



Committee Name: Mousehold Heath Conservators

Committee Date: 18/03/2022

Report Title: Mousehold Heath management update 15 January 2022 to 28 February 2022

Report from: Head of environment services

Wards: Crome/Catton Grove

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To provide an update on the activities on the Heath relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath management plan objectives between 15 January 2022 to 28 February 2022.

Recommendation:

To note the content of the report.

Policy Framework

The Council has three corporate priorities, which are:

- People living well
- Great neighbourhoods, housing and environment
- Inclusive economy

This report meets the great neighbourhoods, housing and environment corporate priority

The Mousehold Conservators Mousehold Heath management plan 2019-2028 has eight objectives, which 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.

This report meets all the objectives.

Report Details

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

AI30/02 TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

1. As a result of storms Dudley and Eunice 31, windblown trees and a number of fallen branches, identified during patrols and reported by members of the community, had work carried out by the Mousehold wardens to reduce any risk posed to visitors.

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

MC81/01 VIEW FROM MOTTRAM MEMORIAL

2. Encroaching scrub and saplings were cleared to maintain the historic view to the city and conserve unimproved grassland on St James Hill.

ML60/01 NORFOLK CONSTABULARY

3. The Mousehold wardens liaised with police officers regarding anti-social behaviour in the woodland adjacent to Gilman Road.

MP00/01 SITE PRESENCE

4. Three abandoned camping areas were removed, located adjacent to St. James Hill, the Rangers House and the centre of the heath. A camper van driver was also informed of the bylaws preventing camping and overnight stays.

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

ME04/02 LITTER BINS

5. One litter bin on the pathway leading to the pitch and putt course had its outer cover replaced due to fire damage.

ME04/03 FLY TIPPING

6. The NCSL EPA crew removed and disposed of garden waste and building materials flytipped at the pitch and putt car park.

ME12/01 REMOVE GRAFFITI

7. Graffiti was removed from the bandstand and football changing rooms at the Fountain Ground sports.

ME41 PROVIDE/MAINTAIN PATHS

8. Scrub partially blocking the all access path and other paths have been cut back to maintain access to the Mottram Memorial and around St James Hill. The work was done by the wardens assisted by TCV volunteers.

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

MH04/01 GLADE MANAGEMENT, MAINTAIN

9. The glade behind the pavilion had encroaching vegetation cut and raked off to maintain the area as a glade.

MH31/01 SCRUB AND TREE REMOVAL

10. Invasive scrub and birch trees were removed in the heathland area to maintain the important heathland habitat, as required by the Higher Level Stewardship Agreement that contributes funding to the management of the area.
11. Birch saplings were pulled up in open heathland areas using tree poppers by the wardens and volunteers.

MH39/03 COMMON GORSE REMOVAL

12. Invasive common gorse was cut and removed from heathland areas to conserve heather, western gorse and other dwarf shrub species.
13. Fire breaks were also created in large stands of gorse, to reduce fire risk and create a mosaic of vegetation types. These isolated gorse thickets provide ideal bird nesting habitat.

HL40/06 NATURAL ENGLAND HLS AGREEMENT

14. The HLS agreement was due to come to an end and the scheme will be replaced by a new countryside stewardship scheme. The new scheme is not yet open and so Natural England have extended the existing agreement until October 2023.
15. The council sent an expression of interest to Natural England to be involved in a pilot of the new scheme.

Objective H: To promote Mousehold Heath to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and a sense of pride.

MI60/01 EVENTS

16. Enchanted Wood Forest School and Tribe held one environmental play activity each on the heath. The events were managed through Norwich City Council events team. These sessions increase the enjoyment, knowledge and interest of nature and the heath for young people.

RC30/01 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

- 17.25. Local historians, involved with the research and restoration of the World War 2 RAF/USAF air base located at Newman Road, Rackheath, have been researching the use of the heath in war time, supported by a Mousehold warden.

RH31/01 FOREST SCHOOLS

18. A fourth Forest School environmental education activity group has started using the heath, facilitated by the Mousehold wardens and Norwich City Council events team. The new group from 'Action For Children Norfolk ECFS and the City and Eaton Early Childhood and Family Service work alongside Norfolk County Council. They are pleased to have found such a large, accessible natural area in the city for their activities.

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

AT50/01 VOLUNTEERS GENERAL

19. A total of 733 volunteer work hours have been contributed to work on the site in the last period by the following groups:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- The Assist Trust
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
- Crown Commercial Corporate Group
- Good Gym Norwich
- City College student groups
- Norwich High School For Girls
- Many individual volunteers from the community.

20. 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.

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