the position;
- (2) ask members to advise the Committee Officer of their availability for the proposed site visit to Gurney Road with NHAC members and to ask the Committee Officer to advise by email when the date had been confirmed;
- (3) ask the Green Spaces Manager to advise the Transportation Manager that the interactive speed indicators were welcome on Gurney Road and to inquire if the monitors could be installed on a permanent basis.

**Contract Monitoring and Litter Picking Arrangements**

The Green Spaces Manager explained the roles and the levels of responsibility of officers and management at both the Council and at Connaught in order to monitor the new contract, and explained how via regular meetings they were able to view monthly management reports.

Inspection regimes were still being developed by contract management and an agreed number of sites would be visited each week by Contract Monitoring Officers and a Connaught Supervisor where failure penalties would be given if any problems were not rectified.

The Green Spaces Manager said as from 1 June 2010, complaints that were received by the Customer Contact Team were recorded on controlled software supplied by Connaught which Council Officers could view via web reports and therefore be able to monitor complaints. If an urgent complaint was received, the

Grounds Hit Squad had a vehicle available at all times to be able to carry out the required works.

In response to questions, the Green Spaces Manager said the more information that could be given to the Customer Contact Team at the time of the initial compliant, then the more thorough the investigation could be. Penalties for failure of contract would be deducted through the year but the difference with this new contract was that the Council and Connaught would be working together as partners and that as Norwich was their biggest contract then Connaught would be working as hard as possible to comply with the terms of the contract.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) ask the Green Spaces Manager to arrange for representative/s from Connaught to attend a meeting of the Management Sub-Group;
- (2) refer the matter of whether the Mousehold Heath Conservators and Defenders should be provided with the mobile phone numbers of the Mousehold Heath Wardens to the Management Sub-Group for final discussion.

**Britannia Road Car Park**

The Natural Areas Officer said a quote had been given of £2,000 to resurface the disabled parking bays and the work could get underway once the Conservators had given their approval.

The Natural Areas Officer said the eroding drop from the road into the car park had been temporarily repaired. He had been advised by Asset and City Management that it would be difficult to repair it permanently without re-surfacing the whole car park.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) approve the work to resurface the disabled parking bays at Britannia Road Car Park subject to the quote of £2,000 to include the work to resurface the access from the path to the car park;
- (2) ask the Natural Areas Officer to speak to the Council's Principal Technical Officer and arrange a suitable date for members to visit the car park and to discuss the options to remedy the eroding drop into the car park in more detail;
- (3) ask the Natural Areas Officer to investigate the report of the drop reported at Mons Avenue;
- (4) ask the Natural Areas Officer to investigate the possibility of 'No Overnight Parking' notices to be put up on the car parks on Gurney Road.

## Vinegar Pond

The Natural Areas Officer presented the report outlining the two options for the Vinegar Pond, the first involving taking no action and the second a remediation proposal to enable the pond to retain water.

During detailed discussion, the Natural Areas Officer answered member's questions in regards to the advantages and disadvantages of both options. Malcolm Bryant said he was concerned that a regenerated pond could attract vandals and littering. In response to a suggestion, the Green Spaces Manager said it would not be sustainable to put water into the pond in its present condition or to remove tadpoles.

**RESOLVED** to agree that with 5 members voting in favour of Option 1 (Chair, Councillor Brociek-Coulton, Chris Southgate, Malcolm Bryant and Dave Cannon), and with 3 members voting in favour of Option 2 (Councillors Bearman and S.Little and Marya Parker) that no further action should be taken as outlined in Option 1 of the report.

## Pavilion Update

Chris Southgate said that he and the Vice-chair had recently visited the Pavilion with the Natural Areas Officer and Kate d'Este Hoare, the Council's Conservation and Design Officer. They had looked at the outside toilets which were in need of refurbishment. External maintenance work was required to deal with blocked gutters and cracks in the walls.

He emphasised that the Pavilion was built by 'Boulton and Paul' and therefore had a strong local connection. It should be kept in good condition and should not be allowed to deteriorate further. This would ensure that the Conservators were able to pursue how the building could be protected and hopefully gain some form of local listing.

The Natural Areas Officer said he had been advised by the Council's Asset and City Management department that the exterior of the Pavilion was the responsibility of the Council but unfortunately there was not any money available in the budget for repair works.

Councillor Little said the matter had been raised at a meeting of the LDF Working Party where he had been advised that at the present time only buildings in Conservation areas were considered for listing although the Council was considering a new planning policy with the ability to include listing outside conservation areas.

**RESOLVED** to:-

- (1) ask that a report regarding the leasing and maintenance of the Pavilion be taken to the Management Sub-Group and then to the next meeting of the Mousehold Heath Conservators on 17 September 2010 as a below the line item;
- (2) ask the Natural Areas Officer to speak to the Conservation and Design Officer about the progress of the requested Condition Report and to advise Chris Southgate accordingly;

- (3) record the thanks of the Conservators to Chris Southgate for all of his continuing hard work.

Chris Southgate moved and the Chair seconded and it was:-

**RESOLVED** that:-

"The Mousehold Heath Conservators believe that the Pavilion is such an important heritage building on Mousehold Heath and express their concern at its apparent lack of maintenance. Furthermore they seek an urgent meeting with the Council's Asset and City Management department to clarify issues of its current lease".

## **8. FOUNTAIN GROUND CHANGING ROOMS**

(Jessica Tyson, Sports and Physical Activity Development Officer attended the meeting for this item)

The Natural Areas Officer and Sports Development Officer presented the report and outlined the three options available for the future provision of sports changing room facilities at the Fountain Ground.

In response to a question, the Finance Control Manager said he believed that the Conservators had the authority to approve the spend for the facility, but it was not clear whether any further authorisation from the Council was necessary. He said that irrespective of the Conservators' decisions, council officers were obliged to follow the Council's procedures as laid down in the Constitution and elsewhere in carrying out their duties. These would normally include the adoption of a planned capital scheme into the capital plan and programme, and its subsequent monitoring by the Capital Programmes Board. He said he would need to investigate if the Conservators' powers may allow some or all of these processes to be avoided or abbreviated.

The Sports Development Office said the Fountain Ground site was included on a priority list compiled by the Football Association (FA) as a facility that needed upgrading and this would hopefully attract new clubs when the season started in September. The Sports Development Team would also be encouraging the public to use the facility for other types of sports and activities.

The Natural Areas Officer said a meeting had taken place on 11 June 2010 between Council Officers and a representative from the Norfolk Football Association (NFA) who had indicated that they would be willing to offer funding of up to £20,000 for the design as contained in Option 3 of the report. The Council would also be able to approach other private sector companies to secure additional funding. The Sports Development Officer added that Option 3 would provide a better facility in partnership with the Football Foundation, the charitable part of the FA which would not be possible with Option 2. With their support and funding, the Heath would get a better facility and being approved by the FA, this would also attract minor football leagues to hold matches there.

In response to questions, the Sports Development Officer said the bookings for the Heath would be handled by Connaught as part of the existing contract for the other facilities in the city. She said it was a good idea that the new changing rooms be built



in a more visible location. The Natural Areas Officer said the new building would have a minimum expected lifespan of 23 years.

The Sports Development Officer said other funding would not match the £20,000 offered by the FA and that a contribution would be required from the Conservators to make up the difference.

The Natural Areas Officer said once the Conservators had given their approval, officers would be able to approach the Planning Department for advice and submit an application. The Council's Principal Technical Officer would be meeting with potential contractors to obtain the best quote and design for the facility as possible.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- 1) ask the Finance Control Manager to investigate the queries as minuted above and to advise the Conservators via the Committee Officer accordingly;
- (2) agree that a Football Foundation compliant modular changing room, as recommended in Option 3 of the report, is installed subject to:-
  - (a) an upper limit of maximum £70,000 being set for the costs of the new facility;
  - (b) the Football Foundation granting the project funding of £20,000;
  - (c) the remainder of the costs to be funded by the Mousehold Heath Conservators via the Capital Fund.
- (3) ask the Sports Development Officer to confirm that the quoted costs include the charge to connect utility services to the facility.

**9. OFF ROAD CYCLING ISSUES ON MOUSEHOLD HEATH**

The Natural Areas Officer presented the report and updated members on the developments concerning off-road cycling at the Heath since the previous meeting of the Mousehold Heath Conservators on 12 March 2010.

He said he was due to meet with the Cyclists Touring Club Officer based at Milton Keynes as soon as he was available for further advice and would update the Conservators when he had more information.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

**10. MANAGEMENT SUB GROUP**

The Natural Areas Officer presented the report of the Mousehold Conservators Management Sub-Group and updated members on the work undertaken since the last meeting.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) note the position
- (2) note the dates of the following meetings:-
  - Itinerant - Tuesday 13 July 2010 at 10.00am
  - Management Sub Group – Monday 2 August at 2.00pm

**11. MOUSEHOLD HEATH MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

The Natural Areas Officer presented the report and updated members on issues, works and events undertaken on the Heath since the last meeting of the Mousehold Heath Conservators on 12 March 2010, and on forthcoming events.

In response to a question, the Natural Areas Officer said the Mousehold Heath Wardens and Defenders had organised a good programme of events and activities on the Heath that would be advertised by posters, the websites and through the media. He said that some events such as the bat and moth walks were dependant on numbers and should be booked via the Tourist Information Office. It might not be possible for someone to join one of those tours at the event itself, as they may be full and may not reach the necessary health and safety standards.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) note the report;
- (2) note the thanks of the Committee to the Natural Areas Officer and Heath Wardens for their hard work in putting together the Mousehold Heath 2010 Guided Walk Programme.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Cavalry Track**

A member referred to how the Mousehold Heath Defenders and volunteers had worked a total of 254 hours so far on clearing the route of the Cavalry Track which had already made a fantastic difference to the track.

**RESOLVED** to note the thanks of the Committee and recognise the achievement.

**13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** to note the dates of future meetings as follows:-

- Friday 17 September 2010 at 2.00pm
- Friday 10 December 2010 at 2.00pm
- Friday 14 January 2011 at 2.00pm (additional meeting to look at Budget Precept for 2011/2012)
- Friday 11 March 2011 at 2.00pm

CHAIR