

**Report to** Mousehold Heath Conservators  
17 January 2014  
**Report of** Head of local neighbourhood services  
**Subject** Annual work programme 2014-15

**Item**

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**Purpose**

To propose the draft work programme for 2014-15.

**Recommendation**

That the Conservators comment on and approve the draft work programme for 2014-15.

**Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priority A safe and clean city.

**Financial implications**

Any costs that arise from this report will be met from the approved Mousehold budget or from external funding.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Kendrick – Neighbourhoods and community safety

**Contact officers**

Bob Cronk, head of local neighbourhood services 01603 212373

Lenny Stamp, community and neighbourhood manager - north 01603 213281

**Background documents**

None

# Report

## Review of 2013-14 work programme

1. All main objectives set out in the 2013-14 works programme for biodiversity improvements will have been met by the end of the financial year. This will have been accomplished through the installation of a new community wildlife pond and the expansion of open heath land areas within the Higher Level Steward scheme with works being carried out by specialist machinery and volunteer groups.
2. Infrastructure improvements were completed notably the removal of old wooden bollards and installation of new hard wood bollards around the Pitch and Putt car park, works also included the re establishment of the soil mound around the rear of the car park improving security and the levelling of the surface providing improved access to visitors and local users alike, this will be carried forward in 2014-15 with improvements to the public car park in front of the pavilion.
3. Improvements to the Connect two cycle routes were undertaken by volunteers and the Mousehold wardens who cut back vegetation and branches that were overhanging the cycle way along Gurney Road adjacent to the Ant Hills.
4. The guided walk programme was very well attended with full attendance on nearly all public walks. This included surveying of fauna and flora carried out by volunteers which contribute to the understanding of Mousehold and the biodiversity improvements arising from management works. With increase in diversity of species recorded especially species dependant on heath land habitat it can be said with confidence that positive management work is bringing improvements with the Mousehold species list increasing year on year.
5. The updating of the orienteering course has not yet been completed due to copyright issues with the maps used. The Mousehold wardens will work with the Norwich Orienteering Club to progress this in 2014-15 with a view to having a downloadable map on the Mousehold page of the council's website for public use in 2014-15.

## Proposed work programme 2014-15

6. The Conservators has in more recent years, approved the annual work programme for the following financial year at the same meeting that the budget and precept is approved. This is to ensure that activity is aligned with the budget setting process.
7. As in previous years, the draft work programme has been produced in a spreadsheet format to show the following – see appendix 1:
  - Each proposed action has been listed under one of nine thematic headings, together with the relevant management plan objective and location details.
  - The actions have been prioritised as follows: 1 = highest priority, 2 = medium priority, 3 = lowest priority. Priorities may need to change during the year depending on circumstances.
  - Tree works, and items included in the grounds maintenance contract or as grounds maintenance day works are identified separately and costs provided where available. Projects, including those which are one off, are identified

separately. It should be noted that many of the actions will be carried out by volunteers, or by city council staff as part of their normal duties, so these items are not separately costed.

- The lead person(s) or organisation for each action is identified. The coloured chart depicts the proposed date range for the action and the individuals and/or organisations involved.

## **Rationale**

8. Many of the proposed actions in the work programme consist of ongoing site management works and activities such as the annual programme of events. It is intended to at least maintain, and where possible expand, the levels of habitat management activity, infrastructure improvement and services to the public undertaken in previous years, subject to the availability of resources. This should be possible for the following reasons:
  - New ways of working, especially the greater availability and involvement of volunteer time, have reduced costs and enabled an increase in the amount of management work undertaken. It should be noted that organising volunteer work parties takes up a considerable amount of staff time, and this has only proved possible due to the current staffing establishment of two Mousehold wardens.
  - The use of contractors with specialist machinery has been increased, especially for heath land management. Also, the increased use of machine tools e.g. chainsaw and brush-cutter for use by the Mousehold wardens, has enabled many smaller tasks to be undertaken at lower cost and more efficiently.
  - It is hoped to continue to expand the amount of external funding available for management works and interpretation at Mousehold. For example, the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme is now entering its second year (this replaced the earlier Countryside Stewardship Scheme that had been in place on a small area of Mousehold since 2002). This has enabled expansion of existing open heath land areas and acidic grassland improving overall biodiversity of the site and supporting one-off habitat management projects.
9. In addition to regular work, several specific projects or one-off works are proposed in the 2014-15 work programme. These include:
  - The installation of two interpretation panels in a lectern style will be installed on the site of St. Williams Chapel and adjacent to the Pitch and Putt car park. Officers will be working in partnership with Norfolk County Council's historic environment officer who will be providing text and graphics along with the Mousehold Heath Defenders who will be financially supporting both projects. It is anticipated that the cost for both these projects will be covered from external funding and funds set aside within the works budget 2013-14 and 2014-15.
  - Heath land management: regular heath land management is carried out mainly by volunteers and the Mousehold Heath wardens, but the use of specialist machinery in 2013 and 2014 has enabled new areas of headland to be brought back into active management. It is proposed to use this machinery again in 2014/15, both for cutting and collecting vegetation and for removing the build up of humus that

has prevented the regeneration of heather and other heath land plants with the aim of extending existing areas of open heath land areas.

10. Some of the site 'furniture' at Mousehold, notably bollards and roadside fencing preventing unauthorised vehicle access to the heath, is in need of replacement along with car park maintenance to improve visitor access. The cost of these replacement and repair works for 2014/15 is in the region of £5,000 - 8,000, depending on the number involved and this will be explored during 2014-15.

## **References**

Mousehold Heath management plan 2013-2018  
Mousehold Heath work programme 2014-15

Type		Priority	Location Name	Item	Action	Management Plan Map 5 Aerial Map Location	Management plan Obj.	Estimated cost £	Lead	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	Budget committed
There are two ponds on site that are fed by surface water run off these play host to breeding frogs and newts throughout Winter, Spring and summer and provide good habitats for aquatic invertebrates and plant life. Objectives are to retain water levels throughout the year and avoid introduction of unsuitable plant and animal species, remove any unauthorised introductions should they occur.																						
Habitat Management - Water	1	Vinegar Pond	Pond	Monitor condition	E4	4.8	0	D/MW	MW	MW	MW	MW										MW
	1	Long Valley	Wildlife Pond	Monitor condition	E6	4.8	0	MW									MW	MW				
Mousehold Heath covers 184 acres of which less than 10% is attributed to Heathland the rest is primary and secondary woodland with small areas of open grassland, open spaces and sports pitches. Objectives are to maintain, enhance and increase biodiversity of areas of heather and lowland heath vegetation, joining up of existing areas of heathland in line with the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme with the aim of extending open Heathland areas to 30% or more.																						
Habitat Management - Heath	1	Heathland areas	Gorse management	Cut/collect gorse areas on rotation Conservation. Contractor	Annual rotation	4.5	2,000	MW/C									MW/C	MW/C	MW/C	MW/C		
	1	Heathland areas	Scrub clearance	Heathland restoration and cut scrub. Community Green Gym	E13-14/F13-14/G13-14/H14	4.5	1,500	MW/C	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW	GG/MW		
	1	Heathland areas	Humus stripping	Remove topsoil from selected areas to encourage heathland regeneration. Contractor	Annual rotation	4.5	1,000	MW/C									MW/C	MW/C	MW/C	MW/C		
	1	St. James' Hill	Scrub clearance	Cut back scrub	E13-14/F13-14/G12-14/H13-14	4.5	0	MW									TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW		
	1	All Heathland areas	Control scrub regrowth	Control regrowth from previously cut scrub. TCV work parties	D3-4/E3-5/F3-5/G3-5&7/H4-5&7/I4-5/J6-7/K6-7/L6	4.5	4,500	MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW		
	1	Heathland areas	Bracken control	Cut/bruise bracken in open areas TCV work parties	G4-5/H5/I5	4.5	0	MW			TCV/MW	TCV/MW	TCV/MW									
	3	Playing field adj pitch & putt	GNDP project	Monitor/manage heathland project area	K6/L6/M6	4.5	0	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW								
Grasses and wild flower species favouring acid soil conditions are an integral component of heathland vegetation providing a diverse habitat for a multitude of insects, these areas will be rapidly lost without appropriate management. Objectives are to cut vegetation once per year and remove arisings ensuring nutrient levels are kept to a minimum, periodically remover encroaching scrub and trees.																						
Habitat Management - Acid Grassland and Wild Flower Meadow	1	The Desert	Wild Flower management	Cut areas & remove arisings (Cons.Cut 5) Contractor	C5-6/D5-6	4.6	0	MW/C							C							
	1	The Anthills	Grassland management	Cut areas & remove arisings (Cons.Cut 5) TCV GG MW	G8/H8	4.6	0	MW/TCV							TCV/GG MW							
	1	The Anthills	Grassland management	Control any encroaching scrub TCV GG MW	G8/H8	4.6	0	MW/TCV									TCV/GG MW	TCV/GG MW	TCV/GG MW	TCV/GG MW		
	2	St James' Hill/Cav Track area	Scrub management	Control, or coppice areas on rotation	E14/F12-14/G14	4.6	0	MW									TCV/GG MW	TCV/GG MW	TCV/GG MW			
Mousehold Heath now mainly consists of dense woodland with little understorey or ground flora. To increase and improve its ecological value, objectives are to create a network of rides and glades by widening existing tracks and pathways, works include thinning, coppicing and pollarding allowing in more light for ground flora to flourish while retaining standing and fallen dead wood.																						
Habitat Management - Woodland	2	All areas	Coppicing, pollarding	Expand woodland ride and glades using work parties and contractors		4.7	9.2	0	MW								TCV/GG MW/C	TCV/GG MW/C	TCV/GG MW/C	TCV/GG MW/C		
	2	Gilman Rd	Path/cycleway	Complete tree work (if not done 2010/11)	A5-F8	4.7	0	ARB/MW									MW	MW	MW	MW		
Cost code: Treeworks 2655	1	All areas	Programmed works	ARB Department; Carry out safety related tree works		4.7	4,239	ARB/MW	ARB	ARB	ARB	ARB	ARB	ARB	ARB	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW		
	1	All areas	Emergency works	Carry out safety related tree works		4.7	0	ARB/MW								C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW		
	2	All areas	Woodland Grant Scheme	Investigate viability for Mousehold		4.7	0	MW	MW	MW	MW					</						

	2	Whole site	Guided walks programme	Deliver annual programme of guided walks/activities	Various	4.10	0	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	
	1	Whole site	Litter	Litter pick, monitor contractor	Various	4.10	0	MW	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
	1	Whole site	Fly-tipping	Remove fly-tipping as it occurs	Various	4.10	0	MW	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Ensure that main pathway networks are maintained and repaired for public health and safety and emergency vehicle access including disable access routes, trails, courses, signs, furnishings, interpretation panels, on site car parks, toilet and sports facilities.																					
Visitor infrastructure	2	All Paths	Paths	Cut back either side as necessary		4.11	0	MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW	C/MW						
	2	All Paths	Paths	Level/fill as necessary		4.11	0	MW				MW	MW	MW							
	1	St. James' Hill	Easy access track	Cut back encroaching scrub TCV GG work parties		4.11	0	MW									MW	MW			
	2	Cavalry Track	Path	Trim back as necessary	F13/G12-13	4.11	0	MW					MW				MW				
	1	Fountain Ground	Bandstand/Changing Rms	Electrical safety testing	F9	4.11	0	MW				MW									
	2	Pavilion area	Visitor point	Examine feasibility/progress	G8	4.11	0	MW												MW	MW
	2	Pavilion area	Pavilion access track	Maintain to safe standard	G8	4.11	0	MW												MW	MW
	1	Britannia Rd car park	Car park	Essential maintenance as required	G12-13/H13	4.11	1,000	MW	C	C	C									MW	MW
	1	Pitch & Putt car park	Car park	Essential maintenance as required	J5	4.11	1,000	MW	C	C	C									MW	MW
	1	Pavilion/Gilman Rd car parks	Car parks	Maintain as necessary		4.11	1,000	MW	C	C	C	C	C	C	C						
	3	Whole site	Interpretation stations	Renew and update when necessary		4.11	0	MW			MW										
	3	Selected locations	Welcome to Mhold signs	Review potential new signs		4.11	0	MW			MW										
	2	Various	Benches	Replace/repair as necessary		4.11	0	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
	2	Various	Signs	Replace/repair as necessary		4.11	0	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
	2	Various	Bollards	Replace/renew as required	G12-13/H13	4.11	5,000	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
	3	Car parks	Car park surfacing	Review durable surfaces		4.11	0	MW										MW	MW		
	3	Areas with BMX activity	BMX biking	Monitor & review measures to resolve unauthorised BMX activities		4.11	0	MW			MW			MW							
	1	Whole site	Emergency works	Emergency repairs contingency		4.11	1,500	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
Review management on a regular basis																					
Review & monitoring	1	Off site	Management Plan	Review & revise plan		5.1	0	MW				MW			MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
		Off site	Conservators Meeting			5.1	0	CO	MHC				MHC			MW	MHC			MHC	
		Off site	Cons Working Group Mtg			5.1	0	CO				MHC			MHC			MHC			MHC
	2	Whole site	Itinerant	Organise site visit to review work plan progress & priorities for next financial year		5.1	0	CO/MW													
	1	Off site	Annual Work Programme	Drafted and agreed by Conservators		5.1	0	MW										MW	MW		
	2	Heathland Areas	Heathland Regeneration	Monitor heathland regeneration	Selected Sqs	5.1	0	MW						MW	MW	MW					
In order to determine whether management is having an appropriate affect on the site's biodiversity, it is important that the site is monitored on an ongoing basis.																					
Surveying & recording	2	All	Common Bird Census	Carry out weekly during season		5.1	0	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW						
	2	All	Butterfly transect	Complete 26 week transect		5.1	0	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW						
	2	All	Fungi survey	Survey & record Fauna and Flora		5.1	0	MW/D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
	2	All	Miscellaneous species	Collate records		5.1	0	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
	2	All	Dragonfly survey	Monitor weekly throughout season		5.1	0	MW			MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW					
	2	All	Annual report	Collate information & produce report		5.1	0	MW	MW	PH											
	1	Heathland areas	Heathland Management	Implement Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement		4.5	0	MW	MW	MW	MW										
Supplies and Services																					
Equipment and Tools Repairs 3371	1	All	Site management works	Purchasing	NA	All	450	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
Equipment and Tools Purchase 3370	1	All	Site management works	Repairs and maintenance	NA	All	450	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
Advertising and Promotion (3910)	1	All	Service	leaflets/guided walks/reports	N/A	All	960	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
Printing (3570)	1	All	Service	Printing/leaflets	N/A	All	300	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
Protective clothing 3550	1	All	Service	Health and Safety	NA	All	190	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
						26,589															
Available funds						26,589															
Balance						0															