



Mousehold Heath Conservators

Date: **Friday, 15 March 2024**
Time: **14:30**
Venue: **Mancroft room City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

Committee members:

Councillor Sands (M) (chair)
Councillor Peek (vice chair)
Councillor Carrington
Councillor Champion
Councillor Fox
Councillor Francis
Councillor Kendrick
Councillor Kidman
Councillor Lubbock
Marion Maxwell, Mousehold Heath
Defenders
Willem Buttinger, The Norwich Society
1 Vacancy

For further information please contact:

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Agenda

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1	Apologies To receive apologies for absence	
2	Declarations of interest (Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)	
3	Public questions/petitions To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.	
4	Minutes To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2024.	5 - 10
5	Report from Andy Hutchinson UEA on the Brick Earth Project - verbal report	
6	Mousehold Heath Conservators budget monitoring to 31 December 2023 Purpose - To provide the 2023/24 revenue budget monitoring position and 2023/24 capital receipts balance as at 31 December 2023.	11 - 16
7	Mousehold Heath Management Update - 4 January to 26 February 2024 Purpose - To provide a quarterly update on activities on Mousehold Heath relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath management plan objectives.	17 - 24
8	Report from the Mousehold Heath Conservators management subgroup Purpose - To provide an update on the items discussed at the subgroup meeting Friday 16 February 2024.	25 - 30
9	Schedule of Meetings - Civic Year 2024-25	

The following schedule of meetings of the Mousehold Heath Conservators are proposed for the Civic Year 2024-25, subject to approval at Norwich City Council's annual council:

- Friday 14 June 2024 at 14:30
- Friday 13 September 2024 at 14:30
- Friday 17 January 2024 at 14:30
- Friday 14 March 2024 at 14:30

Date of publication: **Thursday, 07 March 2024**



Mousehold Heath Conservators

14:30 to 15:40

19 January 2024

Present: Councillors Sands (M) (chair), Peek (vice chair), Carrington, Champion, Fox, Kendrick and Kidman, and Marion Maxwell (Mousehold Heath Defenders) and Willem Buttinger (Norwich Society)

Apologies: Councillors Francis and Lubbock

In attendance Matthew Davies – Fringe project officer
William Stewart, Mousehold Heath Warden
Mark Brzeczek – project manager - delivery
Councillor Giles, cabinet member for communities and social inclusion

1. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Public questions/petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

3. Minutes

Subject to noting that Councillor Carrington was present at the meeting and that under item 6. Mousehold Heath work programme 2023-24, the Mousehold Heath Defenders representative had helped to facilitate the illustrated talk rather than held the illustrated talked it was:-

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2023.

4. Mousehold Heath budget monitoring to 30 November 2023

The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion presented the report. There was a forecasted underspend of £973 for the financial year 2024/25 due to income being higher than budgeted for. The large capital reserves position was due to the sale of the Ranger's House. Any approved upgrades to the public toilets would be paid for from capital reserves. The recharge for the services provided by Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) was still to take place and would be reflected in future budget monitoring reports.

RESOLVED to note the current budget monitoring and reserves positions.

5. Mousehold Heath Conservators Budget and Precept 2024/25

The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion presented the report. The proposed budget and precept for Mousehold Heath Conservators for the financial year 2024/25 was £277,611 which represented a 4.3% increase to the budget for 2023/24. Table 2 within the report provided details on the proposed increases and the reasons for these. An increase of 7.5% was proposed to the fees and charges.

The chair commented it was positive to see that the balance level of the reserves continued to exceed the minimum prudent balance.

The Fringe Project officer said that a request had been made by the Mousehold Heath Wardens to move £400 from the Projects budget code to the Refreshments budget code. This budget paid for refreshments for the volunteers as a thank you for their work on Mousehold Heath and due to the rise in inflation the cost of these had risen significantly. The Conservators were supportive of this reallocation of money to show their gratitude to the volunteers.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:-

- 1) Move £400 from Projects budget code to Refreshments budget code; and
- 2) Place a precept of £277,611 on Norwich City Council for the financial year 2024/25.

6. Mousehold Heath Management Update – 29 August 2023 to 4 January 2024

The Fringe Project officer introduced his new position on the committee. Through a restructure he had assumed the responsibility for the Mousehold Heath Wardens. He continued to manage the Fringe Project which delivered projects across the city, including on Mousehold Heath.

The Mousehold Heath Warden presented the report. He highlighted that a total of 1125 community volunteer hours had been undertaken by a variety of groups on the Heath by a range of organisations and individuals. The volunteers were crucial to the management of the Heath. The two benches that had been donated by the Mousehold Heath Defenders had now been installed.

Following a tree safety inspection, 25 trees were identified as dead, dying or dangerous and these had to be cut down by the Warden and the Eason College work placement student. A number of overhanging branches also had been cleared to maintain access for emergency vehicles and clear cycle paths. Through the support of the Conservators, the work placement student had been able to take part in training courses to aid in his development.

Habitat management continued to be ongoing and during the autumn cutting of the Anthills, Gilman Road and Desert meadows had taken place. These were now either cut by electric brush cutters or scythes. The use of scythes for these cuts was

increasing as these were carbon neutral and more sensitive to wildlife due to the decrease in vibrations that could disturb wildlife.

A number of events had taken place on the Heath. The programme of guided walks on the Heath had concluded in October with the last walk being a Fungi Foray. This had allowed for the recording of fungi species on the Heath including a number of species that were new to the site which would be confirmed by a specialist at the county council. There had also been a wildlife walk in December which had focussed on winter birds. Several different birds had been spotted including a Peregrin Falcon. Mousehold Heath had hosted two Heritage Open Day walks in September, and these had focused on the history and environmental importance of the site. These had been well received by attendees. The chair proposed that the Conservators' thanks should be recorded for the work of the experts who had conducted the Heritage Open Days trails.

A member queried whether the Wardens had seen similar trends to other organisations in regard to the level of volunteering during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Warden said they had seen an initial drop in the number of volunteers in the pandemic but in the last six to eight months the number of volunteers had returned to pre-pandemic levels. There also continued to be enquiries from individuals and organisations to volunteer on the Heath which were always welcomed.

In response to a member's question the Fringe Project officer said that the criteria for the Green Flag award did not change year on year and was available on their website to view. The Warden confirmed that the city council applied for the status on an annual basis and the Green Flag committee would visit the site every other year to inspect the site.

A member asked for an update on the Mustard and Vinegar ponds. The Warden confirmed that fish had again been found in the Vinegar pond. There were plans to humanely remove as many fish as possible during the winter. If this approach did not work other approaches would be explored in the management subgroup and reported to the Conservators at a future meeting.

A member asked whether there had been a decrease in illegal activity on the Heath. The Warden confirmed that there had been a decline, and they would continue to work closely with Norfolk Constabulary and the North Norwich Community Safety Group on this.

In response to a member's question the Warden said that installing a permanent camera near the Pitch and Putt car park to prevent or prosecute fly-tipping would be expensive. The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion said that any request for a redeployable CCTV camera would be assessed in terms of need in relation to other areas. The chair commented that in other local authorities wildlife cameras had been used, and this could be an option to explore. The Norwich Society representative said that he was aware of these having been used successfully to prosecute those committing fly-tipping as they could be hidden. The chair said that they could explore this as an option in future. The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion said that the report on LOVE Norwich that would be brought to the scrutiny committee on 25 January 2024 would address some of these issues. The Warden said that the Wardens could record the instances of fly-tipping and create a map of hotspots.

The chair asked whether the Easton College work placement student was still working with the Mousehold Heath Wardens. The Warden said the student had completed 150 hours the previous year and would be completing another 150 hours in the current year as he was completing an arboricultural course at Easton College.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the contents of the Mousehold Heath Management Update – 29 August 2023 to 4 January 2024; and
- 2) Record the Mousehold Heath Conservators' thanks to the experts who had conducted the Heritage Open Days trails.

7. Mousehold Heath annual works programme 2024-25

The Mousehold Heath Warden presented the report. The works programme included ongoing works that were linked to the Mousehold Heath management plan and changes that had been agreed in 2023-24. There were no planned amendments in 2024-25. Progress against the plan for 2023-24 would be reported to the meeting of the Mousehold Heath Conservators in March 2024.

A member queried what the "Access hubs" were. In response the Warden said that the access hubs were the arrival points for visitors including the car parks. Within the 10-year plan the access hubs would be reviewed in the following years. The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion said that the 10-year plan could be circulated to Mousehold Heath Conservators.

The chair asked whether anything had been done regarding the damage to the Mottram Memorial information plaque. The Warden said the information plaque had been patched but the Conservators would need to consider whether a different material should be used. The chair considered that this option was worth exploring at a future meeting.

In response to a member's question the chair said that while the closure order for the Britannia Road car park had now ended there was a citywide Public Space Protection Order which dealt with vehicular anti-social behaviour. The Conservators could monitor the situation to see if other measures would be needed.

A member queried whether £200 was sufficient for providing and maintaining cycle stands. The Warden confirmed that this figure was the average spend over a number of years and consideration could be given to the locations of the cycle stands in future.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the contents of the annual works programme for 2024/25; and
- 2) Agree to the financial commitments made within the management plan objectives to deliver the works outlined in the work programme keeping within budget for 2024/25 financial year.

8. Mousehold Heath toilet refurbishment

(This item was contained within the supplementary agenda.)

The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion presented the report. The current building next to Zak's Restaurant was not suitable for a Changing Places toilet, as it did not meet minimum size requirements for such a facility. It was proposed to turn the male toilets into a unisex toilet and refurbish the existing accessible toilet. This included introducing an electrical supply by sub-metering from Zak's Restaurant. The Conservators had previously requested a Changing Places toilet was created on Mousehold Heath and it was therefore proposed to engage an external consultant to conduct a feasibility study to identify a possible location for a Changing Places toilet. The project manager – delivery said that the proposal as laid out within the report included external refurbishments and the internal works required. The current male toilet would be large enough for an accessible toilet but would require the door to be widened and for level access to be created. This would be an additional cost to the total provided within the report.

A member queried whether any studies had been conducted to understand how many people would use a Changing Places facility to ensure that there would be sufficient usage of such a facility. The chair commented that former Councillor Bradford had been a wheelchair user and regularly visited Mousehold Heath. Another member commented that Changing Places facilities were used by other individuals and not just wheelchair users.

A member commented that the access to the toilets could be difficult due to the steepness of the incline and due to the surface of the incline, and said that the Conservators could consider looking at the access to the toilets in future. The chair said that it was possible for vehicles to drive closer to Zak's Restaurant to allow a wheelchair user to use the accessible toilet and therefore access to the toilets could stay at the current level.

A member queried whether the Conservators should delay the refurbishment of the toilets next to Zak's Restaurant until the feasibility study had been completed and use some of the budget allocated to this project on a fully accessible facility. The chair said that the current toilets needed to be refurbished to ensure public toilet provision for visitors to Mousehold Heath. In response to a member's query the project manager – delivery said that he would need to confirm the length of time required for the feasibility study.

Members discussed the need for the toilets to be refurbished and were pleased to see that a feasibility study would be conducted to find a suitable location for a Changing Places toilet.

The cabinet member for communities and social inclusion said that the Mousehold Heath Conservators work on refurbishing the toilets had been ongoing for a number of years and the proposal would allow for the refurbishment of the toilets to commence. The provision of toilets within a park would be helpful with being awarded the Green Flag status. Individual Changing Places toilet blocks could cost around £90,000 and the level of capital reserves of the Conservators would not be sufficient for this. The external consultants would be able to explore options for sources of funding. A member commented that the feasibility study would need to

explore the level of demand for a Changing Places facility and the justification for such a facility based on a demand.

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Kidman seconded a procedural motion to move to the vote.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to move to the vote.

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

- 1) The existing male toilets are changed to a single unisex toilet and the existing male disabled toilet is refurbished as detailed in section 8, of the report, at an estimated cost of £36,679.20, including a 20% contingency
- 2) An external consultant is engaged to conduct a feasibility study to identify:
 - a. The optimum location for a Changing Places facility within Mousehold Heath, having regard to the needs of visitors to Mousehold Heath and accessibility
 - b. The enabling works required for the preferred location, e.g. access and utilities; and
 - c. A cost estimate for such a facility
- 3) The refurbishment of the toilets should include LED lighting, hygienic PVC clad walls, non-slip flooring, water heater, hand dryer and a stainless steel toilet, wash hand basin, grab rails and a baby changing station.

CHAIR



Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators

Committee Date: 15/03/2024

Report Title: Mousehold Heath Conservators budget monitoring to 31 December 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 the 2023/24 revenue budget monitoring position and 2023/24 capital receipts balance as at 31 December 2023.

Recommendation:

To note the current budget monitoring and reserves positions

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.

Mousehold Heath management plan objectives

The report helps to meet the Mousehold Heath management plan objective C.

C) To ensure that Mousehold Heath is clean and well maintained.

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.

Report Details

1. Conservators approved a precept for the financial year 2023/24 of £264,571 at their meeting of 20 January 2023.
2. The Conservators have requested that budget reports be brought to their meetings on a regular basis. Appendix A details the financial position for Mousehold Heath as at the end of December 2023, and comparison of the expected outturn to the annual budget.
3. Corporate recharge budgets are no longer shown against individual cost centres within the General Fund, for accounting presentation purposes. All corporate recharges are still calculated in line with agreed principles. The Conservator's element of the recharges has been included within the figures in this report, for consistency between accounting periods.
4. The impact of the precept and forecast 2023/24 budget monitoring position on the Mousehold Heath balances are as follows:

Table 1:

	£
Balance brought forward from 2022/23	(40,868)
Precept 2023/24	(264,571)
Forecast Outturn 2023/24	264,571
Forecast balance to be carried forward to 2024/25	(40,868)
In-year movement in reserves (underspend)	0

5. The prudent minimum level of reserves was assessed in 2022/23 for it to be £10,000 during 2023/24 budget cycle. The reserve balance is expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum balance.

Capital

6. The position on capital reserve is as below, with no spend incurred in 2023/24 to date. There are no current items in the capital budget, therefore no spend can be incurred in 2023/24 without a budget amendment to Council.

	£
Rangers House balance brought forward	(100,766)
Interest accrued on balance up until March 2023	(5,362)
Interest April - Dec 2023	(3,867)
Forecast balance of receipts at 31/12/2023	(109,995)

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	None
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	None

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Financial performance	Failure to adequately plan and monitor finances could result in insufficient resources being available to deliver the aims and objectives of the Management Plan and Annual Work Programme.	Ensure that sufficient financial and management information is available to continue management and maintenance programme.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

- Revenue budget and capital receipts balance monitoring will ensure that there are adequate resources to implement Mousehold Heath Management Plan and Annual Work Programme.

Appendices: A: Mousehold Heath Conservators Provisional forecast year end outturn report April – December 2023

Contact Officer:

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**Appendix A: Mousehold Heath Conservators Provisional forecast year end
outturn report April – December**

	Budget (£)	Actual to P9(£)	Forecast outturn (£)	Forecast variance (£)
Salaries	83,038	63,225	83,038	0
Employers Pension Contributions	10,900	8,296	10,900	0
Annual Added Years Payments	3,332	935	3,332	0
Pension Deficit Recovery	15,546	15,531	15,546	0
Employee/Public Insurance	649	0	649	0
General Repairs & Maintenance	15,000	889	15,000	0
Contract Cleaning	11,154	0	11,154	0
Electricity	3,890	269	3,890	0
Grounds General Maintenance & Upkeep	2,204	880	2,204	0
Recharge from GMO main contract	72,832	0	72,832	0
Tree works	9,613	0	9,613	0
Fire Insurance Buildings	48	0	48	0
Water charge metered	90	0	90	0
Car and Cycle Allowances	800	355	800	0
Clothing and Uniforms General	500	308	500	0
Equipment - Purchase	450	310	450	0
Equip-Repairs/Maintenance	650	466	650	0
Other Equipment and Tools	550	692	550	0
Refreshments	745	176	745	0
Staff Conference & Course Fees	500	175	500	0
Specialist Supplies	445	375	445	0
Projects	4,046	1,756	4,046	0
Other Contractual Services	7,110	2,755	7,110	0
Recharge from AHOs	5,000	0	5,000	0
NCSL Deposit Charge	0	4,496	4,496	4,496
NCSL Deposit recharge	0	0	(4,496)	(4,496)
Football	(1,404)	(624)	(1,404)	0
Other Rents	(15,000)	(11,250)	(15,000)	0
Catering Concession Pitch & Putt	(1,800)	374	(1,800)	0
Government Grants - Specific	(2,204)	(2,204)	(2,204)	0
				0
CDS	35,887	0	35,887	0
	264,571	88,182	264,571	0



Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators

Committee Date: 15/03/2024

Report Title: Mousehold Heath Management Update - 4 January to 26 February 2024

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

AI30/02 TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

1. 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.

MC81/01 VIEW FROM MOTTRAM MEMORIAL

2. Scrub has been cleared to retain historic views of the city and conserve open habitat biodiversity.

ML60/01 NORFOLK CONSTABULARLY

3. The Mousehold Wardens liaised with police officers regarding anti-social behaviour.

MP00/01 SITE PRESENCE

4. Mousehold wardens have continued to patrol the heath, focusing on areas with anti-social behaviour issues.
5. When found during patrols and work parties, litter has been removed on an ad hoc basis, to keep the site safe and clean.

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

ME04/01 LITTER PICKING

6. Large amounts of litter have been removed from areas where scrub and leggy gorse have been cleared.

ME01/02 BOLLARDS

7. One wooden bollard in the Pavilion car park, has been re-installed by Mousehold warden and a work placement student.
8. Four old decaying wooden bollards were replaced on Britannia Road public car park and one at the Pitch and Putt public car park to ensure protection of the site regarding vehicle encroachment.

ME04/03 FLY TIPPING

9. A number of fly tipping items were removed from the Pitch and Putt car park and the slip road at Britannia Road, including garden waste and building materials. Items found are removed and disposed of by NCSL's EPA crew.

ME12/01 REMOVE GRAFFITI

10. An attempt has been made by the Mousehold wardens to remove a large amount of graffiti on trees in the Gurney Road area. Further attempts to remove the graffiti will be made by the Mousehold wardens.

ME41/01 MAIN PATHS

11. Five paths have been maintained by brush cutting and raking vegetation to allow easy access to the site.
12. A repair was needed caused by erosion along Silver Birch Walk. The pathway was made safe by infilling with local materials from the site. The task was undertaken by Hamish Muirden, Volunteer Coordinator Norwich Fringe Project and a Mousehold warden, working in partnership with the Norwich Fringe Project volunteers.

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

MH04/01 GLADE MANAGEMENT MAINTAIN

13. The Mustard Pond glade has been conserved by cutting and raking encroaching vegetation.

MH31/01 SCRUB AND TREE REMOVAL

14. Invasive scrub has been cut and cleared to restore and conserve important heathland and grassland habitat, in line with the Natural England, Higher Level Stewardship Agreement (HLS) and Mousehold Heath Management Plan.
15. The Mousehold Heath Higher Level Stewardship agreement has been extended for five years until 2028 and now concludes at the same time as the Mousehold Heath Management Plan 2018 - 2028. This will

provide funding to support important Acid Grassland and Heathland habitat and biodiversity works, set out in the management plan objectives. Many HLS agreements have been extended with potential for current agreements to enter the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) in the future.

16. In an update from the Conservators meeting in winter 2023, over two hundred saplings have been moved from heathland and grassland habitat and re-planted in a developing woodland adjacent to Gilman Road by volunteers, under the supervision of a Mousehold warden.
17. The tree saplings will take over on the heathland areas, quickly out-competing the heather and other heathland plants, turning the heathland into a pioneering birch woodland.
18. The wardens use a tree popper tool to remove the tree saplings, leaving the tree roots intact. This means that they can be replanted elsewhere on Mousehold. In the past the saplings would have been cut, burnt and the remaining stumps treated with glyphosate.
19. Work had previously been undertaken to manage and control the leggy gorse and bracken, which had been encroaching into the existing woodland on Gilman Road. A gap had been left and the tree saplings removed from the heathland habitat were planted to fill in the gap.

MH39/01 BRACKEN REMOVAL

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

MH39/03 COMMON GORSE REMOVAL

21. Old and leggy common gorse have been cut and removed to make habitat piles, from the Gilman Road and heathland/grassland areas, to conserve heather, grasses, western gorse and other dwarf shrub species and reduce fire risk
22. Mousehold Heath Defenders have cleared old, leggy gorse, on heathland areas during volunteer work parties. This has reduced the fire risk and created a mosaic of vegetation types in open areas.
23. A woodchipper has been hired for use by trained Mousehold Heath wardens, volunteers and the Norwich Fringe Project Volunteer Co-ordinator. The old, leggy gorse which was chipped was previously cut and stacked in the St. James Hill area. Managing and chipping this old material reduces fire risk across the site.

MH60/01 VINEGAR POND

24. An attempt to control the levels of fish in the Vinegar Pond was undertaken by electro-fishing. A large number of fish were removed and transported to a safe location.

It was recommended by the contractor, FishTrack, and the Environmental Agency that the best way forward was to drain the pond when conditions were favourable and remove all the fish at once for a more cost effective and best practice way of realistically mitigating the fish population.

This is in line with aims and objectives within the management plan to encourage and protect frog and newt populations along with any other aquatic fauna and flora.

As and when the right conditions arise, i.e., low water levels due to hot dry conditions in the summer period, this task will be undertaken.

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

AT50/01 VOLUNTEERS GENERAL

25. A total of 756 community volunteer hours has been undertaken on the site between 04 January and 26 February by the following groups;

- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Assist Trust
- Norwich High School for Girls
- Mousehold Heath Monday and Tuesday Volunteer Groups
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Fringe Project Volunteers
- Easton College Work Placement student
- Crown Commercial corporate group.
- Many individual volunteers from the community

26. 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

27. A cross country run for the Norwich School was arranged through our Events Team. Forty competitors completed the course.

28. A Mousehold warden gave an illustrated talk about the history and biodiversity of Mousehold Heath to a Sprowston community group at St Cuthbert's Church.

Consultation

29. 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.

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

Legal

31. 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

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
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


32. Review of current budget will ensure that there are adequate resources to carry out required work.

Contact officer:

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 <p>IN TRAN communication for all</p>	<p>If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.</p>
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Committee name: Mousehold Heath Conservators

Committee date: 15/03/2024

Report title: Report from the Mousehold Heath Conservators management subgroup

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 the items discussed at the Subgroup meeting on Friday 16 February 2024

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Conservators:

- 1) note the contents of the report and
- 2) agree the following recommendations made by the management subgroup:
 - a. ask the project manager – delivery to:
 - i. Undertake a full survey of the exterior of the building, to assess the conditions of the paint and woodwork; and
 - ii. Ask NCSL to quote for the work with timescales for the start and completion of the work.
 - b. agree to employ Tim Holt-Wilson to undertake the work to collate the information, text and images for the biodiversity trail leaflet.
 - c. agree the use of the Mousehold Heath projects budget to pay for this work.
 - d. ask the Fringe Project officer to obtain a quote from Fish Track to pump out the remaining water and remove the fish when the Vinegar Pond is at its lowest water level during the summer months.

- e. Ask the subgroup to discuss future options for managing the Vinegar Pond for biodiversity and preventing unwanted carp/goldfish from being placed into the pond

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.

Report details

1. 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.
- 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.

Pavilion building – planning-ahead external repainting and decorative repairs

2. Property services raised the issue that the Pavilion Building will require the external woodwork to be repainted in the near future, including any other decorative remedial work on the external features undertaken.
3. The Mousehold Heath Wardens have indicated that the Mousehold Heath Conservators have been building up a reserve of fund to pay for this type of work. The forecast reserve balance to be carried forward to 2024/25 is £41,841.

4. Following contact from Property Services a copy of the lease of the Pavilion with Zak's has been received by the Fringe Project Officer. Property Services indicated that under the lease the city council/Conservators are responsible for the exteriors. Further investigation is required to understand who is responsible for the maintenance of the doors and windows and the extent of this.
5. Property Services have provided the following information:
 - a. The suggestion is that the Pavilion exterior needs to be redecorated every 7 years. The last time this happened was 2014 / 2015.
 - b. A building condition report carried out by NPS in 2018 has suggested that external redecoration would be due in the next 5 years with a budget estimate of £18000.
 - c. Whilst Property Services have not specifically looked at the building with a view to the condition of the external redecoration, it was suspected that to prolong the life of the existing external component of interesting building built in 1901 discussions would need to be started.
 - d. The suggestion of the scope of work to be included is the redecoration of previously decorated surfaces; preparation to include rubbing down whilst being vigilant to look for rot; any rot found should be repaired by methods of either cut-and-splice or resin repair. Painting of timber with two coats of undercoats and one coat high gloss with similar colours as the current building.
 - e. A budget estimate of between £25000 and £30000 (including scaffolding).
6. The Fringe Project officer have confirmed with procurement, and the works could be awarded directly to Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) even if the value of the work is more than £25,000.
7. The recommendations from the Management subgroup are to:
 - a. Ask the project manager – delivery to:
 - i. Undertake a full survey of the exterior of the building, to assess the conditions of the paint and woodwork; and
 - ii. Ask NCSL to quote for the work with timescales for the start and completion of the work.

Biodiversity trail leaflet and next steps

8. The Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail provides a self-guided trail enabling visitors to discover Mousehold Heath's landscape and geological heritage. This was produced by Tim Holt-Wilson in partnership with the Wardens several years ago. The Wardens have printed colour leaflets of the trail. They are given out to visitors and those attending guided walks.
9. This is the Link to the [Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail | Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail | Norwich City Council](#) on the Mousehold Heath website.

10. As part of the Mousehold Heath management plan, and to compliment and build on the Earth Heritage trail, the next stage would be to produce a Biodiversity trail leaflet.
11. This has been discussed at the November and February Subgroup meetings with Tim Holt-Wilson, who produced the Earth Heritage Trail leaflet, attending the November Subgroup Meeting. Tim Holt-Wilson gave a short presentation about the creation of a Biodiversity Trail Leaflet.
12. Norwich City Council communications team, at no cost to the Conservators, can work with Tim Holt-Wilson and design the layout of the leaflet, and create a PDF version. This can be loaded up on to Mousehold Heath Website.
13. Tim Holt-Wilson has provided a quote for the cost of the information and pictures ready for the communications team to design the leaflet.

Quote from Tim Holt-Wilson for collating the information and associated works:

		Cost
Leaflet Authorship	Five days @ £250/day	£1250
Liaison with designer	Two days @ £250/day	£500
Travel to three meetings	48 miles @ £0.045/mile	£64.80
	Total cost:	£1814.80

14. Funding for the printing of approx. 500 to 1,000 colour leaflets will also be required. It was estimated that this would cost approximately £1,000, however a quote for this would still be needed.
15. The Mousehold Heath Wardens have confirmed that cost for Tim Holt-Wilson to collate the information and produce the text for the leaflet could be paid for from the 2024/25 projects budget (cost centre 421020 2832). The printing of the coloured leaflets could be carried out in 2025/26 and paid from the same budget, or in in 2024/25 if there is enough funding available.
16. One of the Wardens would be overseeing this piece of work and working with Tim Holt-Wilson.
17. Recommendations from the management subgroup are that the Conservators:
 - a. Agree to employ Tim Holt-Wilson to undertake the work to collate the information, text and images for the biodiversity trail leaflet; and
 - b. Agree the use of the Mousehold Heath projects budget to pay for this work.

Vinegar Pond – management of the carp/goldfish

18. As previously reported to the Mousehold Heath Conservators the Wardens have been organising the annual removal of the carp/goldfish from Vinegar Pond, using electrolysis. The most recent removal being in February 2024.

19. It has been recommended by Fish Track and the Environment Agency, who have been removing the carp/goldfish with electrolysis, to pump out the Vinegar Pond in the summer. The pond will need to be at its lowest level so to avoid damage to other wildlife.
20. Fish Track and the Environment Agency recommend that this would be most cost effective and the best option for removing the carp/goldfish. As they are having a detrimental impact on the newt and frog lifecycle and their population. It has been estimated that there are still thousands of fish still in the Vinegar Pond.
21. Recommendations from the management subgroup are to:
 - a. Ask the Fringe Project officer to obtain a quote from Fish Track to pump out the remaining water and remove the fish when the Vinegar Pond is at its lowest water level during the summer months.
 - b. Ask the subgroup to discuss future options for managing the Vinegar Pond for biodiversity and preventing unwanted carp/goldfish from being placed into the pond.

Consultation

22. None

Implications

Financial and resources

23. 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 2022-26 and budget
24. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources at this time.

Legal

25. None

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	None
Health, social and economic impact	None
Crime and disorder	None
Children and adults safeguarding	The Wardens follow Norwich City Council's procedures.

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Environmental impact	Vinegar Pond Fish removal The Wardens are working with an approved contractor and the Environment Agency, with all licenses and procedures being put in place

Risk management


Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Financial	N/A	N/A
Operational	N/A	N/A
Legal	N/A	N/A

Contact officer:

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