

Report to	Mousehold Heath Conservators 18 January 2019	Item
Report of	Head of citywide services	9
Subject	Mousehold Heath quarterly management update 10 September 2018 to 7 January 2019	

Purpose

To provide a quarterly update for the period 10 September 2018 to 7 January 2019 reporting on activities relating to Mousehold Heath which contribute to the delivery of the management plan objectives.

Recommendation

To note the content of the report.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a safe, clean and low carbon city.

Financial implications

Any financial implications arising from this report will be met from approved budgetary provision.

Ward/s: Crome

Cabinet member: Councillor Packer – Health and wellbeing

Contact officer

Simon Meek, parks and open spaces manager 01603 212403

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Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. The report details the work, activities and issues arising on and relating to Mousehold Heath.

Infrastructure management

2. Eighteen wooden bollards around the perimeter of the public car park at Britannia Road have been re installed and ten new ones renewed due to damage and decay protecting the heath from vehicle encroachment.
3. New 'no parking signs' were installed on all gates and barriers across the site including the fire lane leading up to the pavilion.
4. Maintenance works were carried out to remove a build-up of leaves and moss accumulated on the tiles on both public toilets roofs adjacent to the pavilion, gutters were also cleared of debris by the Mousehold wardens.
5. A cycle stand at the car park adjacent to the pitch and putt course needed a repair to make it secure after the theft of a cycle.
6. Maintenance works to reinstall wooden way marker posts and replacement of broken perspex disks was undertaken to improve the interpretation of the nature trail.
7. A bench at the Mottram memorial was repaired due to one of the wooden rails coming loose.
8. The tenants at the pavilion contacted the council about a leaking roof at the pavilion and other matters relating to landlord/tenant lease obligations. A meeting was held and interim measures agreed with emergency repairs to the roof to be undertaken. The tenant is to send through a list of what they feel is urgent, non-urgent and desirable and a future meeting arranged to discuss these further.
9. The leaking roof required emergency repairs to prevent further water entering the building and disruption to the tenant's business.
10. The management subgroup met on 18 December to discuss further the landlord obligations relating to urgent repairs required to the pavilion gutters and the roof at a cost of £3440. The subgroup agreed with the need to progress the works. As the need to order the works was urgent, approval was given to order them by the Director of neighbourhoods, in consultation with the chair and vice-chair under delegated powers.
11. Condition surveys of the public toilet block and the pavilion were commissioned and received from NPSN.

Tree safety

12. A six monthly tree safety inspection survey was undertaken by the wardens identifying 25 trees requiring work to reduce risk to visitors. The tree works were completed by the Mousehold wardens with the help of volunteers.
13. A further 11 windblown, dead, dying or dangerous trees/branches close to roads, car parks, cycle routes and paths have also been removed by the Mousehold wardens.
14. Two large windblown trees blocking paths in the Long Valley have been removed by NorwichNorse Environmental.

Management for nature

15. A range of habitat and site management tasks have been carried out by the Mousehold wardens, volunteers and contractors, to help deliver the management plan objectives relating to habitats in the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement priorities relating to heathland. These have included cutting/pulling invasive bracken and burnt gorse and brush cutting/raking grassland areas.

Heathland and Grassland management

16. The process of clearing burnt vegetation, such as the large gorse area adjacent to the Vinegar Pond and central parts of the heath have now been completed thanks to the support of volunteers and RBS and Aviva corporate groups. Follow up works to remove the humus layer of decaying vegetation will be undertaken throughout the winter period helping to mitigate any fire risk in future years, in line with the management plan objective, project ref code MH35/01.
17. Encroaching scrub and saplings have been cut and cleared from St James Hill, conserving acid grassland habitats and the historic view of Norwich.
18. Encroaching scrub, such as bracken and bramble, has been cleared from heathland areas, in line with objectives set out in the Mousehold Heath Higher Level Stewardship Agreement.
19. Grasslands and woodland glades have been cut, raked and arisings removed as part of their annual management cycle. Removing this dead/old vegetation allows a diversity of flowering plants to bloom in the spring
20. A number of plant, bee and butterfly surveys have been undertaken by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders and the Mousehold wardens.

Pathway/cycleway maintenance.

21. The disabled access pathway at St. James Hill has been encroached upon by vegetation impeding access; this has now been cut back by the Mousehold wardens, with the help of individual volunteers and volunteer groups, to maintain access to the site.
22. Maintenance work has been carried out on the Cavalry Track by TCV and Mousketeer volunteers.

23. The verges along Gurney Road, Heartsease Lane, Britannia Road and Gilman Road were flailed to maintain open access.
24. The sweeping of Gilman Road has now been resolved; due to this being overlooked, a build-up of detritus is still in need of being removed and will be addressed by future on going sweeping.

Litter management

25. A number of areas formerly used for camping have been cleared and rubbish removed by the wardens with assistance from the NorwichNorse Environmental litter picker, as part of his daily work.
26. Fly tipping has been removed by Norwich Norse Environmental and the Mousehold wardens. There was insufficient evidence in the fly tipping for any follow up action to be taken.
27. A member of the Mousehold Defenders carried out weekly litter picks.

Misuse and antisocial behaviour

28. A number of vehicles were found parked and occupied overnight in Britannia Road car park. These were vans and lorries customised for living. They were challenged by the wardens and notified that no overnight parking was allowed and they were in breach of the bye-laws protecting the heath. They moved on shortly after.

Volunteers

29. A total of 1290 volunteer work hours have been undertaken on site in the last quarter by the following groups:
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
 - The Assist Trust.
 - Mousehold Heath Defenders
 - Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
 - City College Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme group
 - Norwich High School for Girls
 - RBS and Aviva Corporate groups.
 - Many volunteers from the community
30. Ongoing support provided by the volunteer groups 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.

Events (number attending in brackets)

31. The Mousehold Heath Wardens attended the Open Academy Environment Day promoting the heath and networking with new contacts and professional conservation organisations, who were interested in the management of the heath, (70+).

32. Two Heritage Open Day walks took place - one about St Williams Chapel and Ketts Rebellion and the other about the sites fascinating geodiversity, (43).
33. The annual Fungi Foray took place in October, recording a number of new species for the site, (28).
34. A Community Wildlife Workshop, introducing the winter birds of Mousehold Heath and Norwich, took place on 10 December. The day started in the class room at the changing rooms on the Fountain Ground and followed by a guided walk, (8).
35. An Armistice Day ceremony, organised by the Mousehold Heath Defenders, took place at the Airmen's memorial plaque, (12).
36. Volunteer Christmas meals took place at Zaks and the Britannia Café, to thank all the volunteers, who gave many hours of their time and worked so hard, to help maintain and improve Mousehold Heath for people and wildlife in 2018. The thank you events are greatly appreciated by those who attend. (60).