



# NORWICH City Council

**Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators**

**Committee Date: 17/06/2022**

**Report Title: Mousehold Heath Conservators annual report 2021-22**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Giles, Cabinet member for community wellbeing-

**Report from:** Head of environment services

**Wards:** Catton Grove and Crome

## **OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

To report on the work carried out on Mousehold Heath on behalf of the Mousehold Conservators for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that

- 1) Conservators note the content of the report.
- 2) A simplified summary of the report highlights, is published on the Mousehold Heath web page.
- 3) Promotion of the heath continues in order to raise awareness of its value as an open space and the opportunities it has to offer for residents and visitors.
- 4) Authority is delegated to the Parks and open spaces manager to produce the finished version of the summary report with the communications team.

### **Policy Framework**

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the sustainable and healthy city corporate priority

This report addresses Deliver a Capital Investment Programme in our parks that

will improve visitor experience, maintain our heritage assets and improve community cohesion. strategic action in the Corporate Plan

The report helps to meet the Mousehold Heath management plan objective(s):

A: To ensure Mousehold Heath is a welcoming place for people to visit.

## Report Details

1. Mousehold Heath is a unique area made up of 88 hectares (184 acre) of woodland, heathland and recreational open space within Norwich. Mousehold has played an important part in the history of Norwich and it is a designated Local Nature Reserve. It is important both for its wildlife and as a place where people can improve their health by exercising and unwind from the pace of city life.
2. In Tudor times, Mousehold Heath stretched as far north as South Walsham and was 22 miles round. The surviving remnant of the heath was given to Norwich City Council (then known as the local corporation) by the Dean and Chapter, to look after on behalf of the citizens of Norwich.
3. This was officially recorded in 1884 by Parliament in an agreement called the Mousehold Heath Confirmation Act and a body called the Mousehold Heath Conservators was formed to govern the heath. The Mousehold Conservators is comprised of city councilors, representatives of professional bodies and members of the public and meets four times a year, to oversee the management and protection of Mousehold Heath.
4. The Conservators also prepare an annual report which provides an overview of the work of the Conservators, any changes to the heath or new biological records and an opportunity to look forward and reflect on changes, opportunities and issues that the heath faces. The report also highlights the level of voluntary activity as well as the numbers of events, walks and surveys undertaken.
5. The report also highlights how the community are involved with Mousehold Heath; through active involvement in its management and attending events and guided walks and talks, to find out more about their local open space.

## The work of the Mousehold Conservators

6. The management of Mousehold Heath is guided by the Management Plan 2019 -28. This seeks to balance the important ecological value of Mousehold with an equally important recreational site within an urban area.
7. The challenge is to balance these important and at times conflicting objectives.
8. The Conservators agree an annual work programme and budget in January each year for the following financial year and monitor the implementation of this plan at its meetings.
9. The management plan and further details of the work of the Mousehold Conservators can be found on the Norwich City Council website.

[https://www.norwich.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5043/mousehold\\_heath\\_management\\_plan.pdf](https://www.norwich.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5043/mousehold_heath_management_plan.pdf)

**Priority A: To ensure Mousehold Heath is a welcoming place for people to visit.**

AF00/01 PREPARE ANNUAL BUDGET

10. The Mousehold Heath revenue budget for 2021/22 was £235,471, with £100,766 capital held in reserves.

AI00/01 GREEN FLAG AWARD APPLICATION

11. The Mousehold Heath Conservators applied and submitted a Green Flag application for 2021/22.  
The application was a successful one and to celebrate the achievement, a six-meter flagpole was installed on the Fountain Ground sports pitch, flying the new flag awarded for this year. There was also an information sign installed on the chain link fence adjacent to the historical interpretation panel, in recognition of the award for public awareness and information.
12. Sites need to apply for a Green Flag award, which are judged annually, ensuring the standards required are still meeting the criteria to receive an award.

**Priority B: To protect Mousehold Heath and ensure that it is a safe and secure place to visit.**

AI30/02 TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

13. Following the two, six monthly tree safety inspections (September and March), forty-two dead, dying and dangerous trees and branches were identified as requiring works to manage tree safety risk and made safe accordingly. Most of the works were completed by the Mousehold wardens, with additional specialised tree works being ordered through the council's arboricultural team and carried out by Norwich City Services Ltd (NCSL).
14. An additional seventeen dead, dying, dangerous and windblown trees and branches, spotted during patrols and reported by members of the community, have been made safe and cleared by the Mousehold wardens.
15. Trees encroaching on to Gurney Road have been managed by the NCSL Arboricultural team, following a survey by a NCC Arboricultural Officer.
16. Severe high winds during Storm Dudley and Eunice resulted in a further thirty-one windblown trees and large branches needing to be cleared from paths and/or made safe by the Mousehold wardens.

#### AT40/01 CONTRACT MONITORING/IMPROVEMENT NCSL

17. Damaged litter bins are repaired, replaced and maintained by Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) on a like for like basis. On three occasions, damaged bins have been replaced with black plastic outer covers instead of green ones. This has now been resolved, with all outer plastic covers on all litter bins across the heath now green.

#### MI60/03 FOOTBALL PITCH PROVISION

18. A full-sized football pitch is available for hire at the Fountain Ground, Gurney Road, including changing rooms, showers and toilets.
19. No football bookings were taken for this financial year as the goal posts were stolen from the storage location our contractor uses. The situation has now been resolved for this forthcoming season 2022-23, so bookings should return to normal.
20. A sink hole appeared on the Fountain Ground sports pitch and the area was made safe immediately by cording off with Heras fencing. A survey was carried out by our contractor Norse by their senior Civil Engineer. The outcome was that due to adverse weather conditions, heavy rain fall contributed to the collapse. The hole was infilled with concrete and sub soil, with turf re-instated on the top to finish off the landscaping of the area. The area was fenced off for a few weeks for public health and safety reasons.

#### MI60/04 FOOTBALL BOOKINGS MANAGEMENT

21. This facility can be booked via Norwich City Services Ltd on 01603 987922 or email [ncslsportsbookings@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:ncslsportsbookings@norwich.gov.uk)

#### MP00/01 SITE PRESENCE

22. A number of complaints have been received regarding cyclists jumping over the hard surface of the public cycle route/footpath at Valley Drive. Wardens have increased their presence and patrolled this area at peak times on weekends and evenings, advising cyclists of the risk to the public and that they should not be cycling dangerously on the heath. A site visit was included on the itinerant meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. A decision was made to monitor the situation and re visit if needed. Activity has greatly reduced in recent months with BMXers using other sites.
23. Nine campers have been informed of the Bylaws restricting camping and overnight stays; at Beech Drive, the area adjacent to the Pitch and Putt course, the area adjacent to the Rangers House and central parts of the heath.

24. A camper was asked to put out a fire, in dry weather, in woodland near the Vinegar Pond by a Mousehold warden.

#### RH35/01 ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES CRIME

25. The wardens worked with the council's homeless/rough sleeper coordinator for support to be provided to rough sleepers (camping or sleeping in vehicles) on the heath. This included site visits, resulting in temporary accommodation being found until a more permanent arrangement could be made.
26. A number of BMX jumps were dismantled and holes filled in by the wardens, adjacent to Valley Drive and central parts of the heath. The wardens used the principle of engage, inform, and advise when speaking to people.
27. The Mousehold wardens liaised with police officers regarding anti-social behaviour and also a search for a lost, vulnerable adult.
28. There has been a recent increase in anti social behaviour resulting in six wooden bollards pulled up around the perimeter of Britannia Road car park, a no overnight parking sign removed from its fixing and a bench uprooted adjacent to the Mottram Memorial. This was reported to the police through the crime reporting process with the reply that the local beat manager has been made aware of these issues. Unfortunately, from the information we currently have, there are no lines of enquiry which would be proportionate for us to pursue and so this investigation has been closed. If any further information comes to light, please contact us.
29. A Mousehold warden was contacted by Norfolk police and spent the day brush-cutting and clearing vegetation with a police search team, close to where a body was found on St James Hill.
30. The Mousehold wardens liaised with police officers regarding anti-social behaviour in the woodland adjacent to Gilman Road.

#### **Objective C: To ensure that Mousehold Heath is clean and well maintained.**

##### ME01/01 GATES, FENCING AND BARRIERS

31. Six sections of old metal rail spiked topped fencing was removed from Hill Farm Track public car park for public health and safety due to its decayed condition.
32. A repair was undertaken to secure the hasp and staple to the wooden access gate to Beech Drive.

##### ME01/02 BOLLARDS

33. Seven wooden bollards have been replaced around the perimeter of Britannia Road car park due to decay, and one at the entrance to Gilman Road from Mousehold Avenue entrance.
34. Six wooden bollards were replaced in the pavilion car park due to decay and being damaged by vehicles.
35. Six wooden bollards were renewed along the all-access pathway adjacent to Britannia Road to upgrade old decaying ones.

#### ME02/01 BENCH AND SEAT PROVISION

36. Following the removal of graffiti, five benches have been painted with wood preserver by the Mousehold wardens.
37. Two, old rotten benches have been replaced by a City College student group working with a Mousehold warden.

#### ME04/01 LITTER PICKING

38. NCSL litter picked the whole site five days a week Monday to Friday with just the car parks being litter picked on a weekend.
39. Due to the increase in visitor numbers since the lockdown, additional litter picks have been carried out by Mousehold volunteers and wardens.
40. Litter was removed from three camp sites and areas where vegetation has been cleared by our NCSL contractor and Mousehold wardens.

#### ME04/02 LITTER BINS

41. Three black litter bin outer plastic covers have been replaced with green ones to ensure consistency across the site at the Wingfield Open Space, Mousehold Lane, The fountain ground Sports Pitch, Gurney Road and Hill Farm Track public car park Gilman Road.
42. Graffiti was removed from five litter bins located at Hill Farm track, the Fountain Ground, behind the bandstand, the Wingfield open space and Gilman Road, as part of the grounds maintenance contract provided by NCSL.
43. Four litter bin outer plastic covers were replaced due to fire damage. The locations were, the pathway leading to the Pitch and Putt course, the Wingfield Open Space, the Bandstand and the top of Hill Farm Track.

#### ME04/03 FLY TIPPING

44. Fly tipping items were removed from Hill Farm Track, Pitch and Putt car parks and Britannia Road Slip Road. Items included garden waste and

building materials. Items found are removed and disposed of by NCSL's EPA crew.

45. Seven cubic metres of fly-tipping and litter were removed from an area adjacent to the back gardens of Lavengro Road and surrounding area by a Mousehold wardens and a volunteer, making it safer for Forest School activities to take place in the area.

#### ME06/01 FINGER POSTS AND WAYMARKERS

46. The Nature Trail and Earth Heritage trail posts and discs have been maintained and any rotten or vandalised ones replaced.

#### ME12/01 REMOVE GRAFFITI

47. Graffiti has been removed from nine benches, two emergency vehicle access signs, a waymark trail post, ten wooden bollards across the site, the historical interpretation panel, the bandstand, Zaks sign post, two lamp posts along Valley Drive cycle route, three cycle route signs along Gilman Road and the notice board at the Pitch and Putt car park. The works were reported through the City Council online reporting form with most of the removal works undertaken by the Mousehold wardens.

#### ME12/04 CHANGING ROOMS

48. The meeting room at the Fountain Ground changing room has been broken into with the interior door damaged beyond repair. This was reported to the police and a crime scene officer undertook an inspection of the room, involving the removal of items and fingerprint recovery, this is still being investigated.
49. A recommendation from the police was to supply and install new locks to the outside doors for higher levels of security, this has been completed with the inner door replaced.

#### ME41/01 MAIN PATHS

50. Nine paths have been cut to allow easy access across Gilman Road Open Space and the Desert Wildflower meadow by a Mousehold warden. This has made the area accessible, whilst conserving biodiversity through providing nectar for pollinators in uncut areas, which receive a conservation cut later in the summer.
51. Over 25 paths have been maintained by brush cutting, pruning saw and raking cut vegetation, including Mustard Pond Glade, Gilman Rd copse, in front of the Pavilion; St William's Chapel and along transect survey routes, by the wardens with the help of volunteers, to allow access to, and across the site.
52. Scrub partially blocking the 'access path for all' and other paths on St James Hill have been cut back to improve access to the Mottram Memorial and historic city views.



53. Wooden dam boards and posts were used to support an eroding footpath by a Mousehold warden with help from a City College DofE group.
54. Gilman Road, Gurney Road, Mousehold Lane and Britannia Road paths and cycle routes have been flailed maintaining open access.

#### ME41/03 CYCLEWAYS

55. Gilman Road and Gurney Road cycle route verges have been flailed to improve access.

#### ME44/02 CAR PARK SURFACING

56. The Pitch and Putt public car park, Gurney Road and Britannia Road public car park have had maintenance works carried out, including surface re grading works and the levelling and the filling in of pot-holes.

#### ML00/03 CONCESSION BRITANNIA ROAD

57. Sunset Café terminated their license with us, the expiry date was 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
58. A new concession holder for Britannia Road public car park started trading at the beginning of February, offering a selection of traditional food, cold and hot drinks. Food will be varied to coincide with the seasons some vegetarian and vegan options alongside the traditional ones, the aim is to offer a wide variety of both English/ Chinese street food at different times of the year.

### **Priority E: To improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife to enhance the biodiversity of Mousehold Heath**

#### **Heathland and Grassland management**

59. Lowland heathland is a scarce and threatened habitat and only a sixth of the heathland that was present in England in 1800 now remains.
60. However, Britain still has 20 per cent of the world's total area of heathland and this makes it important to conserve the existing heathland areas and look for opportunities to extend them.
61. The Government UK Biodiversity Action Plan for Lowland Heathland includes targets for establishing more lowland heathland to provide space for wildlife and open access to members of the community.
62. Similar declines have been seen in unimproved acid grassland habitat. Both of these habitats can be found at Mousehold and provide a home to a high number of notable, characteristic, declining and threatened species.

63. Heather is an important nectar source for many insects, such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies. A survey of solitary bee and wasps found a number of scarce and threatened species on heather and bare ground, inhabiting the heath.
64. One of the management objectives is to address the reduction of open heathland and acid grassland across the site, which has occurred over the last 40 years. Of the total area of 88 hectares, only roughly 11 hectares of Mousehold is covered by heathland.
65. Butterflies, such as small copper and green hairstreak, and a number of moth species, such as true lover's knott, heath rustic and beautiful yellow underwing, are associated with heathland habitats, and were recorded on the heath this year.

#### HL40/06 NATURAL ENGLAND HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP (HLS) AGREEMENT

66. A grant of £30,600 was awarded to be paid in equal annual payments until the year 2022/23. HLS funding has enabled the conservators to access specialist contractors to achieve their objective of improving the quantity and quality of heathland, a nationally important habitat.
67. The funding has been used to restore heathland and acid grassland, by removing scrub, mowing with a tractor-mounted Rytec mower, grinding stumps, and stripping humus to control nutrient enrichment of soil, in line with management plan objectives. This has resulted in existing heathland areas being enlarged and linked up.
68. Habitat improvements carried out during 2021-22 involved the removal of encroaching trees, scrub, bracken and leggy gorse from existing heathland areas. These works were undertaken by volunteers and the Mousehold wardens, who supervised the works, in compliance with the HLS agreement.
69. In short sward open areas, tree poppers were used to pull up birch saplings, which rapidly out-compete and shade-out heather and grassland species.
70. Future management will increasingly move from heathland restoration to maintenance as areas in the agreement are restored.
71. The HLS agreement was due to come to an end in November 2022. However, with a new Countryside Stewardship Scheme currently being implemented, Natural England has extended the existing Mousehold agreement until October 2023.
72. The council sent an expression of interest to Natural England to be involved in a pilot of the new scheme.

#### MH12/01 MAINTAIN ACID GRASSLAND

73. The Anthill and Wildflower Meadows had an annual autumn conservation cut which was completed by volunteers and the wardens.

74. All arisings were removed from site, minimising nutrient enrichment of the soil. These management techniques provide and maintain acidic soil conditions required by specialist grasses and wildflowers found on the heath.
75. The conservation of Anthills is ensured through sympathetic management techniques, such as using a cord trimmer and carefully raking around the large ant hill habitats.

#### MH39/01: BRACKEN REMOVAL

76. Large areas of bracken were cut, pulled, raked and removed from heathland, grassland and woodland glade habitats by volunteers and the wardens. This summer task is crucial to conserving nectar rich heather and grassland species and complying with the Mousehold Heath's, Natural England, HLS Agreement.

#### MH39//03 COMMON GORSE REMOVAL

77. Invasive common gorse has been cut and removed from heathland areas, to conserve heather, western gorse and other dwarf shrub species.

#### **Woodland management**

78. Mousehold today is largely covered in secondary woodland and scrub, consisting mainly of oak and birch, with some rowan and sycamore. These are species which readily invade open areas.

#### MH00/01 COPPICING

79. Woodland areas were managed through a number of techniques to diversify and enhance habitat and increase biodiversity, through ride creation, coppicing, and pollarding.
80. Work to maintain access to a section of woodland adjacent to Gilman Road by clearing dead and overgrown vegetation has continued. This work has been carried out to increase community access to a formally impenetrable area, with the aim of improving biodiversity and creating a more diverse environment for fauna and flora to become established.

#### MH03/01 NATURAL REGENERATION

81. Natural woodland regeneration is encouraged, rather than the planting of new trees, which ensures the trees within the woodland are of local provenance, minimising the spread of pests and disease.

#### MH04/01 GLADE MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE

82. Grassland habitat in the Wildlife/Mustard Pond glade has been conserved by cutting and raking encroaching vegetation, such as invasive bracken and bramble.

## MH08 DEAD AND DECAYING WOOD

83. Dead and dying trees were retained where safe to do so, to encourage a diverse structure to woodland and to ensure that there is a supply of dead and decaying wood for those specialist species which require it. Trees identified as posing an unacceptable level of safety risk were removed. Where appropriate dead wood removed is left on site as a habitat. Cut branches and other vegetation in the woodland is left in piles to provide wildlife habitats.

## MH31/01 SCRUB AND TREE REMOVAL

84. Invasive scrub and birch trees have been cut and removed within the heathland habitat area.

## **Aquatic habitats**

### MH60/01 Vinegar Pond and MH60/02 Mustard Pond

85. The Vinegar and Mustard Ponds are the only source of water on the heath. These habitats were monitored and floating debris, such as branches and litter removed. Reed sweet-grass and yellow flag iris are invasive plants which had been unofficially introduced to the Vinegar Pond. These plants were removed by the wardens.
86. Since the installation of a bentonite clay linings in December 2011 (Vinegar Pond) and November 2012 (Mustard Pond), water levels have remained high, even during prolonged periods of dry weather, providing an ideal environment for spawning common frogs and other aquatic biodiversity.
87. These conditions have also resulted in common newts inhabiting the ponds, along with a wide variety of damselfly and dragonfly species.
88. The ponds have also served as an important place for birds and mammals to bathe and drink.

## **Birds.**

### RA12/01 COMMON BIRD CENSUS

89. A Common Bird Census (CBC) survey was carried out by the wardens in the Spring, following a transect route between Gurney Road car park and St James Hill. 33 species of bird were recorded (singing and/or calling), with many having breeding territories based on the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), CBC methodology.

## **Reptiles and Amphibians.**

### RA26/01 REPTILES SPECIES LIST

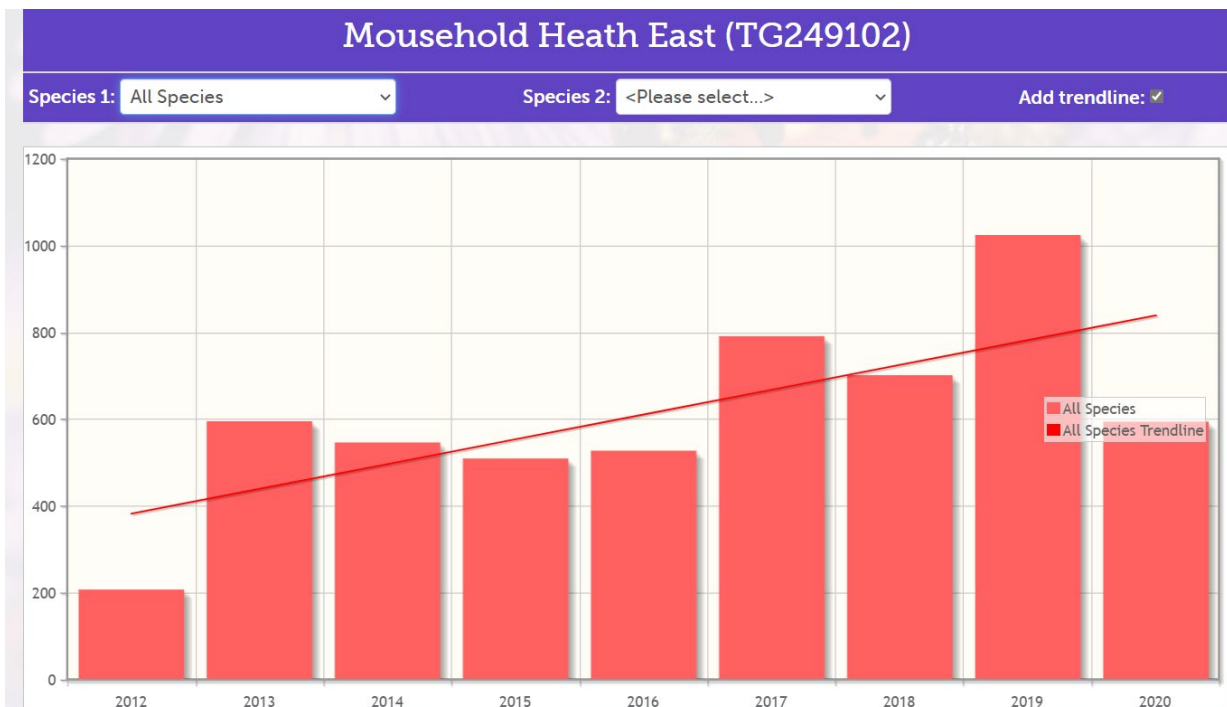
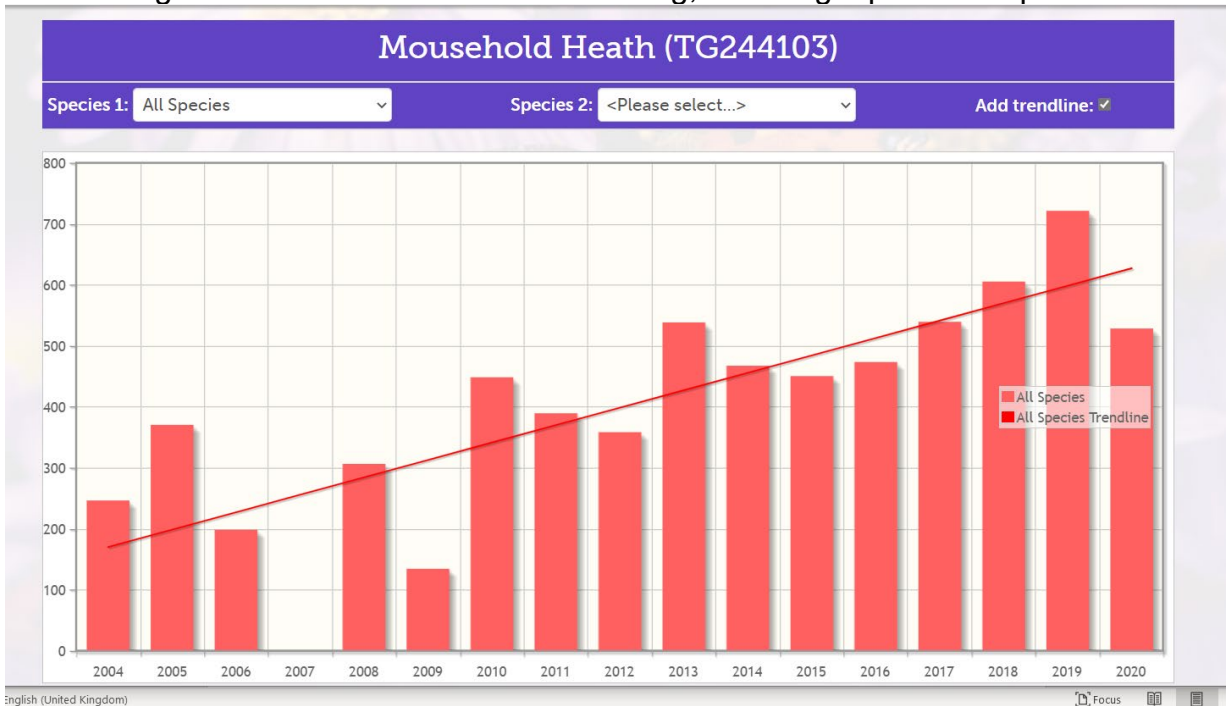
90. Common lizards were recorded in good numbers throughout spring and summer months, with many seen basking in recently restored open heathland and grassland habitats.
91. Frogs had a productive year with many adults being seen in March and frog spawn and tadpoles in the Vinegar and Mustard Pond. Common Newts have been spotted in both ponds.
92. There were ad hoc sightings of both slow worm and grass snake at various locations across the site.

## **Butterflies.**

### RA42/01 BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SURVEY

93. The BMS is the largest and longest running biological survey in the country (established in 1976). Data is collected from over 1,200 sites in the UK, with 31 sites surveyed in Norfolk.
94. Butterflies are uniquely placed among British terrestrial insects and other invertebrate groups to act as indicators of the state of the environment. The results of the surveys are used by the national government to assess the impacts of climate change and the progress of governmental policy initiatives such as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) schemes.
95. Not only are butterflies biologically suitable as indicator species, having rapid lifestyles and, in many cases, high sensitivity to environmental conditions, but the recording and monitoring volunteer and datasets built up by Butterfly Conservation and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, enable accurate assessment of their trends.
96. Two, weekly BMS transect surveys have been undertaken by the wardens, often joined by volunteers. On the Mousehold Heath West survey, monthly counts recorded 472 individual butterflies. This is compared to 627 estimated in 2020.
97. Several local and characteristic species were recorded, such as Green Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Small Copper and Purple Hairstreak.
98. On the Mousehold Heath East transect, an estimated 520 were recorded compared to 615 in 2020.
99. This slight drop in numbers in 2021 could be explained by a cool spring and an unsettled summer in Norfolk.
100. When taking into consideration that butterfly numbers have been declining nationally over recent years, it is encouraging that the butterfly population trend line on both Mousehold BMS transects (see trend line graphs below) - when taking into account annual weather fluctuations and national population changes - are increasing.

101. An upward trend could suggest that the restoration and conservation of early-successional habitat, such as heathland, woodland glades and grassland, through bracken control and scrub clearing, is having a positive impact.



## Dragonflies.

### RA56/01 DRAGONFLY SPECIES LIST

102. A good number of dragonfly and damselfly species have been recorded, such as Norfolk Hawker, Red Darter, Southern Hawker and Emperor dragonflies, with over 50 Migrant Hawkers being recorded feeding over

heathland vegetation at one time. Many species are seen near the ponds during the Spring/Summer months.

103. Norfolk Hawker, which is a nationally threatened and scarce Red Data book species, was recorded for the fifth year in succession. It's nearest breeding site is Thorpe Marshes so they are presumably flying up to the heath to feed on the abundance of insects in open habitats.

### **Bumblebees.**

#### RA82/01 ST JAMES' HILL BUMBLEBEE SURVEY

104. Monthly, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, BeeWalk surveys, have been undertaken by the wardens with the help of a member of the Mousehold Heath Defenders. A total of 96 (51 in 2020) bees, including Buff-tailed, Red tailed, White tailed, Common Carder, Tree and Early bumblebee species (often feeding on bramble), along with Honey bee and Hairy-footed flower bee (feeding on White-dead nettle), were recorded, along the transect route on St. James Hill.

### **Bats.**

#### RA92/01 NATIONAL BAT MONITORING PROGRAMME SURVEY

105. Two, National Bat Monitoring Project (NBMP), Bat Conservation Trust Field Surveys were completed in July by the wardens assisted by volunteers, using a bat detector. A total of 48 Common pipistrelle passes (66 in 2020), 3 Soprano pipistrelle (39 in 2020), 10 Noctule passes (2 in 2020), 5 unidentified pipistrelle agg., were recorded during the transect survey, starting 20 minutes after sunset. This annual national survey was started on the heath in 2018. Bat population trend line analysis will help assess bat species and abundance on the site in future years.

### **Plants.**

#### RF22/02 MUSTARD POND SURVEY

106. A monthly flowering plant survey has been undertaken in Mustard Pond Glade, by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders, recording many beautiful and nectar-rich species. Two new species were added to the area list, which stands at 86 flowering plant species.

#### RF22/03 ST JAMES' HILL SURVEY

107. A warden and a member of the Mousehold Heath Defenders carried out a monthly flower survey, identifying a number of new flowering plant species and bringing the total number up to 133 species in the last 11 years.

**Objective F: To safeguard the historic landscape, archaeological features and buildings of Mousehold Heath.**

## MC03/01 ST WILLIAMS CHAPEL – VEGETATION REMOVAL

108. Invasive bracken and bramble has been cut and removed from chapel paths, banks and viewpoints by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Mousehold Mousketeers and the Mousehold wardens so that views of the chapel could be viewed from the interpretation board.

## MC81/03 CAVALRY TRACK

109. Under the supervision of a warden, volunteers have cleared vegetation, leaves and other dead vegetation to keep the track open and accessible.

**Objective G: To provide opportunities for local communities to be involved in all aspect of our work.**

## AT50/01 VOLUNTEERS GENERAL

110. A total of 3532 volunteer work hours (923 hours in 2020/21) were contributed, in the last year, by the following groups:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- The Assist Trust (based at the Lazar House)
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
- Natwest, Natural England, Open Reach, Crown Commercial and Aviva Corporate Groups
- GoodGym Norwich
- Norwich High School For Girls
- City College DofE group
- Geological Society of Norfolk work party
- Individual volunteers from the community

111. Since July 2008, there has been over 50,000 volunteer hours safely undertaken on the site. Volunteering has provided an opportunity for the community to become involved with the management of the heath, to increase their understanding of the projects being undertaken, the importance of the heath and to engender a sense of ownership and pride in the space.

**Objective H: To promote Mousehold Heath to increase awareness,**



## **knowledge, understanding and a sense of pride.**

### MI60/01 EVENTS

112. Two, Heritage Open Day (HOD) walks (Geodiversity and History) took place on 17th and 19th September, joint led by a local geologist, historians and the Mousehold wardens. Both walks were fully booked and a big success.
113. Three Community Wildlife Workshops took place this year, covering an 'Introduction to Moths' on May 18<sup>th</sup>, an 'Introduction to Butterflies' on July 26<sup>th</sup> and an 'Introduction to winter birds' on December 10<sup>th</sup>, led by a local expert and Mousehold Heath warden.

### RC30/01 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

114. Local historians, involved with the research and restoration of the WW2 RAF/USAF Air Base at Newman Road, Rackheath, have been researching war activity on the heath with a Mousehold warden.

### RH31/01 FOREST SCHOOLS

115. Two ROOTS environmental education and play activities took place organised through Norwich City Council Events Team.
116. Three Enchanted Wood Forest School, play and environmental activities including one birthday party, took place, organised through Norwich City Council Events Team.
117. Three Tribe environmental play activities took place, organised through Norwich City Council Events Team liaising with the Mousehold wardens.
118. All these activities increase involvement, understanding and enjoyment of nature and the heath for young people.
119. A fourth Forest School environmental education activity group - facilitated by the Mousehold wardens and City Council Events Team – has started on the heath. The new group from 'Action For Children Norfolk ECFS, City and Eaton Early Childhood and Family Service', who work alongside Norfolk County Council, are delighted to have found such a large, accessible natural area in the city for their activities.

### WASTES AND STRAYS PROJECT: URBAN COMMONS FUTURES

120. Following the Wastes and Strays conference, in Brighton, in 2019 which was attended by two members of the Mousehold Heath Conservators and a Mousehold warden, the conservators agreed to be part of the Wastes and Strays project and support project activities.
121. The Urban Commons Futures is the third phase of the wider Wastes and Strays project, celebrating the rich social, cultural and ecological value of the urban common.

122. In collaboration with the four cities, the plan is to explore and record on the ground, experiences of urban commons and to co-create visions for their possible futures. The stories, traditions and unique habitats will culminate in the production of a series of exhibitions, performances and artworks.
123. Following a site visit to the heath by Wastes and Strays project officers Siobhan O'Neill and Alessandro Zambelli, in May 2021, the project officers have involved community groups in a creative dialogue and activities, around how they use the heath and alternative futures for urban commons in general.
124. The activities have been resourced by the Urban Commons Futures project with the wardens overseeing the delivery of activities on the heath.
125. The resource requirement and the potential impact on their work was discussed with the wardens and they have found capacity to support and advise the project whilst also ensuring that activities are appropriate and will not damage the heath.
126. The interdisciplinary Wastes and Strays research project is coming to an end on 30 June 2022. The pandemic intervened to prevent some planned visits to Norwich, but most of the interviews and work has been completed online.
127. The project is concluding with several public events to bring its work to as wide an audience as possible. There will be an interactive exhibition at the Frere Road Community Centre, Norwich on 7th June. The exhibition will showcase the project's historical research on the urban commons and explore themes of locality and identity through testimony from contemporary users and user groups. There will be a poetry workshop; and participatory creative activities for both children and adults focussed to exploring the meaning and value of Mousehold Heath as a community 'green space'. There will also be short talks by the research team explaining the outcomes of the research.
128. Further information about the project can be found here:
129. [Wastes and Strays | Wastes and Strays | Newcastle University \(ncl.ac.uk\)](#)

## **Consultation**

130. None

## **Implications**

### **Financial and Resources**

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and Budget.

131. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources at this time

## Legal

None

## Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	The Mousehold Wardens will continue to work with Norfolk Constabulary to ensure that the Heath is a safe place to visit
Children and Adults Safeguarding	Safeguarding is a priority for the Mousehold Wardens, and they will continue to signpost vulnerable individuals to the services that they require
Environmental Impact	The Mousehold Wardens will continue to improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife to enhance the biodiversity of Mousehold Heath.

## Risk Management

132. There are no risks associated with this report

## Other Options Considered

133. There have been no other options considered.

## Reasons for the decision/recommendation

134. The annual report provides the service and the Conservators with an opportunity to review the success of the activities that have been completed in the previous year and plan accordingly for the following year

**Appendices: None**

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