

Mousehold Heath Conservators**14:00 to 15:40****21 June 2019**

Present: Councillors Maxwell (chair following election), Price (vice chair following election), Button, Kendrick, Lubbock, Osborn and Sands (M) and Clare Cohen (Mousehold Heath Defenders), Matthew Davies (Norwich Fringe Project) and John Trevelyan (The Norwich Society)

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton and Sands (S)

1. Appointment of chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Maxwell as chair for the ensuing civic year.

2. Appointment of vice-chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Price as vice-chair for the ensuing civic year.

3. Public Questions/Petitions

A public question was received from Mr Paul Scruton.

“Can the conservators have some steps made like the ones shown in the photograph which were installed two or three years ago, for the dangerous slope on the other side of the field. As this slope is the only way of getting up and down people use it in the winter when it is wet and icy, this presents a risk of someone slipping and seriously hurting themselves.”

(Copies of the question with photographs were distributed at the meeting and is available to view online [here](#))

In response the parks and open space manager said:

“The question was discussed with the wardens; the route suggested was viewed as a ‘desire line’ a path that people wished to walk and which there were a number of across the heath. Desire lines were not managed paths and there was no liability attached to them.

The work suggested was not approved in the management plan and had not been raised as part of the public consultation on the plan. A level path existed which provided access to the top of the desire line addressed in the question and installing another path was arguably an unnecessary expenditure.”

There was no supplementary question.

4. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes

The chair noted that the labour group had donated a bench to be erected in honour of former Councillor David Bradford who had been a member and previous chair of the committee before his retirement.

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2019.

6. Mousehold Heath Conservators budget – Provisional outturn 2018-19

The finance business partner (LGSS) presented the report.

The vice chair asked for an update on the request made at the previous conservators meeting to provide interest to the conservators on the capital receipt of £100,000 received from the sale of the warden's house. Finance were in the process of agreeing a methodology to accrue interest on the capital receipt. There would be no interest provided retrospectively.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the content of the report;
- (2) ask the finance business partner to report back to the committee on the interest from the Conservators' capital receipt.

7. Mousehold Heath Conservators annual report 2018-19

The parks and open spaces manager said the report reflected and highlighted the work achieved during the year by the wardens and conservators. The format was the same as last year and was to be revised for next year.

In response to a member question concerning the impact of fires on the heath, the parks and open spaces manager said it would not be possible to understand the impact until next year.

Members discussed that BMX cycling had proved challenging in some areas of the heath. Matthew Davis of the Norwich Fringe Project said that a dialogue had begun with the cyclists and they had responded to requests to take actions which minimised their impact on the heath.

Clare Cohen of the Mousehold Heath Defenders said unfortunately a bird nesting box had fallen down in bad weather and it was hoped to be replaced by October 2019. The bandstand plaque had been cleaned, renovated and reinstalled with a new perplex cover.

In response to a member question the parks and open spaces manager said the number of felled trees was higher this year than the previous due to winter storms. In response to a question in relation to the Higher Level Stewardship agreement he confirmed that additional areas to be developed could be applied for in the renewal application when the agreement ended in 2022.

The parks and open spaces manager agreed in response to a member question that livestock grazing used as a conservation tool was extremely effective. He noted that the management of livestock was resource intensive and key to the management of livestock in urban areas was containment. This inevitably meant fencing and the unique arrangements regarding public access to the heath conflicted with fencing off areas. Clare Cohen of the Mousehold Heath Defenders said the siting of sheep previously on the heath had proved problematic with containment a particular issue.

A member asked if volunteering on the heath was linked with the Norwich Sharing City campaign, it was agreed a specification would come back to committee for consideration on the project register.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the content of the report;
- (2) produce a simplified summary version of the report highlights, in a colour, A3 folded version, including photographs;
- (3) include information about the heath to raise awareness of its value as an open space and the opportunities it has to offer for residents and visitors;
- (4) delegate authority to the parks and open spaces manager to produce the finished version of the summary report with the communications team;
- (5) produce a PDF version of the finished summary report for the Norwich City Council website, a hard copy of the document for each member of the committee, and also copies for circulation to local schools; and
- (6) ask the parks and open space manager to bring a project specification on linking volunteering on the heath to the Norwich Sharing City project to committee for consideration in the project register.

8. Mousehold Heath quarterly management update

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

9. Commons Symposium

(Copies of the commons symposium report had been distributed to members and was circulated at the meeting.)

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report. He said that academics at Brighton University were holding a conference on urban commons and were interested in the work at Mousehold Heath. The chair, vice chair, parks and open spaces manager and warden had been invited to attend the conference at Brighton University on 9 July 2019. Travel and accommodation costs would be met by the university. He noted that the inclusion of the work on Mousehold heath at the conference brought national recognition to the heath.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) agree that the chair, vice-chair, Mousehold warden and parks an open spaces manager attend on behalf of the Mousehold Heath Conservators; and
- 3) agree the payment of out of pocket expenses relating to attendance will be paid in accordance with the Council's subsistence rates.

10. Mousehold Heath management subgroup

Following discussion it was:

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Maxwell (chair), Councillor Price (vice-chair), Councillor Brociek-Coulton, Councillor Button and Clare Cohen (Mousehold Heath Defenders) and John Trevelyan (The Norwich Society) to the Mousehold Heath management sub group.

***11. Exclusion of the public**

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items *12 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

12* Zaks Restaurant – The Mousehold Heath (para 3)

Variations to the lease were being negotiated and delegation was requested in order that when terms were agreed the revised lease could be signed.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note progress to date with revisions to the lease plan and variations to the lease;
- 2) agree that NPS Norwich progress and conclude the lease variations negotiations on behalf of the Conservators; and
- 3) arrange a meeting with Blue Sky Leisure once matters relating to the lease have concluded to continue to develop a positive landlord/tenant relationship.

CHAIR