



MOUSEHOLD HEATH CONSERVATORS

2:05pm to 3:35pm

17 January 2014

Present: **COUNCILLORS BRADFORD (CHAIR), BARKER, MAXWELL, ACKROYD, HENDERSON, PRICE, THOMAS, CHRIS SOUTHGATE, MARGARET BUSH, LENNY STAMP.**

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton and Little

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2014.

3. PUSH THE PEDALWAYS

Ben Webster, design conservation and landscape manager, presented the report, summarising the options and evaluation criteria. He explained that whilst it was not possible to put an exact price on each design or option, firmer costs and designs could be produced once more development and consultation had taken place.

He went on to explain that there were some concerns regarding the left hand turn onto Barrack Street, saying that this felt counter-intuitive and that people may possibly turn right instead and find a way up Gurney Road.

Differences in gradient were discussed and Ben explained that route profiles had been produced to highlight the changes in gradient of each different option, adding that option one would allow for an incline over a relatively short distance.

Discussion took place regarding the use of Gurney Road as part of the route. It was felt that difficulties were likely to arise when trying to separate the footpath into a separate area to allow both bicycles and pedestrians to be able to use the footway. A further concern was that if cycles were heading down

Gurney Road using part of the footway, they were likely to pick up speed causing potential danger to pedestrians.

Margaret Bush that explained her reason for favouring a route involving Gurney Road was to avoid having more cycle tracks across the heath. She did not want further encouragement of cyclists onto the heath and as such voiced her opinion that a route using Beech Drive would be unsuitable.

It was then clarified that Beech Drive was still being used for access to soil storage. Ben Webster pointed out that using beach drive as part of the cycle route would allow access for the soil storage to be improved.

Councillor Maxwell explained that she did not like the Gurney Road option as it offered too much potential for accidents. She also felt that the Beech Drive option would create excellent opportunities for group cycling.

It was explained that a number of possibilities were being examined to incorporate the steps at the junction of Hassett Close and Mousehold Street. Designs had been commissioned offering different options:

- The original steps could be maintained with a ramp added.
- New steps could be constructed with integrated ramps.
- There could be a ramp only.

In response to a members question, Ben said that a little land from the area of Hassett Close upon which two houses had previously been demolished may be used in the construction of a new ramp. The aim, however, would be to use as a little of this land as possible to allow for building of future housing on the site. To this end a ground condition survey has been undertaken to assess the viability of having both the ramp and housing on the site.

Ben Webster explained that design standards used on cycle projects are taken from national guidelines (2008, 2012) although on this occasion it was not felt that the standards were specific enough. As such the planning department had begun working on a set of design standards. A manual was in development to provide proper guidance and standards throughout the city.

Margaret Bush stated that the defenders would be happier with a small encroachment due to expanding the pathway along Gurney Road, than taking the Beech Drive option. She also stated that using the Beech Drive option would necessitate putting in an additional pedestrian crossing along Gurney Road. To her this seemed superfluous as there was already a pedestrian crossing further along Gurney Road. Councillor Maxwell pointed out that people had already been petitioning the council for an additional crossing at Beech Drive across Gurney Road. David Bradford agreed that there was an appetite to pursue a pedestrian crossing at Beach Drive irrespective of the route of the cycle path.

It was agreed that the two options listed in the report would be taken forward for further exploration, subject to suggested additions.

4. BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT APRIL – DECEMBER 2013

Mark Smith presented the report and answered a number of questions from members.

RESOLVED to note the report.

5. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2014-15

Mark Smith presented the report and answered member's questions.

RESOLVED to;

- a) approve the budgets set out in Appendix A of the report; and
- b) To place a precept on Norwich City Council in the amount of £210,947 for the financial year beginning 1st April 2014

6. MOUSEHOLD HEATH QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Bob Cronk presented. In response to a member's question he explained that the use of volunteers meant that the wardens could rely on them as a flexible resource. Once there is an agreed work plan for woodlands management, wardens can carry out some of this work with additional support from volunteers. Lenny stamp pointed out that woodland management work carried a high risk. As such the kind of work volunteers could be involved with would likely be manual handling once tree cutting had taken place. A councillor suggested speaking to Easton College in terms of gaining volunteers. It was noted that these students would have the skills necessary to assist in the woodland management work. Cllr Bradford agreed, suggesting that it would be good to encourage direct links with the college. It was agreed that it would be worthwhile talking to Paul Holly and to bring ideas to the management subgroup meeting.

Bob Cronk went on to explain that signage on the heath would be in a consistent style which would combine elements of work being carried out by David Robertson and the city council's own communications style guide.

7. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2014-15

Lenny stamp presented. He said that the heath wardens had carried out excellent work in clearing fallen branches and trees following the recent storms.

He stated that the softwood posts on the pitch and putt green were to be replaced with oak. This would mean the items could then last 25 to 30 years.

Lenny pointed out that neighbourhood offices would be able to contact the contract officers directly to chase up anything which they felt had not been completed within the contract.

The loan of the Mottram memorial plaque was then discussed. Cllr Bradford explained that he had completed paperwork to allow the item to be tracked and that it was to be loaned to the Norwich Museum at the Bridewell.

Bob Cronk mentioned that Councillor Brociek-Coulton had emailed. She had discussed working with the defenders on the Mousehold fair and requested whether or not the conservators would be able to donate £100. It was agreed that this donation would be made.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED to agree that the next meeting of the Conservators, to be held at City Hall at 2pm will be on 20 June 2014

CHAIR