

MOUSEHOLD HEATH CONSERVATORS

17 SEPTEMBER 2010

ITEM 9A

Notes from Mousehold Heath Working Group

Monday, 2 August 2010

14:00 – 16:00 Wymer Room City Hall

Present:

Cllr David Bradford (Cllr DB)
Cllr Stephen Little (Cllr SL)
Chris Southgate (CS)
Malcolm Bryant (MB)

Bob Clark (BC), Asset & City Management - first part of meeting
Paul Holley (PH)

Apologies

Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton

Pavilion issues

This discussion was confidential, as it involved sensitive information including the proposed lease renewal by Zak's Restaurant.

Changing rooms update

PH reported on recent progress. MB asked whether the new building would arrive as one unit or as a kit, as this could affect site access requirements.

ACTION POINT: PH to consult with Gary Bagge.

Off-road cycling update

PH mentioned a recent altercation involving unauthorised cyclists and two other members of the public. He added that the Mousehold Heath Wardens were continuing to enforce the bye-laws against both unauthorised BMX and motorcycle riders, with the co-operation of the Neighbourhood Wardens and the police, which was having some deterrent effect. The production of a report on managing off-road cycling from the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) was eagerly awaited.

Work programme and itinerant

These items were combined at the request of PH, who advised that potential dates for a re-arranged itinerant would shortly be sent out to all Conservators.

PH briefly outlined some recent management proposals, including the use of modern 'cut and collect' machinery on the heathland areas, which was being actively pursued by the Mousehold Wardens.

ACTION POINT: PH to check with Andy Emms if the forthcoming 'purdah' period before the local council elections would influence the itinerant date.

MB asked if 'The Desert' grassland area was in the new contract, as if it was not the contractor who had been proposed to carry out the heathland area cutting work could also mow this area.

ACTION POINT: PH to follow up.

Any other business

1. PH drew attention to a recent complaint by a Mr Tarver, a resident of Gertrude Road who had reported that there had been a landslip of material from Mousehold Heath into his garden. Nigel Hales had visited Mr Tarver and obtained photographs, copies of which were shown to the meeting by PH. Nigel had also contacted Norwich City Council's Legal section for advice, and a response was awaited.

It was agreed to await the view of the council's legal section and to include the issue on the forthcoming itinerant before taking any further action on this matter.

2. CS drew member's attention to the forthcoming NHAC visit to Gurney Road on 24 September. He asked if an information pack could be prepared for the benefit of the attendees; this could include the map produced by Nigel Hales.

ACTION POINT: PH to discuss with Simon Meek.

Contact Officer: Paul Holley, Natural Areas Officer

**MOUSEHOLD HEATH CONSERVATORS
17 SEPTEMBER 2010
ITEM 9B**

**Mousehold Heath Conservators
Itinerant Meeting Notes
Wednesday 1 September 2010 – 10am**

Present: Cllr D Bradford (Chair)

Cllr S Little
Mr M Bryant
Mr D Cannon
Mr M Davies
Mr C Southgate

Nigel Hales
Paul Holley
William Stewart

1. Heathland management

The main heathland areas in Compartments A, B and C (Map 2, Mousehold Heath Management Plan) were visited and forthcoming management for the autumn/winter 2010/11 was discussed. The conservation and improvement in quality of the existing heathland areas was agreed to be the priority. Works proposed and agreed included further removal of encroaching scrub, especially birch the cutting of old 'leggy' gorse and the selective removal of scrub and small trees to maintain connectivity between existing heathland areas.

Concerns were raised about the prevalence of bracken, although the recent efforts by volunteers to control it were noted. Approval was given for four days use of a 'cut and collect' tractor operated mower; the work would be undertaken in November, and would include both cutting and removal of dead bracken to limit soil nutrient enrichment, and the cutting of gorse to create a more varied age structure, as specified in the management plan. On site disposal of cuttings (at carefully selected areas away from the heathland areas) would be undertaken and would result in cost and contractor time savings that would allow larger areas to be cut. The heather regeneration on previously scraped areas was noted, and approval was given for further limited areas to be scraped.

Approval was given for the purchase of a chainsaw and kit, to be operated by William Stewart which would allow management work to be undertaken more efficiently.

ACTION POINT: WS and PH to follow up.

2. Vinegar Pond

The future of the Vinegar Pond was discussed. Water was present in the pond, and MB felt that the low water table had prevented the pond from filling previously. WS said that the pond's profile had been detrimentally altered by the work in 2009 to remove the invasive reed sweet-grass. Cllr SL expressed some concerns that the work had gone ahead despite warnings of possible damage to the pond's lining, and he felt that there was a duty of care to retain the Vinegar Pond, and that relining should be considered. CS agreed that there was strong public sentiment towards the pond.

The possibility of a new pond near the Pavilion was discussed; Cllr DB said that the pros and cons of digging a new pond versus the cost of refurbishing the Vinegar Pond would need to be decided.

3. GNDP heathland project

WS, NH and PH provided an update on the GNDP (Greater Norwich Development Partnership) project. This would involve the creation of a demonstration heathland area on the school playing field on Heartsease Lane (adjacent to Mousehold Heath and the pitch and putt course), combined with the creation of a heathland corridor linking with the existing 'Pilot Project' heathland area. The Mousehold Heath part of the proposal would involve the expansion of the Pilot Project area, and would involve the removal of scrub and some young trees; the work would be entirely funded by the GNDP. The Conservators gave their approval for the work, subject to re-affirmation at the full Conservators meeting on 17 September 2010.

ACTION POINT: WS and PH to consult with Helen Lambert (GNDP) regarding this project.

4. Fountain Ground changing room replacement

The Conservators visited the Fountain Ground, where the current two options for replacing the existing building were discussed. NH had marked out the 'footprint' of the display building alternative to the Football Foundation (FF) approved building; the former was of similar size to the existing structure. The two options were discussed, and although no final decision was made the consensus seemed to be that the FF building was still the preferred option.