

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
21 June 2019
Report of Parks and open spaces manager
Subject Four Urban Commons: Conference and workshop 9 July
2019, Brighton

Item

10

Purpose

To inform the Mousehold Heath Conservators of an approach by Brighton University requesting attendance of the chair, vice-chair, parks and open spaces manager and warden at the conference.

Recommendation

To:

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) agree that the chair, vice-chair, Mousehold warden and parks an open spaces manager attend on behalf of the Mousehold Heath Conservators; and
- 3) agree the payment of out of pocket expenses relating to attendance will be paid in accordance with the Council's subsistence rates.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority great neighbourhoods, housing and environment.

Financial implications

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

Ward/s: Catton Grove and Crome

Contact officer

Simon Meek, parks and open spaces manager

01603 212403

Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. On 12 April 2019 Dr Alessandro Zambelli from Brighton University contacted Cllr Maxwell as the chair of Mousehold Heath Conservators with regards to a research project investigating the 'past, present and future of English urban commons'.
2. Dr Zambelli explained that the research is looking into areas of open space which are or were commons and which have a close relationship to urban centres with their associated and unique pressures (and pleasures).
3. Dr Zambelli's research is based on the need for them to be understood and managed in particular and sensitive ways. The research is interested in how a deep understanding of the historical and archaeological past of 'urban commons' can help and inform the custodians, stakeholders and users of their present and their future.
4. 4 'commons' have been selected as case studies; Mousehold Heath being one of them, along with Newcastle Town Moor, Valley Gardens in Brighton which was once, but is no longer, officially a common and Clifton Down in Bristol
5. It has been pointed out to Dr Zambelli that Mousehold Heath is not a registered 'common'. Mousehold Heath has been selected as the work is also looking is also interested in urban open spaces which were common land or even those which have common-like qualities.
6. A conference and workshop has been organised for 9 July in Brighton. As the custodians of Mousehold Heath a request has been received for representatives to attend the conference and workshop. There is a particular interest in hearing about the views and experiences of managing the heath and to hear how the 'exemplary management plan' was developed.

Four Urban Commons: Conference and workshop 9 July 2019, Brighton

7. The format for the conference is as follows:

Four Urban Commons: Methodologies for Engagement

12.00 Pre-Introductions and Lunch

12:30 Introductions

Alessandro Zambelli (for host institution and as WP3 Co-Investigator)
Chris Rodgers (Project Introduction)

12:45 Common Conversations (reps from each common in conversation)

- Town Moor and Mousehold Heath (30mins)
(with Chris Rodgers and Rachel Hammersley)
- Valley Gardens and Clifton Down (30mins)
(with John Clark and Alessandro Zambelli)

2:00 Common Talk (chair Emma Cheatle) (30mins)
• All commons representatives

2.45 Talking Engagement (chair Alessandro Zambelli) (20mins)
• Nick Gant (Community 21)
• Duncan MacKay (Natural England) (20mins)
• Nicola Hodgson (Open Spaces Society) (20mins)

4.00 Making Engagement (Parallel workshops with coffee/tea): (45mins)
• Group 1 TBC
• Group 2 TBC
• Group 3 TBC

4.45 Re-talking Engagement
Report back with 'common methods'
(co-chaired by all Wastes and Strays Investigators and Post-docs)

5.30 Close

8. The attendance of the chair and vice-chair of the Mouseshold Heath Conservators acting as ambassadors for the heath, would provide a perspective from the 'custodians' of the heath to be expressed. The parks and open spaces manager would be able to share experience from a strategic and planning perspective and a Mousehold warden will be able to share operational experiences. All will present different perspectives and experiences.
9. Attendance at the conference will result in Mousehold Heath being discussed and more people becoming aware of the heath and the work of the conservators. It will also support a large piece of research work, recognising the value and importance of such spaces; and will have its profile raised through the publication of the research project findings.
10. The work will also be valuable professional development for the Mousehold warden and the Parks and open spaces manager.
11. Dr Zambelli has agreed the attendance of the four representatives would be beneficial.
12. The research project will cover the costs of travel and accommodation. It will not cover meals outside of the conference programme and these would be paid in accordance with the council's subsistence rates.