



Mousehold Heath Conservators

14:00 to 14:40

21 January 2022

Present: Councillors Maxwell (chair), Sands (M) (vice-chair), Brociek-Coulton, Champion, Kendrick, Lubbock and Sands (S) and Clare Cohen (Mousehold Heath Defenders) and John Trevelyan (Norwich Society)

Apologies: Councillor Galvin and Matthew Davies (Norwich Fringe Project)

1. Public Questions/Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2021.

4. Mousehold Heath Budget Monitoring April to November 2021

(The head of finance, audit and risk attended the meeting for this item.)

The head of finance, audit and risk presented the report. She referred to the forecasted underspend of £1622 and that appendix A highlighted that there were no major variances in the spend compared to the budget for this. Members were also advised that the reserves balance was detailed in Table 1 in the report, and that the pension deficit costs were smoothed over by the in-year cost.

In response to a question the head of finance, audit and risk stated that the year 2022-23 was the final year in which the pension deficit would need to be paid. A member asked whether there was a danger of the reserves being lost and the head of finance, audit and risk clarified that the Mousehold Heath reserves were earmarked reserves specifically to be used for costs related to the Heath.

The parks and open spaces manager highlighted that the current level of reserves was higher than the prudent minimum level of reserves as there were planned works that would initially need to be drawn down from the reserves.

RESOLVED to note the current budget monitoring and reserves positions.

(Councillor Button joined the meeting at this point).

5. Mousehold Heath Conservators Budget and Precept 2022-23

(The head of finance, audit and risk attended the meeting for this item.)

The head of finance, audit and risk presented the report. She highlighted that the proposed budget for 2022-23 was around £10,000 higher due to inflationary costs associated with both staff salary increases and contractual costs. A member asked whether the budget for 2022-23 included inflation costs related to the increasing utility costs and in response the head of finance, audit and risk stated that this had been calculated as part of the budget but that this would be monitored and adjusted as part of the ongoing budget monitoring as there may be further price increases.

In response to a question the head of finance, audit and risk said that there were no amendments to the budget proposed so it would stay at the proposed level.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) Review the forecast balances position as set out in paragraphs 3-4 of the report;
- (2) Consider the risk management arrangements and prudent minimum reserve levels set out in paragraphs 4-9 of the report;
- (3) Review the budget proposals set out in paragraph 10 of the report and approve the budgets in Appendix A to the report;
- (4) Place a precept on Norwich City Council for the relevant amount for the financial year 2022/23 as per paragraph 12.

6. Mousehold Heath Management Update 31 August 2021 to 14 January 2022

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report. He highlighted that the second six monthly tree safety survey had been completed and any specialised tree works had been completed by Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL),.

A licence for a vacant concession at Britannia Road car park and the additional income for this had been reflected in the forecasted outturn for the end of the year. As the management subgroup had met on 9 November 2021 to discuss, amongst other things, the pavilion, a report on the pavilion roof repairs would be brought to the next meeting of the Mousehold Heath Conservators. The parks and open spaces manager would be looking to undertake a survey to understand roof repair estimates alongside the costs for any other planned works. This would inform a report on planned works for the financial year 2022-23 and whether the precept for the financial year 2023-24 would need to be increased to meet costs.

The parks and open spaces manager also highlighted while there were instances of fly tipping and graffiti, which have been removed by the relevant teams, on the Heath this was comparatively low compared to other green spaces within Norwich.

A number of activities to improve the habitats and biodiversity of the Heath had been undertaken with activities for both volunteers and school children starting to increase as the Covid-19 restrictions were beginning to ease.

Finally he had been in contact with NCSL and the company would present an update to the committee at the March meeting. This would allow the company to relay to members any issues, improvements and changes that had happened related to their work on the Heath. This would also tie in with the other services being brought into NCSL in April and they would be able to give an update how the building maintenance and repairs works on the Heath would be incorporated.

In response to a member's question the parks and open spaces manager stated that in terms of treating diseased trees a number of different actions could be taken, depending on the nature of the disease, safety risk and severity of the issue.

Claire Cohen asked the parks and open spaces manager whether the suggestion of painting the band stand had been delayed. In response he stated that an update on this this would be brought to the March meeting.

A member asked whether there was a timeline available for the toilet blocks. In response the parks and open spaces manager stated that this would be dependent on the decision of the Conservators at the March meeting, but he would include a timeline within each option presented. He also clarified that the current total refurbishment option was being costed based on the suggestion of the management subgroup, which was for accessible, gender-neutral toilets.

As a point of clarification, the parks and open spaces manager confirmed that works for the pavilion had not been brought forward from the financial year 2022-23 as the cost of these would put the prudent minimum reserves at risk.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

7. Management Subgroup Membership

The chair introduced the report and stated that the members of the management subgroup for the 2021-22 civic year were appointed at the 23 July 2021 meeting and were Councillors Maxwell (chair), Mike Sands (vice chair), Brociek-Coulton and Champion and Clare Cohen (Mousehold Heath Conservators) and John Trevelyan (The Norwich Society)

RESOLVED to approve the management subgroup appointments.

8. Proposal for a McDonald's on the former Richard Nash car sales site

(The chair agreed to take this item as urgent business)

Clare Cohen stated that she had received a letter concerning a consultation for a proposed McDonald's which would border the Heath. Members discussed their

concerns around the possibility of increased litter and attraction of rats, due to the change of use, on the Heath.

CHAIR