

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
16 June 2017
Report of Head of citywide services
Subject Mousehold Heath update

Item

9

Purpose

To provide an update on recent activities on Mousehold Heath.

Recommendation

To note the work undertaken in the last quarter to meet the management plan objectives.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a safe, clean and low carbon city.

Financial implications

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

Contact officer

Simon Meek Parks and Open Spaces Manager	01603 212403
Will Stewart: Mousehold warden	01603 213310
Nigel Hales: Mousehold warden	01603 213310

Background documents

None

Report

Infrastructure management

1. It was agreed to request that the Band Stand on the Fountain Ground be included in the contract specifications with Norwich Norse, to be cleaned on a regular basis following the guidelines below.

1.1 Key aims

- To keep shelters and bandstands to the standard required by client.

1.2 Method of Operation

The Contractor may use such methods appropriate to achieve the desired standards within the specification.

SPECIFICATION TO ACHIEVE THE AIMS

1.3 Cleaning

The Contractor shall clean all parts of the areas of each shelter/bandstand including all the following items once a week from the 1st April to the 30th September and once a month October to March.

All floor areas, seating and steps shall be swept and any stains, deposits etc. removed and spot cleaned with water and/or disinfectant as appropriate.

Check for graffiti and remove/cover areas up to .5sq.m of obscene and homophobic. Larger areas of obscene and homophobic graffiti to be reported to Supervising Officer immediately or as soon as practically possible all other graffiti to be reported on inspection report.

The Contractor shall undertake additional cleaning in April and September:

- All painted and stained surfaces shall be wiped clean and left in a dry condition, taking care not to damage paintwork or other finished surfaces.
- Roof rafters, ledges, partition tops, balustrading and painted surfaces shall be washed down and rinsed to remove all deposits of dirt, dust and cleaning streaks.

When the need arises, due to heavy soiling, the routine cleaning process should include either the use of disinfectant or the use of a steam cleaner, but only on surfaces that will not be damaged by steam cleaning.

The Contractor shall undertake cleansing in accordance with the specification.

1.4 Method of Assessment

- Customer complaint levels
- Monthly quality assessments
- Sustainability within the operation
- Contract monitoring inspections”

Tree management

2. The Mousehold Wardens have undertaken work across the site, to unblock paths and make trees and branches safe. There are still low risk trees which require further remedial work, these works will be prioritised and completed as and when required as not to disturb hibernating insects and nesting birds.

Natural Area Management

3. A range of habitat and site management tasks carried out by Mousehold wardens, volunteers and contractors have been undertaken in the last quarter, to help deliver the management plan priorities.

Woodland management:

4. Work to restore a section of woodland adjacent to Gilman Road by clearing dead and overgrown vegetation was continued. This work has been carried out to increase community access to a formally impenetrable area and improve biodiversity.

Heathland management

5. Bracken, gorse and saplings invading areas of heathland not in good condition have been removed to enable dwarf heathland plants such as heather to flourish.
6. These works have been undertaken by volunteer groups including the newly formed Mousehold Volunteers who used to be known as Norwich Community Green Gym as mentioned in the previous update this group was formed to undertake two practical tasks a month, supervised by the Mousehold wardens.

Emergency vehicle access and pathway maintenance.

7. Vegetation that encroached onto access tracks around the heath and main public footpaths has been cut back using volunteer groups closely supervised by the Mousehold Wardens.

Litter management

8. A number of areas formerly used for camping have been cleaned and rubbish removed by the Mousehold wardens with the assistance from the Norwich Norse Environmental litter picker as part of his daily work.

Asset management

9. The cleaning of the band stand was undertaken prior to the memorial service held for Pat Siano.

Volunteers

10. A total of 500 volunteer work hours have been undertaken on site in the last quarter by the following groups:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- The Assist Trust.
- An Easton College and City College work placement students.
- City College Duke of Edinburgh award scheme group.
- George White School students.
- Many volunteers from the community.
- Charles Darwin School.

11. The opportunity to work closely with the Friends of Ketts Heights and share equipment and skills across both sites will be explored. If both groups feel there is a worthwhile benefit to be gained from such an arrangement a report will be brought to the Conservators for approval setting out the basis on which the partnership will work.

12. Ongoing support through our volunteer groups have provided an opportunity for the community to become involved with the management of the heath, to increase their understanding of the work of the conservators, the importance of the heath and to engender a sense of ownership and pride in the space.

Events

13. 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.

- A Musical Tribute to celebrate the life and dedication to Mousehold Heath of Pat Siano a Mousehold Heath Defender and Conservator was organised by the Mousehold Defenders, held on St. Georges Day, Sunday 23rd April 2017 at the Fountain Ground, Gurney Road.

The thanksgiving service was conducted by Canon Peter Howard, music provided by Norwich City Concert Band, a plaque in recognition of Pat's dedication to the Heath was unveiled by Councillor David Bradford MBE.

- A number of practical environmental education sessions for George White School student groups, involving over 45 children, were supervised by the Mousehold Wardens.
- A number of Forest School activities have also taken place on site.
- A dawn chorus walk took place Wednesday 10th May 05.00 am with five members of the public in attendance.

- Two moth evenings took place on Thursday 27th April and Wednesday 24th May, four new species were identified to the enjoyment of ten members of the public who were in attendance.
- Our first of three community wildlife workshops was held on Friday 28th April, 11.00 am to 15.00 pm. The event was well supported providing the public with an insight of conservation management within a classroom environment followed up with the implementation of these new skills on site.
- Environmental education activities were organised for pupils of Charles Darwin School, these activities included a guided walk and practical conservation tasks, clearing scrub and then burning to conserve the glade and grassland behind the pavilion.
- Wellbeing walk organised in partnership with Norfolk County Council held on Wednesday 29th March, exploring the wildlife associated with Mousehold Heath.
- Roots environmental activities reconnect with Nature, outdoor child-led stay and play, second Sunday in the month. Sessions £6.00 per child aged 3-11 years, parents stay and play, babes in arms free with a paying child, organised through our Norwich City Council Events Team.

Management

14. The Annual Report on behalf of the conservators for the period covering 2016-17, was drafted for consideration and approval by the Conservators.
15. The Wardens have also started the first stage of the Mousehold Heath Management plan review, to cover the period of 2018-2028. This review will be on going with a first draft copy available to members for comments, presented by the Parks and Open Spaces Manager with a priority to achieve Green Flag status. The aim being to agree the vision statement and management objectives for the Mousehold Heath management plan 2018-2028 to enable work on stage 2 to commence, developing the management prescriptions and projects.