

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators (Sub Group)
22 January 2016
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Mousehold Heath update

Item

10

Purpose

To provide an update on issues and recent activities at Mousehold Heath

Recommendation

To note current activities that have been undertaken on Mousehold Heath

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate Priority City of character and culture

Financial implications

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

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

Site management

1. A court order eviction notice was issued to the campers who were sited adjacent to Gilman Road. The campers removed themselves before the court order was enforced but unfortunately left a large amount of waste on site. An order for its removal was requested and the council's environmental protection team removed all items and cleansed the site.
2. An oak bollard at the pitch and putt public car park was deliberately pulled up and this was reported to the police as a crime. The bollard was reinstalled with the help of a volunteer.
3. Works were carried out with our conservation contractors to remove vegetation within the heathland restoration areas, humus build up was removed by scraping build in line with our management plan objective, section seven, 7.2. This work was funded under our HLS agreement.

Tree and natural area management

4. A large Beech tree was identified as suffering from a serious fungal disease by the Wardens, who arranged for the council's tree officer to confirm the diagnosis. Following this survey, it was decided to take immediate action on public health and safety grounds and the crown was removed allowing the tree to decay providing a good standing dead wood habitat for insects in line with our management plan objectives, section four, 4.7.
5. The first half year tree survey has been completed identifying twenty four trees in need of works to be carried out over the next one to three months.
6. Due to high winds a number of trees were identified to be cleared and made safe, works included hung up and fallen trees over or adjacent to main public pathways.
7. Unfortunately due to high winds (Barney), the Turners Oak situated in the middle of the public car park in front of the pavilion, suffered damage to a large limb, the tree gang were called out to undertake emergency works to make safe. Fortunately the damage was high up in the crown to the rear when viewed from Gurney Road, so aesthetically it had little impact on the structure of the tree.

Access works

8. To control vehicle encroachment onto Gilman Road Open Space at Hill Farm Track a pathway leading onto the open space was narrowed by TCV volunteers.
9. Works are nearing completion for the installation of the new hard surface cycle route adjacent to the Rangers House.
10. The Mousehold Heath Defenders working party carried out pathway clearance to access route through St. Williams chapel site. This has now improved access for the visiting public to interpret the site more easily.

Promotion

11. A ceremony was organised by the Mousehold Heath Defenders in respect of Armistice day, which was well attended.

Volunteers

12. There have been a total of 1536 volunteer hours worked on the site in the last quarter.

These have been completed by:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Norwich Community Green Gym
- The Assist Trust
- Hartford House Engage Group
- A work placement student
- Volunteers from the community
- Jump Start Project (Dibden Road Hostel residents).

13. These works have significantly contributed to the implementation of objectives set out in the Management Plan, along with increasing community involvement in the many projects being undertaken on the site.

Events

14. A range of events have been organised or hosted on the heath in the last period, these being:

- Fungi walk
- Wild 4 wellies, environmental education activities for children
- A number of Forest School environmental education activities.
- Two Norwich Heart Heritage weekend walks
- Autumn Watch walk