

Notes from Mousehold Heath Working Group

Weds 9 October 2013

10:00 – 11:15 Mancroft Room City Hall

Present:

Cllr Bradford (DB)	Chairman
Cllr Barker (KB)	(substituting for Cllr Brociek-Coulton)
Margaret Bush (MB)	The Mousehold Heath Defenders
Nigel Hales (NH)	Mousehold Heath Warden
Lenny Stamp (LS)	Neighbourhood and community manager
Bob Cronk (BC)	Head of neighbourhood services
Andy Futter (AF)	Committee Officer

1. Notes from itinerant meeting – 5 August 2013

High level stewardship (HLS)

LS explained that the itinerant meeting had helped expand knowledge of HLS. Attendees had examined the area near the pitch and putt and that between Nigel and Will, LS felt excellent restoration work had taken place.

NH explained that the HLS work would include the removal of trees and careful management of heathland. He said that trees would be felled, the wood removed from site and the stumps ground. He had explored the cost of purchasing a stump grinder but at £7.5K - £8K to buy it was considered too expensive. Although the cost of contractors also proved not to be cheap (£350-£400 per day) the most economical route considered was to have the team in to do the work of both felling trees and grinding stumps at the same time. As per the HLS agreement, the area in which trees were to be felled was marked on the map and the team would be working carefully within that.

NH went on to explain that this work was to develop more heathland as heath currently accounts for only 10% of Mousehold heath. This significant reduction in heathland was due to invasive trees. NH also explained that in future, humus stripping would take place to remove the high level of nutrients thus making the soil more acidic to encourage heathland plants such as heathers and gorse.

NH said that work would be taking place over the course of the week commencing 21 October and that signage would be going out next week. The wardens had already had lots of engagement with members of the public and residents to explain what would be happening.

BC suggested that the wardens discuss the upcoming work to the communications team at the city council. This would make them aware in advance of any questions

which be received from the press or the public. DB offered to provide a quote regarding the work to be included in any potential press release.

St. William's chapel management and interpretation board location

LS explained that the option of having two signs produced for interpretation regarding St Williams Chapel. The wording was yes to be decided, but LS said that David Robson from the archaeology unit was putting together text for the chapel sign interpretation. This should be ready around Christmas for the conservators to view and consider.

NH explained that he had been gathering quotes in regards to the signs. One plinth would be in the region of £1300. He explained that a donation of £500 had been received from the defenders to part fund the sign to be placed on the chapel site. There were plans for a second sign in the car park to encourage people towards the site of the chapel. He reiterated that the draft of the signs would be approved by conservators.

NH explained that there was potential for spreading the cost of the two signs across two separate years of the works programme. He stated that he was happy to negotiate this with Signs Express Ltd (preferred supplier for the signs).

BC said that the city council communications team would need to be involved to discuss the style of the signs. This would be bought to a subgroup meeting to then discuss further.

Action points

NH to discuss signage with Communications team and progress designs and a Mousehold "style."

2. Pavilion works – verbal update

The meeting notes from the itinerant meeting in August were reviewed. NPS Norwich Ltd. had indicated that the roofing costs would be in the region of £18K and the external decoration £3K. The city council finance team had indicated that the costs of the roofing could be covered by the capital budget, but not the decoration.

NPS Norwich were continuing discussions regarding the renewal of the lease and this also included discussions regarding the renovation work to the toilets.

Some sketch drawings of the proposals for the toilet renovation had been prepared and it was recommended that the agents attend a conservator's sub group meeting in the autumn to discuss these further.

ACTION POINTS:

LS to arrange a meeting of the management sub group for November involving NPS Norwich and the lessee's agent.

3. Officer update on recent major work and any issues

NH said that work with volunteers on the heath had gone well, explaining that certain areas had been strimmed, pathways opened up and trees made safe. He also said that work had been carried out on Hill Farm track at the suggestion of the police who were concerned about car crime. The clearing that police had suggested had now taken place and it was felt that a reduction in car crime and more and a greater sense of security were the result of this work.

NH went on to say that surveys had taken place successfully on the heath. He said that the final guided walk also took place on the 17 October and that all guided walks had been well attended this year. The play day had also proven very successful alongside the band stand concert.

LS spoke about emergency planning that would take place for dry, hot seasons following discussions with the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and Norfolk Constabulary during the summer. This would be explored early next year via a problem solving briefing to look at ways to eliminate fires on the heath. There was potential for discussion with local schools including talks on dangers of fire on the heath.

ACTION POINT:

LS to bring the fire risk and emergency plan to a future meeting of the management sub group.

4. Work that needs to be slipped to cover revenue costs at Zaks

BC explained that the decoration of the pavilion had not been budgeted for this year. Officers would look at what could be slipped from the work program to cover these costs.

LS then suggested that a program of regular decoration for the pavilion and other assets should be considered to avoid large, costly, intermittent re-decorations.

Action

LS and NH to bring proposals for budget slippage to the November meeting of the management sub group.

5. Agenda for the conservators meeting on 18 October 2013

Agenda items for the meeting on 18 October were highlighted. This included a report on the the new cycle route. A site visit to the heath has been suggested by officers in November to look at the plans for the new route in situ and seek Conservators approval where this is required.. Members were very much in favour of the site visit to have the new cycle route explained to them in detail.

The chair requested as much info prior to the cycle meeting from the officer leading on this proejct.

ACTION POINT:

AF to arrange a site visit and tie in with the management sub group meeting to discuss the Pavilion subject to discussions at the Conservators meeting on the 18 October.