

<b>Report to</b>	Mousehold Heath Conservators 17 January 2020	<b>Item</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Parks and open spaces manager	<b>7</b>
<b>Subject</b>	Mousehold Heath quarterly management update 30 August 2019 – 17 January 2020	

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## **Purpose**

To provide a quarterly update on activities on Mousehold Heath relating to the delivery of the management plan objectives.

## **Recommendation**

To note the content of the report.

## **Mousehold Heath management plan objectives**

The report helps to meet the Mousehold Heath management plan objective A) To ensure Mousehold is a welcoming place for people to visit.

## **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
Will Stewart, Mousehold Heath warden	01603 213310
Nigel Hales, Mousehold Heath warden	01603 213310

## **Background documents**

None

## Background

1. The report details the work, activities and issues arising and relating to the delivery of the Mousehold Heath management plan objectives.
2. The objectives 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.

## Report

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

AI30/02: TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

1. The second six monthly tree safety survey was completed by the wardens and identified nineteen dead, dying, dangerous and/or windblown trees and branches requiring work to manage tree safety risk. Works were completed and trees made safe within three months by the Mousehold wardens.
2. In addition to the tree survey, work to manage tree safety risk on twelve more windblown and dead trees and branches, identified by the wardens on patrol or members of the community, adjacent to main pathways, was completed.

AT40/01: CONTRACT MONITORING/IMPROVEMENT NORWICH NORSE ENVIRONMENTAL (NNE)

3. Gilman Road, Mousehold Avenue and Valley Drive footpath-cycle routes had large build-ups of leaf litter which was reported to NNE and the Area Management Officer for the eastern area because of concern for a risk to the health and safety of the public.
4. The areas will be closely monitored by the wardens to ensure there is an improvement in the future.

5. A request was received from an interested party requesting permission to locate a mobile catering unit at Britannia Road car park to serve hot and cold drinks. The matter was discussed at the management sub-group and the sub-group considered that the retailer's environmental credentials should be further explored.
6. The decision as to whether to require environmental credentials for mobile concessions on the heath will need to be made in order to respond to this application and any future ones. To enable Conservators to make a decision a report will be brought to the March Conservators meeting. The impact of any decision to apply environmental standards to concessions would also have to be considered in relation to the existing concession licence holder.

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

**ME01/02: BOLLARDS**

7. Fifteen new wooden bollards were installed around the perimeter of Britannia Road car park, replacing missing and damaged ones to ensure the security of the site.

**ME02/01: BENCH AND SEAT PROVISION**

8. A request was received from Norwich Labour Group to sponsor a bench in recognition of former Norwich City Council councillor David Bradford's service both as a councillor and a Mousehold Heath Conservator. A seat was purchased and installed by the Mousehold wardens and a seat dedication ceremony took place at the Fountain Ground, Gurney Road on Monday 28 October at 11.00am.

**ME04/02: LITTER BINS**

9. Graffiti was removed from two litter bins; one at the Pitch and Putt car park and the other adjacent to the ice cream van concession, this fell within the terms of the maintenance contract provided by Norwich Norse Environmental Services.

**ME04/03: FLY TIPPING**

10. Food waste, mostly cooked meat was found at Hill Farm Track car park, the area is now being monitored closely and any items found are being removed and disposed of through our contractor Norwich Norse Environmental Services.

**ME12/01: REMOVE GRAFFITI**

11. On two separate occasions Graffiti had to be removed from the Historical interpretation panel (adjacent to the ice cream concession) on Gurney Road.
12. The graffiti was reported using the council's online reporting system and removed the next day, the police were also informed.

**ME41/01: MAIN PATHS and ME41/03: CYCLEWAYS**

13. The issue of leaf fall build-up at Gilman Road, Mousehold Avenue and Valley drive main pathways and cycle routes is now resolved and the pathways and cycle routes are being swept regularly.

14. Over 10 paths have been maintained by cutting back encroaching vegetation by the Mousehold wardens and volunteers.

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

MH39/01: BRACKEN REMOVAL

15. Large areas of bracken were cut, pulled, raked and removed from heathland, grassland and woodland glade habitats by volunteers and the wardens. This summer task is crucial to ensure conservation of nectar rich heather species and to comply with the Mousehold Heath High Level Stewardship Agreement.

RA44/01: MOTH TRAPPING SURVEY

16. The last of the moth survey evenings lead by the wardens took place on 12 September 2019. The evening was attended by 7 members of the community increasing understanding, involvement and enjoyment of the site.

RA82/01: ST JAMES' HILL BUMBLEBEE SURVEY

17. Monthly Bumblebee Conservation Trust surveys were undertaken by the wardens with the help of a member of the Mousehold Heath Defenders.

RF22/02: MUSTARD GLADE SURVEY

18. Monthly wild flower surveys were carried out by members of the Mousehold Heath Defenders recording the number of flower species.

RF22/03: ST JAMES' HILL SURVEY

19. A warden and a member of the Mousehold Heath Defenders carried out monthly flower surveys identifying record numbers of flower species.

**Objective F: To safeguard the historic landscape, archaeological features and buildings of Mousehold Heath.**

MC03/01: ST WILIAM'S CHAPEL - VEGETATION REMOVAL

20. Invasive bracken and bramble have been cut and removed from chapel paths, banks and viewpoints by The Conservation Volunteers and the Mousehold wardens in preparation for Heritage Open Day Walks and to enable the chapel to be visible from the chapel interpretation board.

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

AT50/01: VOLUNTEERS GENERAL

21. A large total of 1928 volunteer work hours have been contributed to work on the site in the last quarter by the following groups:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- The Assist Trust

- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
- Natwest, RBS and Aviva Corporate Groups
- Good Gym Norwich
- Norwich High School For Girls
- George White School students
- Many individual volunteers from the community.

22. Volunteering 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.

23. Christmas volunteer thank you meals for over 50 volunteers were held at Zaks restaurant, to mark and thank everyone for their time and effort in helping to improve the site for people and wildlife in 2019.

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

MI60/01: EVENTS

24. A range of events to increase understanding, involvement and enjoyment of the site were organised or hosted on the heath in the last quarter:

- Five environmental education activities organised by Norwich City Council events team and run by ROOTS were held to encourage children and adults to reconnect with the natural world through play and outdoor experiences. The activities included, birthday parties (including woodland adventure), stay and play sessions, adult fitness and wellbeing, children's clubs, spoon carving and yoga.
- Forest schools from Mousehold Avenue Infant School run one session a week (depending on the weather), with approximately 15-20 pupils taking part in each session.
- 77 George White School children helped conserve woodland glade biodiversity, by working with a Mousehold warden to remove encroaching scrub and using the material to build a dead hedge between the school's nature area and Silver Road. The hedge also provides important dead wood habitat, along with nesting areas and hibernacula's for wildlife.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Wildlife Workshop took place on Friday 6 December, covering an 'Introduction to Winter Birds', led by a local expert and Mousehold warden. Eight members of the community enjoyed the day, viewing many species of bird including a brief glimpse of a Peregrine Falcon from St James Hill.
- A fungi foray walk was led by Norfolk's County Fungi Recorder, Dr Tony Leech and a Mousehold warden, on Tuesday 15 October. Heavy rain a few weeks before the event resulted in a large number of Fungi being present. A record 63 species were recorded, with 17 species new to the site list, which now

stands at an incredible 314 species. Star of the show was a tiny bonnet on conifer needles found and identified by Norfolk expert Yvonne Mynett as Purple Edge Bonnet *Mycena purpureofusca* which had not previously been recorded from Norfolk and indeed is only common in Scotland. As usual the event was well attended and attracted over 25 members of the public.

- A guided walk of the site for Respect4Us participants was organised and led by a Mousehold warden.
- The final public moth survey evening took place for this year, on 12 September, led by the Mousehold wardens. The evening was attended by 7 members of the public, increasing understanding, involvement and enjoyment of the site.
- An Armistice Day service was organised by the Mousehold Heath Defenders on Monday 11 November 2019. Held at the Airmen's Memorial, Gurney Road, to remember those who gave their lives, especially in recognition of the 5 airmen who were killed there during World War 2.

Plt.Off. Colin Barton RNZAF  
Flt.Sgt. James Lemon RCAF  
Flt.Sgt. Robert Kater RCAF  
Sgt. Donald Carpenter RAFVR  
Sgt. Ernest Nightingale DFM RAFVR

- Two Heritage weekend walks were organised, one covering the local history of the heath including the story of St. William and Kett's Rebellion. The other a guided tour of the geodiversity walk, around the Earth Heritage Trail. Both walks were fully booked, with 45 people in attendance over the two days. The walks were led by local experts and a Mousehold warden.
- The Mousehold wardens worked with Norfolk's County Council Adult Learning Officers to discuss ways in which the heath could be used to improve people's well-being. A trial 'Well-being walk – Healthy Habits for your Head' was jointly led by an Adult Learning Officer and Mousehold warden. The walk was a success with twelve people in attendance and fortnightly Well-being walks are in place from Monday afternoons until mid-March.
- The Mousehold wardens liaised with Fringe Project Officers to conserve and improve adjacent habitat and prevent non-native invasive Laurel from spreading onto to the heath from surrounding land.
- Norwich Orienteering Club were given permission from the Conservators to hold an orienteering event. It started from the Wingfield Open Space with varying courses marked out and varying levels of difficulty to accommodate differing abilities of competitors. There were a total of 82 competitors who completed the course on the day.