

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
18 September 2015
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Mousehold Heath update

Item

7

Purpose

To provide an update on issues and recent activities at Mousehold Heath

Recommendation

That Conservators comment on current activities that have been undertaken on Mousehold Heath during the last period.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate Priority City of character and culture

Financial implications

Any financial implications arising from this report will have or will be met from approved budgetary provision

Contact officers

Lenny Stamp, Communities and neighbourhood manager	01603 213218
Will Stewart, Mousehold warden	01603 213310
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Background documents

None

Report

Site management

1. Large areas of invasive bracken have been cut back, pulled up and removed from heathland areas to allow heather to grow and flower.
2. A number of BMX jumps have been removed by the Mousehold wardens with the help of a local volunteer.
3. Earth Heritage Trail Interest Points have been maintained prior to the Heritage Day Walk.
4. Volunteers from the Dibden Road, Supportive Living Hostel carried out the removal of old posts and fencing to make the areas safe for users of the heath. The hostels Jumpstart Programme, assists their residents to engage in activities help re-introduce them to a working structure.

Asset management

5. New graffiti found on benches and litter bins on Gilman Road has now been removed.
6. During the summer, a camper set up camp adjacent to Gilman Road. The Mousehold wardens advised the individual on a number of times that this was against the byelaws and involved the Council's rough sleeper/single home coordinator and Police to support the request to leave Mousehold. However the camper did not vacate the site and Nplaw were instructed to apply for a court order for the individuals to leave Mousehold. Thi is in progress.

Tree management

7. Twenty four windblown, dead, dying or dangerous trees have been made safe, cut up and removed from near paths and high amenity areas by Mousehold wardens with help from a student from Easton College.

Access works

8. Paths on St. James Hill, Mousehold Avenue and from Gurney Road car park have been maintained by TCV, Green Gym and other volunteers supervised by Mousehold wardens.
9. Paths have been cut back around St. Williams Chapel by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders.
10. The emergency vehicle access route along Gilman Road has been maintained.

Promotion and Interpretation

11. After the Itinerant meeting in July to view information boards and heath signage, discussions have started regarding information hubs sited on the car parks. The project will look at what signage will look like and what infrastructure information should be included to assist visitors to the heath.

Volunteers

12. There have been a total of 954 volunteer hours on site in the last quarter. These have been completed by:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Norwich Community Green Gym
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- The Assist Trust
- An Easton College work placement student
- Volunteers from the community.
- Dibden Road Hostel JumpStart Project participants.

13. These works have significantly contributed to the implementation of objectives set out in the management plan, along with increasing community involvement in the many projects being undertaken on the site.

Citizen Article

14. As part of the aim to encourage more people to volunteer on the heath an article was published in the autumn edition, headlined Mousehold Heath Heroes (page 17). This is available on the council's website.

<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/services/Documents/CitizenAutumn2015.pdf>

Surveys

15. A number of bee, butterfly, flower, moth and dragonfly surveys have been carried out by members of Mousehold Heath Defenders, Green Gym and individuals from the community, collecting important data on the site's biodiversity. All records are forwarded to county recorders and Norfolk County Council's, Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service.

Events

16. A range of events to increase understanding, involvement and enjoyment of the site, have been organised or hosted on the heath in the last period, these being:

17.

- A number of Forest School environmental education activities.
- Playdays children activity day and a bandstand concert organised by Norwich City Council Events team on the Fountain ground.
- A community summerwatch wildlife walk.
- Butterfly walk led by the county recorder
- Site management and wildlife walk
- Guided walks for Norwich MIND, Horning Walking Group and the author of a new novel about Kett's Rebellion have been led by Mousehold wardens.
- Three moth survey evenings

Prayer event

18. A prayer event took place in 2014 on Mousehold which created traffic and parking issues in the vicinity of Gurney Road. Due to this, Conservators took a decision that such an event should not be booked in future as the Fountain ground was not suitable for this size event.
19. Unfortunately a similar event was booked earlier this year without reference to this decision. Following the request the events team sought advice from the Norfolk Constabulary who indicated that the organisers could manage the event and that the issues that arose in 2014 would not happen.
20. Following this it has been re-confirmed that no such event should be approved in future.

Annual work programme

21. A copy of the 2015-16 work programme is attached as appendices to the report and an update on progress will be provided at the meeting.