



# NORWICH City Council

**Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators**

**Committee Date: 15/09/2023**

**Report Title: Mousehold Heath Management Update - 6 March to 29 August 2023**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Giles, cabinet member for communities and social inclusion

**Report from:** Head of Environment Services

**Wards:** Catton Grove and Crome

## **OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

To provide an update on activities on Mousehold Heath relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath management plan objectives.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Conservators note the contents of the report

### **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. The report details the work, activities and issues arising on, and relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath management plan objectives.
2. The objectives are:
  - A) To ensure Mousehold Heath is a welcoming place for people to visit.
  - B) To protect Mousehold Heath and ensure that it is a safe and secure place to visit.
  - C) To ensure that Mousehold Heath is clean and well maintained.
  - D) To manage Mousehold Heath in a way that has a positive impact on the environment.
  - E) To improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife to enhance the biodiversity of Mousehold Heath.
  - F) To safeguard the historic landscape, archaeological features and buildings of Mousehold Heath.
  - G) To provide opportunities for local communities to be involved in all aspect of our work.
  - H) To promote Mousehold Heath to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and a sense of pride.

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

#### AP80/03 MOUSEHOLD CONSERVATORS ITINERANT

1. An itinerant meeting has been arranged for committee members to discuss the management of the site regarding the implementation of the management plan and the implementation of the biodiversity strategy for the improvement of nature habitats promoted by Norwich City Council on 1 September.

#### AI00/01 GREEN FLAG AWARD

2. The Green Flag application was successful with the new flag being raised on Fountain Ground Playing Field. The information sign installed on the chain link fence adjacent to the historical interpretation panel was maintained to inform visitors of the achievement.

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

#### AI30/02 TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

3. Seven 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.
4. Sixteen dead, dying, dangerous and windblown trees and branches were identified as needing remedial works during the March Tree Safety Inspection Survey. These have been undertaken by the Mousehold wardens.

#### ML60/01 NORFOLK CONSTABULARY

5. The Mousehold Wardens continue to liaise with police officers to reduce anti-social behaviour.

#### MP00/01 SITE PRESENCE

6. Mousehold wardens have continued to patrol the heath, focusing on areas with anti-social behaviour issues.
7. A Mousehold warden spoke to campers who declared themselves homeless. The Pathways Norwich team were immediately contacted, and a member of the Pathways team made contact with the campers to organise accommodation.
8. Any litter found during patrols and work parties, has been removed on an ad hoc basis, to keep the site safe and clean.

#### RH35/01 ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES/CRIME

9. There was an attempted break-in at the Fountain Ground meeting room. Repairs were carried out to secure the outside doors and make safe by NCSL.
10. Mousehold wardens liaised with the police and citywide services officers, to arrange for the removal of an abandoned caravan parked on the verge of Mousehold Avenue.

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

#### ME04/01 LITTER PICKING

11. Five camp sites have been cleared of waste across the site. All except two were homeless, where as mentioned above, support was provided through our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Officer in partnership with the Pathways team to process permanent accommodation applications on their behalf.

#### ME04/02 LITTER BINS

12. Another eight cast iron litter bins have been installed across the site replacing existing plastic ones. There are now only three plastic bins remaining on site at Britannia Road public car park. These will be replaced with cast iron bins when they become available. This implementation reduces the risk of fires and is in line with the replacement programme agreed by members.

#### ME04/03 FLY TIPPING

13. Several fly tipping items have been removed from the Pitch and Putt car park, Gurney Road and Hill Farm Track public car park, Gilman Road. Items included, building materials and household waste, these were disposed of by NCSL's EPA crew.

14. Two vandalised Guided Trail and one Earth Heritage Trail way-marker discs have been replaced by the Mousehold wardens and Easton College work placement student.

#### ME12/01 REMOVE GRAFFITI

15. The interpretation panel at St. Williams Chapel, along with the public notice board in the Pitch and Putt car park, on the Fountain Ground, and the Green Flag sign, have been cleared of offensive graffiti by the Mousehold wardens and NCSL.

#### ME41/01 MAIN PATHS

16. Twenty-two paths across the site have been maintained by brush cutting, raking and removing vegetation, to allow easy access to the heath. This work has been undertaken by the Mousehold wardens and volunteers.

#### ME44/02 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF PUBLIC CAR PARKS

17. Britannia Road, Pitch and Putt public car park, Gurney Road and Hill Farm Track, and Gilman Road public car park have had maintenance works carried out, including surface re-grading and potholes filled, to provide visitors with a level parking surface.

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

18. A stolen vehicle was driven through the wooden access gate at Beech Drive. A temporary repair has been undertaken, until a permanent replacement can be fitted.
19. The Ranger's House letter box post has been replaced after an attempt was made to pull it out of the ground.

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

#### MH31/01 SCRUB AND TREE REMOVAL

20. Invasive saplings have been moved to restore and conserve important heathland and grassland habitat, in line with the Natural England, Higher Level Stewardship Agreement (HLS) and the Mousehold Heath Management Plan. Over two hundred saplings have been moved from heathland and grassland habitat and re-planted in a developing woodland area, adjacent to Gilman Road, by volunteers, under the supervision of a Mousehold warden.

#### MH39/01 BRACKEN REMOVAL

21. Large areas of bracken have been pulled, raked and removed from heathland, grassland and woodland glade habitats by volunteers and the wardens. Habitat piles, which could be used for nesting and as hibernacula, have been created for birds, reptiles, mammals and invertebrates. This task is also crucial to conserving nectar-rich heather

species, grasses and other wild flowers, and complying with the Mousehold Heath HLS Agreement.

#### MH60/01 VINEGAR POND

22. Litter and large branches have been removed from the Vinegar and Mustard ponds by the Mousehold wardens.

#### RA12/01 COMMON BIRD CENSUS

23. Weekly B.T.O. Common Bird Census Breeding Bird Surveys have been undertaken by a Mousehold warden with support from volunteers.

#### RA42/01 BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SURVEY

24. Two weekly Butterfly Conservation and Butterfly Monitoring Scheme transect surveys have been carried out by a Mousehold warden, joined by volunteers. These surveys also include the recording of day-flying moths and dragonflies.

#### RA44/01 MOTH TRAPPING SURVEY

25. Community Moth Survey evenings took place in July and August. Two new species for the site have been identified, bringing the site list up to 270 species.

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

26. Monthly Bumblebee Conservation Trust BeeWalk transect surveys have been undertaken by a Mousehold warden.

#### RA92/01 NATIONAL BAT MONITORING PROGRAMME

27. Two Bat Conservation Trust National Bat Monitoring Programme Transect Field Surveys were undertaken in July by a Mousehold warden and volunteers.

#### RF22/01 MUSTARD POND GLADE FLOWER SURVEY

28. Members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders have carried out monthly flowering plant surveys, recording a wide range of colourful, nectar-providing flowers.

#### RF22/02 ST JAMES' HILL SURVEY

29. A member of the Mousehold Heath Defenders and a Mousehold warden have undertaken a monthly plant survey on St James' Hill.

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

#### AT50/01 VOLUNTEERS GENERAL

30. A total of 1096 community volunteer hours have been undertaken on the site between 6 March and 29 August by the following groups;

- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Assist Trust
- Easton College Work Placement student
- GoodGym Norwich
- Norwich High School for Girls
- Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Natwest corporate group.
- Many individual volunteers from the community

31. 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.**

#### ME06/03 INFORMATION PANELS

32. Information panels have been cleaned and maintained.

#### MI60/01 EVENTS

33. Two Community Wildlife Workshops have taken place - one on Tuesday 11 April and the other on Monday 24 July. Many insects and other wildlife were recorded, including many butterflies, dragonflies and a moth which was new to the site list.

34. The Mousehold Heath Guided Walks programme and poster has been produced with support from the Communications Team. The Mousehold wardens have implemented the programme increasing involvement, understanding and enjoyment of the site. The last event of the programme is a Fungi Foray in October.

35. A Dawn Chorus Walk was organised and undertaken on 9 May, starting at 4.15am, led by a Mousehold Heath Warden. Conditions were wet but many hardy volunteers attended and a wide variety of bird species were recorded on the Breeding Bird Survey Transect. The walk was followed by hot drinks and breakfast in the Fountain ground meeting room.

36. Two Forest School events have been organised through the Norwich City Council Events Team.

37. A Moth Survey evening took place on 17 August, recording three new species for the site.

38. A Mousehold Warden led a guided walk for the participants of an EU Peer Review for the County Council: EU Peer Review; protecting and recovering local biodiversity, particularly insect populations in Norfolk, on Wednesday 21 June.
39. Goodgym Norwich have carried out two conservation activities on Monday 26 June and Monday 7 August in the evening.
40. The 9<sup>th</sup> Norwich Cub group were involved in environmental practical activities on the 26 and 27 June.
41. A Norwich High School for Girls (NHSFG), Environmental Activity Day, saw over 60 students involved in three activities - heathland management, history walk, butterfly survey - on Tuesday 27 June. Everyone enjoyed the activities and an ice cream during their lunch break.
42. A Geodiversity Earth Heritage trail guided walk, lead by local expert Tim Holt Wilson, took place on Tuesday 4 July.
43. A site management walk led by a Mousehold warden focused on the management that had been recently undertaken to improve the site for people and biodiversity was held on 1 August.

### **Consultation**

44. 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.

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

### **Legal**

46. None

### **Statutory Considerations**

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
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**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls Required</b>
Financial	Failure to adequately plan and monitor activities could result in insufficient resources being available to deliver the aims and objectives of the Management Plan	Ensure that sufficient management information is available to continue management and maintenance programme
Operational	Failure to adequately plan and monitor activities could result in insufficient resources being available to deliver the aims and objectives of the Management Plan	Ensure that sufficient management information is available to continue management and maintenance programme
Legal	The Council cannot comply with its legal duty to ensure that buildings are safe for users to access	Ensure that sufficient management information is available to continue management and maintenance programme

### **Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

47. This report is for members to note the activities on Mousehold Heath since the last committee meeting.

**Background papers: None**

**Appendices: None**

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