



Mousehold Heath Conservators

Annual report summary 2020-21

Chair's welcome

The last year has been a very different one for so many of us and the heath has also seen some major changes.

Visitor numbers increased significantly during the lockdown periods, and it continues to be very well used as a community sanctuary for wellbeing, fitness and meeting friends and family outside.

Although volunteer engagement activities were unable to go ahead throughout much of the year, the wardens continued to carry out essential ecological surveys, tree maintenance work as well as restoration and improvement projects.

This couldn't be done without the input, passion and dedication from The Mousehold Heath Defenders, The Norwich Society, Norwich Fringe Project, and Norwich City Council.

I'm so pleased to reprise my role as chair of this wonderful group and introduce the work that's taken place, as well as looking ahead at what the next year will bring.

This will be my final year as a member of the group as I'll be retiring in 2022, but I am very much looking forward to working with our partners and all the amazing volunteers to protect and enhance such an important green space in our fine city this coming year.

I also wanted to use this opportunity to say thank you to councillor Ben Price who has been vice-chair of the conservators for nine years, and welcome councillor Mike Sands to the position for 2021-22.

I really hope you find this summary a useful and enjoyable read.



Marion F. Maxwell

Members of the Mousehold Heath Conservators 2020-21

Councillor Ben Price (Vice Chair)
Clare Cohen (Mousehold Heath Defenders)
Matthew Davies (Norwich Fringe Project)
John Trevelyan (The Norwich Society)
Councillor Julie Brociek-Coulton
Councillor Sally Button

Councillor Paul Kendrick
Councillor Judith Lubbock
Councillor Jamie Osborn
Councillor Mike Sands
Councillor Sue Sands

Cover photo: TCV volunteers pulling and clearing invasive bracken on a heathland area.

Management of the heath

The management plan for 2019-28 sets out the eight overarching objectives for the heath so we can make sure we're working to achieve what's really needed.

The objectives are:

- To ensure Mousehold Heath is a welcoming place for people to visit.
- To protect Mousehold Heath and ensure that it is a safe and secure place to visit.
- To ensure that Mousehold Heath is clean and well maintained.
- To manage Mousehold Heath in a way that has a positive impact on the environment.

- To improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife to enhance the biodiversity of Mousehold Heath.
- To safeguard the historic landscape, archaeological features and buildings of Mousehold Heath.
- To provide opportunities for local communities to be involved in in all aspect of our work.
- To promote Mousehold Heath to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and a sense of pride.

You can read the full management plan on the city council website at www.norwich.gov.uk/aboutmouseholdheath



Mousehold Mousketeer's removing invasive bracken from the heathland

A nature reserve and much more

Mousehold Heath is a mosaic of habitats including mature woodland, specimen trees, acid grassland, heathland, scrub, and aquatic environments which provide a range of conditions suitable for a variety of plant and animal species, including some which are nationally in decline. The heath is classed as a Local Nature Reserve and County Wildlife Site.

Alongside the environmental importance of the site, it's a valuable rural space in a city location. It's where people can walk, exercise, learn about nature and history, attend an event, or just unwind from the pace of city life.

Mousehold Heath is used frequently for dog walking and other informal recreation such as running or jogging, ball games and picnics.

The bandstand is used for occasional concerts and events organised by Norwich City Council, Mousehold Conservators and Mousehold Defenders.

The heath is a place for everyone and has many facilities available to use across the large site – we help look after and enhance these so people can make the most of their visit.

We're pleased that the refreshment facilities such as Zaks restaurant and the regular ice cream van, that is close to the Fountain Ground sports pitch, remain in place and are able to trade again following COVID19 closures.

Facilities

You can find details of the facilities on the council website www.norwich.gov.uk/aboutmouholdheath



Mousehold Mousketeer's litter picking

Community

The local community is at the heart of everything we do, and we love people getting involved to help us manage the heath. This year people gave 923 hours of their time to volunteering on the heath.

Residents can help in a variety of different ways including taking part in ecological surveys, collecting litter, carrying out practical tasks with our Mousehold wardens, as well as acting as our eyes and ears and reporting any concerns to us so we can resolve them.

The wardens also work with local schools running educational programmes and assisting students with college placements and providing them with practical work experience. Norwich High School For Girls and City College students have undertaken their volunteer work hours, carrying out a number of site management tasks including heathland management, ecological surveys and maintaining the calvary track.

The annual guided walks programme and many other walks had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, five were able to take place with GoodGym and City College participants and included a practical task.

Wildlife surveys have continued to take place in the past year to assess what bird, insect, and bat species (amongst others) inhabit the land. These surveys are carried out by our wardens alongside local community groups, students, and resident volunteers.

A couple of the highlights include several scarce and threatened bee and wasp species and during the butterfly survey a Small Copper and Green Hairstreak

were recorded. There was also a variety of moth species recorded, such as True Lover's Knott, Heath Rustic, and beautiful Yellow Underwing, which are associated with heathland habitats.

Habitat improvements carried out during 2020-21 involved the removal of encroaching trees, gorse, and scrub from existing heathland areas. These works were undertaken by volunteers and contractors alongside the wardens.

As well as individual local community volunteers this year we've also worked with:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- The Assist Trust
- Mousehold Heath Defenders
- Mousehold Heath Mousketeers
- Natwest, RBS and Aviva Corporate Groups
- GoodGym Norwich
- Norwich High School for Girls
- City College DofE group
- George White School students

For information on how to get involved visit www.norwich.gov.uk/volunteer



GoodGym Norwich volunteers clearing invasive bracken

Exploring the past and future of urban commons

We've been busy taking part in the Wastes and Strays project, which is exploring the past, present and future of English urban commons and is being carried out by a team of universities across the UK.

Mousehold Heath is one of only four commons being researched in depth for the project. Back in 2019, members of the conservators and one of our wardens attended a conference Brighton. It was here they shared the cultural heritage, history, and biodiversity of the heath as well as detailing community contributions.

The Urban Commons Futures is the third phase of the project, celebrating the rich social, cultural, and ecological value of the urban common. In collaboration with the universities, the plan is to explore and record experiences of urban commons and to co-create visions for their possible futures which will involve working closely with the community in a creative dialogue around how they use the heath and alternative futures for urban commons in general.

The stories, traditions and unique habitats will culminate in the production of a series of exhibitions, performances, and artworks.



Brown Argus butterfly

Protecting our trees

The heath has lots of trees of different ages and health and inspecting and working on them to ensure they are safe is an important part of our work. In September 2020 and March 2021 tree surveys were carried out that identified 76 trees that required work – mainly due to the high winds in 2020.

Turners Oak, located in the car park on Gurney Road, gave cause for some concern as it seemed to be struggling. Work was done to reduce vehicle impact on the root system and aerate the soil in the root zone. We're pleased to report that since the work, the tree's condition seems to have significantly improved.



A fallen tree blocking a well-used path that was moved and the area made safe and accessible by the wardens

Useful information

Bench sponsorship

Please contact us using the details below.

www.norwich.gov.uk/contactus
or **0344 980 3333**.

Events

If you would like to organise an event on the heath go to www.norwich.gov.uk/spaceforhire

Football

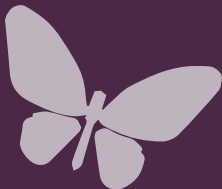
There is a full sized football pitch available to book with changing facilities, showers and toilets at the Fountain Ground Sports Pitch on Gurney Road.

You can book via Norwich City Services Ltd by contacting them on **01603 987922** or ncslsportsbookings@norwich.gov.uk

Green Flag Award

The heath proudly retained its Green Flag Award this year, after first receiving it in July 2020.

Find out more about the scheme at www.greenflagaward.org



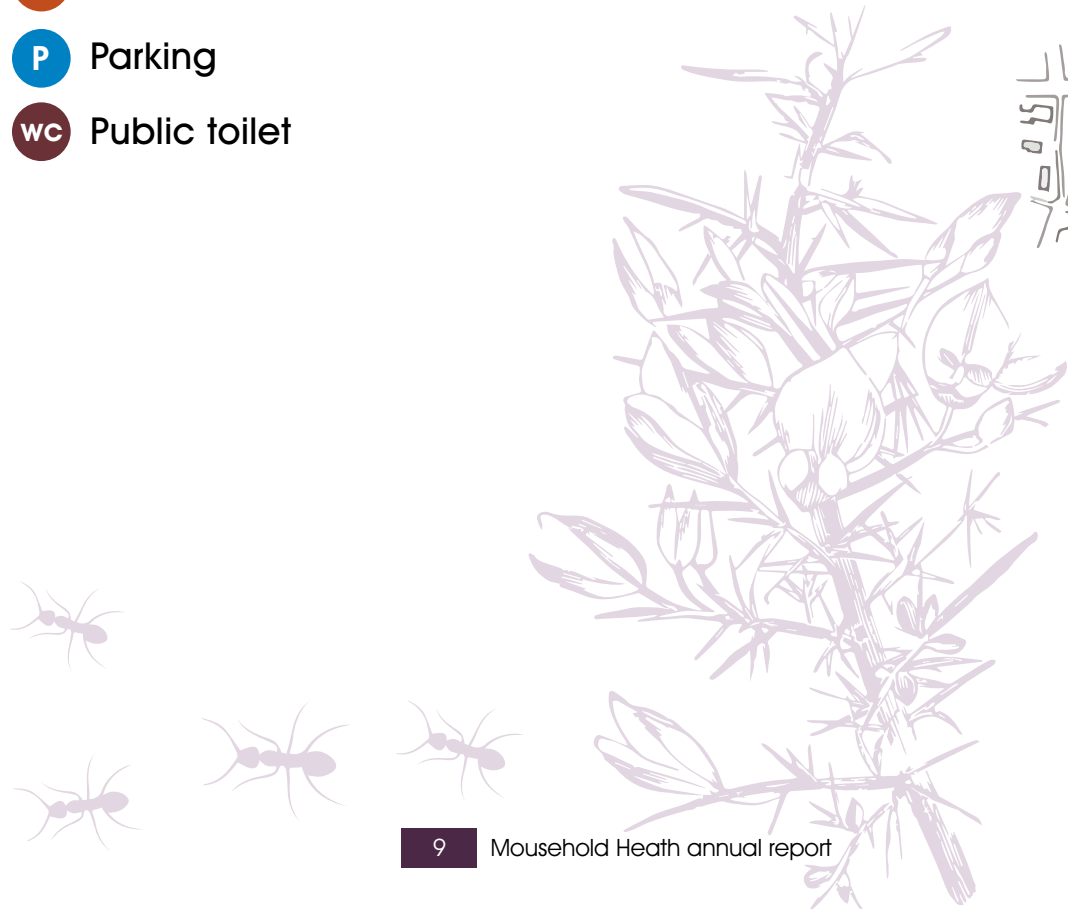
Litter and fly-tipping removed by wardens and volunteers between Gurney Road and Mousehold Avenue



DofE students helping to maintain paths and areas in the wildflower meadow

Site map

- 1 Gilman Road open space
- 2 Desert conservation area
- 3 Hawthorne Glade
- 4 Vinegar Pond
- 5 Wingfield open space
- 6 St Williams Chapel
- 7 Round Hill
- 8 Pavillion
- 9 Ant hills
- 10 Airmen's memorial plaque
- 11 Fountain sports ground
- 12 Bandstand
- 13 St James Hill
- 14 Mottram Memorial
- P Parking
- wc Public toilet





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