



NORWICH City Council

Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators

Committee Date: 14/03/2025

Report Title: Mousehold Heath Management Update 2 January 2025 to 26 February 2025

Portfolio: Councillor Hampton, Deputy leader: a climate responsive Norwich

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's 2024-29 community-led plan outlines five priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

This report supports the delivery of *A Fairer Norwich* and '*A climate responsive Norwich*'

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. Eight 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 and work placement student.

MC81/01 VIEW FROM MOTTRAM MEMORIAL

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

MP00/01 SITE PRESENCE

3. Mousehold wardens have continued to patrol the heath, focusing on areas with anti-social behaviour issues.
4. The Mousehold wardens have reported two campers who declared themselves homeless. A member of the Pathways Norwich Team will make contact with the campers to organise permanent accommodation.
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 has been cleared.

ME01/02 BOLLARDS

7. Two wooden bollards in the Pitch and Putt public car park, have been re-installed by the Mousehold warden and a work placement student.

ME04/03 FLY TIPPING

8. 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

9. Non offensive graffiti has been removed from the historical interpretation panel and road signs along Gurney Road by our contractor NCSL. These works were completed with no additional costing to us.

ME41/01 MAIN PATHS and ME41/03 CYCLEWAYS

10. Leaf clearing of Valley Drive, Gilman Road and Gurney Road cycleway and footpaths have been swept under the NCSL contract five times this year to keep the surface clear of leaf fall ensuring public health and safety.
11. Encroaching gorse has been cut back from heathland and grassland areas, by volunteers and the Mousehold wardens, to allow easy access across the site.

ME41/04 ACCESS FOR ALL PATHS

12. The 'Access for All' pathway, on St. James Hill, has been cleared of overhanging vegetation to improve access to the public.

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 common gorse and birch saplings 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. Many of the saplings that have been removed from heathland and grassland habitat, using a tree popper tool, have been re-planted.

MH39/01 BRACKEN REMOVAL

17. Invasive bracken has been cut and 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

18. Old and leggy common gorse has been cut and removed to
 - make habitat piles,
 - form heathland and grassland areas to conserve heather, grasses, western gorse and other dwarf shrub species and
 - create fire breaks to reduce fire risk.

MH60/01 VINEGAR POND

19. The pond has been closely monitored after the removal of fish by the draining of the pond and electro fishing. There have been no sightings of any fish remaining after the removal last year.

RF22/02 ST JAMES HILL FLOWER SURVEY

20. 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

21. A total of 419 community volunteer hours has been undertaken on the site between 2nd January and 26th February by the following groups:

- Assist Trust
- Mousehold Heath Monday and Tuesday Volunteer Groups
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- GoodGym Norwich
- Easton College Work Placement student
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Many individual volunteers from the community

22. 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

23. A Mousehold warden led a Common Lot, 'Mousehold to the Marshes' community research guided walk for 50 participants, focusing on the heath's social and landscape history; biodiversity; climate change mitigation, etc. There has been positive feedback from the Director and many of the attendees.

24. The Events Team manager was invited to the subgroup meeting held on Friday 14th February to discuss the use of drones regarding filming applications for the Heath. After much discussion members decided to respect the Byelaws and decline the use of drones for all events applications.

Resolution:

To request that all applications for the use of drones on the Heath are refused by the Events Team.

Consultation

25. 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 Community Led Plan, We Are Norwich, 2024-2029, and its Budget.

1. 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

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

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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

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