

Kett's Heights: Management Plan 2024-2029



**Prepared by
the Friends of Kett's Heights
and Norwich City Council
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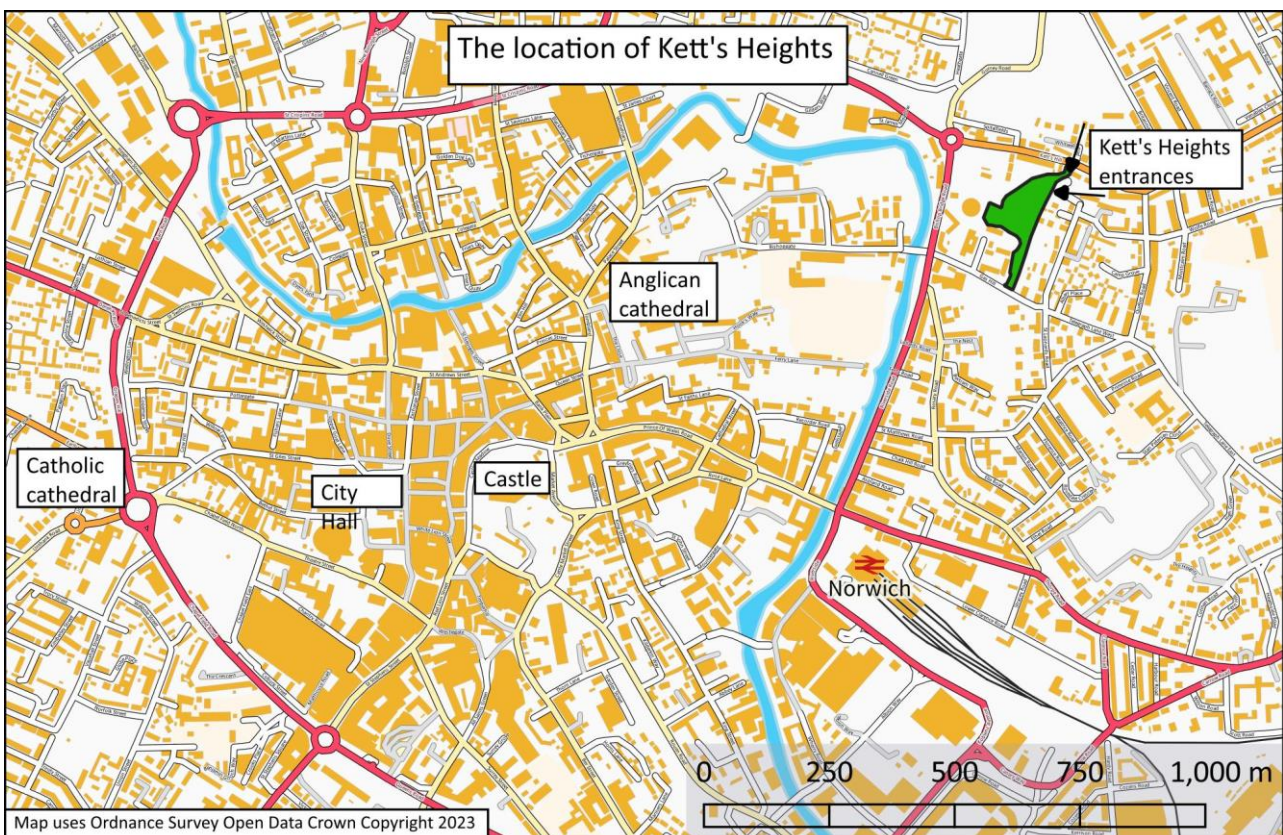
Introduction

This Management Plan describes how Kett's Heights will be managed in a partnership between Norwich City Council (NCC) and the Friends of Kett's Heights (FKH) over the period 2024 to 2029. It replaces a first Management Plan agreed in 2018, and follows significant improvements to the site, culminating in a major project by NCC to create an additional, step-free, access, due for completion in early 2024. This development provides the springboard for consideration of further improvements to the site in the years ahead.

The structure of the Plan has been guided by the advice in the Green Flag guidelines, but the intention is to produce a document that will serve as a guide to all those involved with the management of the site and its future development.

Kett's Heights is a site rich in history, from the building of a Norman chapel overlooking the cathedral through Kett's Rebellion in 1549 to major landscaping work by the gasworks owners in the 19th century. It also provides one of the best views over Norwich city centre and is an important community facility for local residents in Thorpe Hamlet and Crome Wards, with recent residential development nearby and adjacent land zoned for further development.

This Plan is a working document that will be reviewed annually by NCC and FKH.





Part 1: The site and its managers

1.1 The Kett's Heights site

1.1.1 Site description

Kett's Heights is located to the east of Norwich city centre (see location and site plans on previous pages). The site is 1.7 hectares, (4.2 acres) in size and is owned by Norwich City Council. It is a public open space on a steep hillside with terraced gardens that contain the remains of a medieval chapel. It is one of the three designated strategic viewpoints overlooking the city centre.

The site is open to the public at all times. Currently the site is accessible via a stepped path from Kett's Hill (grid reference TG 2430 0915) and a new step-free access from Ladbrooke Place (grid reference TG 2427 0912), which also provides restricted access for maintenance vehicles. There are numerous paths running around the site in variable condition. Some are tarmacked or brick-paved; others are not surfaced.

1.1.2 Topography and hydrology

This site has very steep gradients. This is in part linked to the natural topography, but also because of quarrying of the southern slopes for flint and chalk in medieval times, followed by the creation of 19th century garden terraces.

There is no surface water apart from a small man-made pond on the west of the main entrance from Kett's Hill. The soil is free-draining, slightly acidic and loamy.

1.1.3 Habitats

Woodland

The woodland contains mainly Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Willow (*Salix fragilis*) and Elm (*Ulmus*). Dominant plants to be found in this part of the wood include: Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), and Nettles (*Urtica dioica*). The site also includes several individual tree species which are semi-mature to mature in age. Species of significance include oak and beech, and there are also mixed woodland habitats.

Wildflower meadow

This is found mainly on the upper grassland, consisting of grass and a mixture of Ox Eye daisies and clover.

Orchard

There are fruit trees in the areas shown on the plan as orchard, terrace and chapel terrace. Recent plantings have been of local heritage varieties of apple, cherry, pear and plum.

Scrubland

This includes bramble and Alexander plants, among other wild plants that are very attractive to a wide range of butterflies and moths.

Grassland interspersed with cow-parsley

This covers most of the areas on either side of the entrance path from Kett's Hill. These areas have been planted out with various spring-flowering bulbs, mostly native species including crocus and snowdrops.

Pond (aquatic)

The pond is an important habitat for invertebrates and amphibians. It is also a watering point for birds and small mammals.

Planted garden areas

Recent developments have been of gravel, herb and sensory gardens.

Fauna on this site include muntjac deer, rabbits, grey squirrels, and many garden bird species such as sparrows, robins, tits, finches, and wood pigeons.

1.1.4 Main fixed assets

These include entrance gates, terrace walls, boundary walls, the ruins of St Michael's Chapel, footpaths and flint walls. Amenity items include benches, picnic tables, information boards, litter bins, signage and a large beacon.

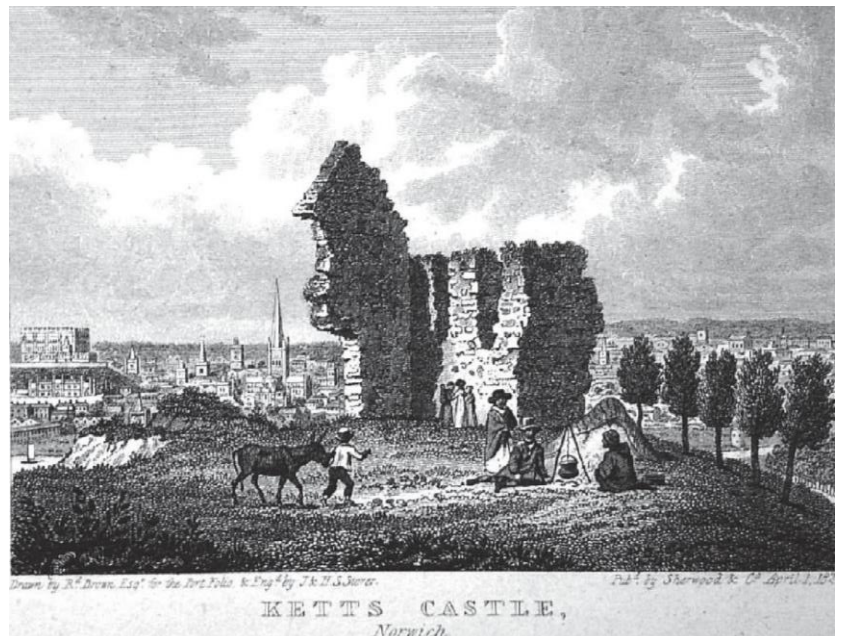
1.1.5 History of Kett's Heights up to 2015

Kett's Heights was originally part of Mousehold Heath, a vast open heathland on the north-east side of the city. The site takes its name from an important historic event, as it is from here that Robert Kett and his 10,000 followers besieged Norwich in 1549.

St Michael's Chapel was built around 1100 to replace a church in Tombland demolished in connection with the building of the cathedral, and with St Leonard's Priory nearby. It ceased to be a chapel after the Reformation and the building was used as Kett's headquarters. After the rebellion the chapel ruins became known as Kett's Castle and were a popular subject with artists in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In 1801 the part of Mousehold Heath in Thorpe parish was inclosed, and the public ceased to have access to it. In 1830 a gasworks was established at the foot of St Leonard's Hill (later Gas Hill). Part of what is now Kett's Heights was included in the land purchased by the gas

company (and the remainder purchased later), but its terrain was considered 'unsuitable for gasworks', as shown on the site map of the period. Instead, this part of the gasworks' land was transformed into terraced woodland garden. A network of terraces and paths was



developed on the hillside using a combination of materials including bricks and the linings of the coke ovens. Workers from the noisy and smelly gasworks could escape up here for fresh air using the zig-zag path that still leads up from what is now William Kett Close. Two greenhouses were established by the chapel remains, and were heated by boilers fed by gas from the works. Food has played a part in the history of Kett's Heights. In both world wars workers cultivated allotments on the site. There were also piggeries for many years, the last pigs departing when the gasworks stopped production in the 1960s.

For the next few years the site fell upon hard times. The terraces were no longer maintained and natural woodland habitat had begun to take over. At one time, before the trees blocked the view of the western side of the city, Kett's Heights would have provided one of the best panoramic views of the city.

In 1977 the area was acquired by an anonymous donor and given to Norwich City Council, with the initial title of Jubilee Heights. After considerable discussion and an extensive programme of works, the site was officially opened in the late 1980s as a public open space with a new name: Kett's Heights. There was an intention that a volunteer group would undertake regular maintenance but this did not happen, and for the next 25 years there was regular grass-cutting and bin-emptying and occasional clearances, but nothing on a scale to prevent the site becoming generally overgrown and acquiring an appearance of neglect. During winter, when there was no grass-cutting, the only visits from anyone connected with management might well have been a brief fortnightly visit from the person emptying the bins.

In 2015 local residents were encouraged by NCC to form a community group for the benefit of the site. Subsequent actions are described in Part 2.

1.2 Norwich City Council

1.2.1 Corporate aims

As site owner and the local authority at district level for the area this Management Plan supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2026, which has the following aims:

People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city

High quality well designed and maintained parks and open spaces contribute to people feeling safe and reduce anti-social behaviour and crime. Parks and open spaces make a significant contribution to physical and mental health from the provision of sporting activities through to walking and relaxing in a clean and pleasant environment.

Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city

Kett's Heights provides access to nature and delivering the actions set out in this plan will be key in protecting and enhancing the environment and biodiversity.

Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city

Essential to achieving this will be to ensure that Kett's Heights is managed effectively, and that funding is sustainable to enable good quality services meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.

An inclusive economy

Residents have equal opportunity to flourish. High quality open spaces contribute to a vibrant economy attracting businesses, investment and skilled people to the city. Conversely, low-quality parks and open spaces have a detrimental effect on the local economy.

1.2.2 Other links (see also Appendix 2)

This management plan links to and contributes to a wide range of other policies and strategies including:

- Parks and Open Spaces Regeneration Strategy [This strategy is currently being drafted. This sets out the path to greater financial security and sustainable funding for all our parks and open spaces. It will also be a key document in prioritising staff resources and provide a vision for those delivering it. This is due for completion in late Spring 2024]
- The Local Development Plan
- Neighbourhood strategy
- Housing strategy
- Environmental strategy
- Biodiversity strategy
- Tree strategy
- River Wensum strategy
- Sports strategies including the Greater Norwich sports and physical activities strategy, the local Football facilities plan and playing pitch strategy
- Strategies and policies relating to health, healthy living, and well-being.
- The Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The draft Greater Norwich Local Plan

This is expected to be adopted as formal planning policy in 2024, containing a continuation of existing allocation for residential development of the brownfield sites along Bishop Bridge Road on the western boundary of Kett's Heights, from Kett's Hill down to and including the gas compressor station adjacent to the flats in William Kett Close.

Following representations by the Friends, the draft plan includes a requirement in policy R14/R15 that development should provide access to Kett's Heights. This additional access will only happen if there is development of the site, but in recent years the gasholder has been demolished and the site infilled, and an adjacent part of the site put up for sale for residential development. Development may therefore take place within the timescale of the Management Plan. If provided, this new access would have the potential to provide a shorter link between Kett's Heights and Bishop Bridge Road (bus stops and route into the city centre) than the proposed reopened access via William Kett Close (see objective A10).

In the current Local Plan:

- Policy No. DM3 deals with the protection of the views from a strategic viewpoint.
- Policy no. DM6: Woodland is protected from development which would result in significant and demonstrable harm.
- Policy No. DM8: Kett's Heights is Open Space: Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space. This has historic importance as identified by the town and gardens survey.
- Policy No. DM9: Conservation Areas: The site is within the Thorpe Hamlet Conservation Area. It is also a Historic Park that does not currently appear on English Heritage's register of historic parks and gardens. (Locally identified heritage asset under policy DM9.) Trees within the site are protected, so proposed works may require planning approval.
- Policy No. DM11: HSE Sites (Notifiable hazardous installation). The gas holder site adjacent is an HSE site. Consultation with the Health and Safety Executive is required for development within specific distances from the installation.

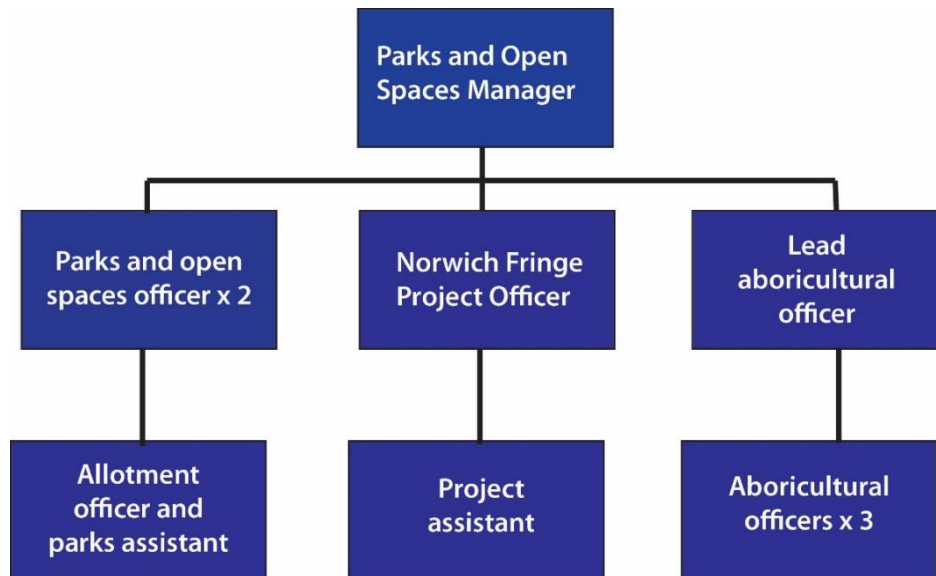
1.2.3 Council finance

Norwich City Council's budget process is designed to ensure resource allocation aligns with council priorities as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2022-26. (To protect and invest in our parks, green spaces, and biodiversity.)

Kett's Heights does not have its own revenue budget, but forms part of the overall budget for all Parks and Open Spaces. The financial situation currently being faced by all local authorities means that the service is constantly having to identify savings. Until now this has been possible by looking at different ways of doing things, more efficient ways of working or absorbing work from posts that have been cut at the council, generating indirect savings. Reducing costs and maximising income are ongoing priorities. However, the council is still committed to investing in its assets. In October 2023, the council commenced major works to improve access to Kett's Heights, funded with £312,000 from the Greater Norwich Growth Board.

Kett's Heights is one of many parks and open spaces owned by Norwich City Council and managed by its Parks and Open Spaces Team in partnership with a Friends Group or

voluntary organisation. Day-to-day management of many of these open spaces falls to Norwich City Council. Park maintenance is contracted to the in-house company Norwich City Services Ltd.



Norwich City Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team, organisational structure

Parks and Open Spaces Manager

- strategic planning
- managing stakeholder relationships
- approving projects. financial management
- managing the Parks and Open Spaces team

Reports to the Head of Service for Development and City Services and plays an important role in identifying projects.

Norwich Fringe Project Officer and Assistant

Monitors and maintains a wide range of natural and semi-natural green spaces in Norwich including Bluebell Wood, Lion Wood and Kett's Heights. Supports work in other natural and semi-natural areas as negotiated.

The Parks team also pulls in expertise across and beyond NCC, including landscape architects, surveyors, planners, events managers, conservation officers, health and safety experts, community enabling, police and County Council officers.

Norwich City Services Ltd

Responsible for the maintenance of the hard and soft landscape areas of the site, services, buildings maintenance, cleaning, and routine inspections under the direction of Norwich City Council.

1.2.4 Managing the environmental impact

This section looks at how management of Kett's Heights addresses the impact of climate change. Norwich City Council's document, Environmental Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy also influences management of the site.

Trees provide shade, help lower temperatures and capture carbon. Any new trees planted at Kett's Heights will be chosen with local biodiversity in mind.

NCC does not buy peat or plants grown in peat. Composts are bought from local suppliers. Compost is used in beds managed by the Friends and elsewhere.

NCSL is moving to using battery-operated leaf blowers, hedge cutters, strimmers and ride-on mowers. As equipment fails it will be replaced with electric equivalents.

NCC includes sustainable practice in its procurement criteria and requires contractors/suppliers to assess their environmental impact. NCC prioritises working with local companies.

NCC has safe working procedures in place to ensure all pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers are properly applied and their use minimised. These procedures ensure relevant legislation is followed and that records are properly kept and maintained. NCC aims to minimise the use of chemical products and actively seeks alternative approaches where possible. Should there be no alternative to chemical usage then products are selected from an approved list, preventing the use of environmentally unfriendly products.

Chemicals currently used in the park are Glyphosate (Trustee 450) and chikara which is a pre-emergence treatment and should stop weeds from growing for up to 5 months. Use of chemicals is limited through practices such as using mulching to suppress weed growth and ensuring turf is well drained to avoid moss growth.

NCC is currently auditing existing chemical use to reduce and ultimately cease the application of chemical-based herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides for all grounds maintenance activities.

1.2.5 Tree management

Norwich City Council tree management policy is to deal only with dead, diseased and dangerous trees. Regular inspection work and action is covered in Part 2. Any other tree management work not within the City Council's maintenance or work plan will need external funding. Kett's Heights is located within the Thorpe Hamlet Conservation Area, any tree work must have approval from Norwich City Council's Tree Officers. Works to trees where birds and/or bats are known to (or are likely to) nest/roost are avoided during the bird nesting season (usually March to August) and/or the advice of a bat specialist is obtained.

1.2.6 Works to heritage features

The City Council's Design & Conservation team should be consulted on any proposed works to heritage features as the whole space is considered a non-designated heritage asset within a Conservation Area.

1.2.7 Pest control

Rats and other pests are monitored, and outbreaks controlled only as and when necessary. Over the past eight years no action has been necessary.

1.2.8 Physical constraints

Several constraints exist on the site: heritage, the presence of gas pipes and the steep terrain.

Kett's Heights may have areas that could be of archaeological importance. This should be taken into consideration when carrying out any ground disturbance work.

There are two existing gas pipes running through the site, one which is active and one which is understood to be obsolete and runs on the surface below the slope. These should be considered when choosing fire sites, digging into the ground or felling trees.

The western side of the site has steep-sided slopes which may require specialist contractors using ropes for working directly on the slope. Any work on the slopes should be risk assessed before being attempted.

1.3 The Friends of Kett's Heights

The Friends of Kett's Heights was set up in 2015 to restore the historic site for the local community and visitors to Norwich. Its aims are to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, and to encourage public use of Kett's Heights. The Friends of Kett's Heights was granted charitable status in 2019 (registered charity number 1191607). It is a voluntary group with over 100 members, governed by a committee elected annually by and from the members. It produces an annual review and accounts and sends monthly newsletters to members.

More information about the Friends and its publications and activities can be found on the Group's website (see Appendix 2).

Part 2: Where are we now?

In developing objectives for the future we identified four themes: accessibility and enjoyment, biodiversity, community engagement and heritage. These headings are used throughout this Part and the next Part to report on recent developments, current activities and future plans.

2.1 Developments since 2015

2.1.1 Accessibility and enjoyment

FKH volunteers started undertaking regular practical work in early 2016. They had some early assistance with major clearance from community payback participants, and have had occasional assistance from Norwich Fringe Project volunteers, notably with scrub clearance of areas so that fruit trees could be planted, and with construction of a replacement fence adjoining the path on the north side of the upper grassland.

FKH volunteers commenced by undertaking clearance work on, and adjacent to, the paths on site, many of which had become overgrown. They also undertook work on management of smaller trees and removal of ivy, with some more substantial tree work undertaken by NCC and its agents.

In particular the spectacular view across the city had become largely obscured by trees. An early priority was initial clearance to restore the view, with subsequent work to remove trees lower down the slope to improve the view still further.

Later work undertook minor repairs to the path surfaces and the walls alongside. Many of the areas adjoining the paths were cleared and planted, including an area planted as a gravel garden. The pond was cleared, and more recently repaired, after which it held water rather better.

The sites of the two former greenhouses by the chapel were cleared and excavated. In the eastern site a herb garden was created, together with seating built into a wall using old gasworks bricks found on site. In the western site (see cover photograph) a new brick path has been laid, a sensory garden created and a bench installed (a memorial donation from a member) with the boundary hedge kept low so that the view can be enjoyed from this upper viewpoint.

The railings at the viewpoint and alongside paths and steps were renovated and repainted by the Friends in 2016 and again by the Friends working with Aviva volunteers in 2023.

A replacement notice board has been attached to the external wall by the entrance on Kett's Hill together with an FKH information board with notices about events and volunteering opportunities. The information board at the lower grassland has been replaced with up-to-date information, and that at the viewpoint, which had been removed, replaced with a panorama.

Two picnic tables have been provided by FKH and a new bench constructed at the lower viewpoint using recycled materials found on site.

Financial support for these activities has been provided by grants from NCC, National Grid Community Fund and from FKH's own resources, with donations of equipment and plants made by individuals and provision from the Outdoor Projects Network, which brings bodies such as FKH together under the auspices of NCC's Community Engagement team.

In total more than 8000 hours of volunteer time have been recorded by FKH members since 2015, and the site has been transformed through having people there most days taking an interest in its condition.

A major project initiated by NCC, using Community Infrastructure Levy funding from the Greater Norwich Growth Board, commenced construction in October 2023 and is due for completion in March 2024. It will create a step-free access, suitable for maintenance vehicles, from Ladbroke Place (off St Leonards Road), and will also refurbish the existing entrance path, constructed in the 1980s. This furthers an objective in the first Management Plan.

2.1.2 Biodiversity

Fruit tree saplings have been planted including numerous different local varieties of apple and plum. Older fruit trees have been given restorative pruning to extend their productive lives. The site enjoys a splendid display of blossom from early March through to May, principally of the fruit trees, but also hawthorn.

The tree work referred to above has resulted in many areas becoming lighter and encouraging more plants to grow.

Thousands of spring flowering bulbs (mostly native varieties) have been planted along the entrance path and on clumps on the lower grassland. These are mainly snowdrops but also a path of mixed crocus.

Prior to planting of the former greenhouse site as a sensory garden, annual wildflower seeds were sown, and performed (and continue to perform) well.

In conjunction with the NCC project referred to above FKH has financed the provision of a mains water supply in the site. It is envisaged that this can be used both for topping up the pond if needed and also for providing water when undertaking planting.

2.1.3 Community engagement

FKH has run free public tours since its formation. These are now run monthly from April to October, with the September event part of Heritage Open Days. Some tours have a particular theme such as Kett's Rebellion. Other tours are run from time to time for particular groups, and assistance has been given to school visits.

FKH volunteers are drawn from a wide area, and have from time been joined by students and people with special needs and their carers.

The publication of C J Sansom's Shardlake novel *Tombland* in 2018 brought Kett's rebellion, and the key role Kett's Heights placed in it, to a much wider audience. The Friends prepared, with the Norwich Society and assistance from Mr Sansom, a Shardlake Trail, and local tour guide Paul Dickson leads regular tours bringing people on a walk from the Maids Head hotel to the site and back for tea (see Appendix 2).

The lower grassland has been found to be a good natural amphitheatre, hosting events including:

- 1549 Kett's Rebellion. A musical presented by 'The Common Lot'
- 2018 At the Turning of the Tide, presented by 'Crude Apache'

FKH has received awards. These include:

- Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (2018). This was a highly commended group award for our commitment to improving and caring for a city centre oasis
- Design & Craftsmanship Award (2019). Commendation in recognition of the high standard of design and craftsmanship
- Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (2021). 'Digging Deep award'. For work undertaken to enhance biodiversity and improve accessibility, joint winners with Wild Ken Hill (a major rewilding project in north Norfolk).

2.1.4 Heritage

The heritage structures on the site range from the ruins of a 12th-century chapel through to 19th century walls reflecting the industrial history of the area in their construction using materials from the gasworks. Over the course of 2022 FKH volunteers were trained in the use of lime mortar mix in preparation for repair and renovation of the boundary and terrace wall, using funding supplied by NCC from the Greater Norwich Growth Board project. Having completed this, work has now started on renovating the flint walls of the chapel ruins.

Many materials left around the site from past demolition have been recovered and reused.

The publications by the Friends, in addition to the Shardlake Trail referred to above, include guides to the medieval churches that can be seen from the viewpoint.

2.2 Current day-to-day activities

Kett's Heights is managed in a collaborative relationship between the Friends of Kett's Heights and Norwich City Council. In brief, the responsibilities of the two parties are as follows:

Friends of Kett's Heights responsibilities

- Follow agreed management plan objectives and review work plan annually
- Inform Norwich City Council if repairs or maintenance are needed
- Maintain water supply in accordance with health and safety standards
- Pay water charges to Anglian Water as required
- Inform Norwich City Council and police of ASB and vandalism
- Inform Norwich City Council of rough sleeping.

Norwich City Council responsibilities

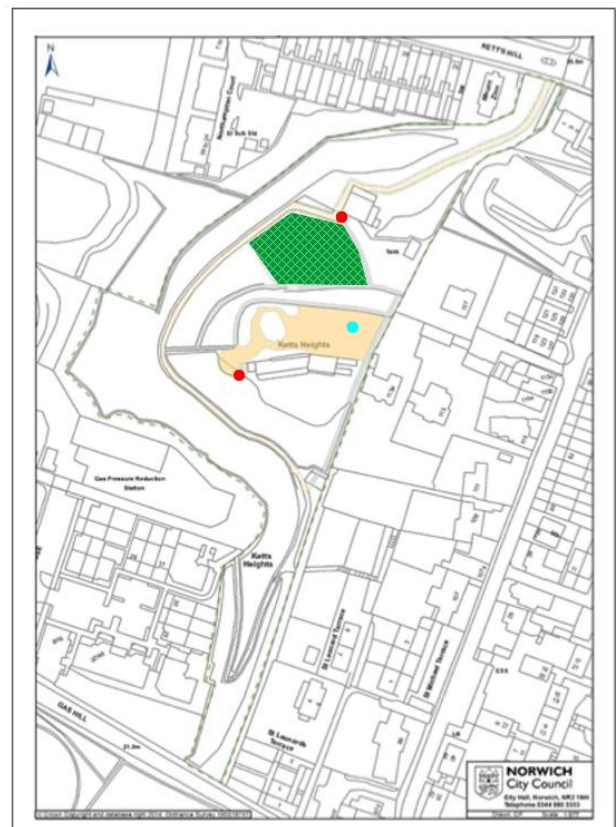
- Honour grounds maintenance contracts, including mains water supply
- Ensure that the Friends of Kett's Heights are kept informed and consulted over developments including future bids for funding
- Respond promptly to reports from the Friends of Kett's Heights on requirements for repairs/maintenance; ASB/vandalism; rough sleeping

2.2.1 Accessibility and enjoyment

Kett's Heights is under a ground maintenance contract managed by City Wide Services and delivered by Norwich City Services Ltd (NCSL). The map below outlines what work is undertaken on Kett's Heights under the Grounds Maintenance contract.

Key

- The brown coloured area is a conservation Cut 1 Spring.
- Maintain grass as follows. Cut 4 times between Weeks 26 - 42, approximately every 4 weeks. Height of first cut: 50mm, height of 3 subsequent cuts: 75 - 100mm. All arisings to be removed.
- The green hatched area is a vegetation cut, which should be done approximately every 4 weeks.
- The paths coloured in grey have a hard surface sweep monthly.
- The path coloured in beige have a twice yearly weed control.
- The red dots are two litter bins.
- The blue dot indicates a monthly litter pick.



In practice the Friends have reached an informal agreement with Norwich Fringe to rope off certain areas on the Upper Green to allow the grass (and hopefully wildflowers) to grow, with just one cut in August/September, after which the Friends rake off the arisings.

Dealing with accidents

Site users can report accidents or incidents using 101 or 999 or direct to park and city council staff. Hazards are isolated within 24 hours of notification to Parks and Open Spaces staff followed up by an investigation and review of any accident or incident. These are reviewed by the Parks Manager to agree necessary action and forward to the health and safety team for record. A RIDDOR report is submitted to the HSE for serious accidents. In the time the FKH have been in existence no serious accidents have taken place.

Dogs and dog owners

Kett's Heights welcomes responsible dog owners and their dogs. Dog mess can be disposed of in all general litter bins. Dog fouling is not a problem in this location.

Litter

A litter-picking rota was set up by FKH which operates every day during the summer months and alternate days during the winter. NCC empties the bins each week. The pathways are swept clean of leaf-litter once a week.

2.2.2 Biodiversity

FKH volunteers have a weekly practical work session undertaking whatever gardening work is needed at the time. Leaves are raked up by volunteers and composted on site with other waste plants. The aim with horticultural and arboricultural work is to maximise reuse of waste materials/by-products, where possible, onsite. Cuttings from shrub and hedge maintenance are composted on site and left to rot down.

Norwich City Council tree management policy is to deal only with dead, diseased and dangerous trees. FKH volunteers alert the City Council if any issues arise.

2.2.3 Community engagement

FKH engages with the local community in several ways: direct involvement with our volunteers; free monthly guided tours from April to October; monthly members' newsletters and website; and formal engagement via an annual general meeting, to which all are invited.

Volunteers also regularly liaise with visitors when on site.

2.2.4 Heritage

Old brick and other materials originally from the former gasworks are gathered up on site by FKH volunteers and used to repair the walls and for hard landscaping projects, such as path repair work and border, seating and new wall creations.

The wall repair work referred to in 2.1.4 above is a continuing project.

2.3 Analysis and development of the vision and objectives

To inform the development of future aims and objectives, we conducted a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the present position.

2.3.1 Accessibility and enjoyment

Strengths: step-free access and vehicle access for maintenance

Weaknesses: only accessible from one end of the site; narrow paths and steps; no accessibility audit to date, thus inadequate understanding of problems and issues; inadequate signage

Opportunities: improvements to path surfaces; reopened southern access from William Kett Close; a fourth entrance from Bishop Bridge Road if the development goes ahead

Threats: none identified

2.3.2 Biodiversity

Strengths: increased biodiversity (both fauna and flora) through good management such as tree cutting and clearing out invasive species such as Alexanders

Weaknesses: lack of water, despite repairing pond (but may be remedied by project to instal mains water supply)

Opportunities: scope to do more, eg in north-west corner

Threats: climate change; reverting to overgrown state if not adequately managed, some species cannot be grown because of muntjac deer

2.3.3 Community engagement

Strengths: plenty of visitors all year round; strong membership; loyal volunteers; newsletter and website; programme of events eg Heritage Open Days, dramas; regular guided tours (our own and Paul Dickson's 'Shardlake'-themed tours)

Weaknesses: not engaging with all of the local community

Opportunities: education, eg via school visits; interpretation boards; expanding our Heritage Open Day offers

Threats: support fades away, loss of volunteer involvement

2.3.4 Heritage

Strengths: the viewpoint; medieval chapel; connection to Kett's Rebellion; Norwich School of Romantic painters; industrial heritage; wartime cultivation

Weaknesses: poor documentation of occupation by the gasworks over a 100-year period

Opportunities: better awareness of gasworks history if southern entrance reopened

Threats: graffiti; anti-social behaviour, failure to maintain structures

Part 3: Where do we want to be?

3.1 Vision and aims

Following the assessment and analysis in Part 2, a vision has been developed consisting of the following four aims linked to the themes.

Accessibility and enjoyment: to provide an accessible, safe and welcoming space for the local community and visitors from further afield

Biodiversity: To develop, maintain and sustain a wide diversity of plants and wildlife

Community engagement: To be responsive to the needs of our users, by providing activities and resources which will enhance both physical and mental wellbeing

Heritage: To enhance the site as an educational space where its long and diverse history can be investigated and interpreted

The objectives that follow are grouped under the four themes. They are summarised in Appendix 1 together with indicative timescales. Objectives are of two types: 'continue' and 'initiate'. The first group are current actions that it is envisaged will continue, subject to NCC and FKH being able to continue to provide resources (finance and time of staff and volunteers). The second group are new actions that NCC and FKH wish to see undertaken, but will need resources to be allocated.

3.2 Objectives : Accessibility and enjoyment

A1 : Continue to keep paths and steps clear and safe to use, including repainting railings

This will mainly be regular work by FKH volunteers to keep path surfaces and adjacent vegetation clear, with occasional repair work, but may also involve NCC. Railings were repainted in 2023, so may not need repainting until later in the Plan period.

A2 : Continue to maintain and repair existing signage

The existing information panels and boards do attract vandalism as well as needing maintenance from general wear and tear. FKH will finance and undertake any necessary work.

A3 : Continue to keep lower and upper grassland areas cut in accordance with NCC contract

The grassland areas are important for recreational purposes, and the upper area is developing improved biodiversity.

A4 : Continue to manage planted garden areas

The areas which have been cleared and established by FKH as planted areas are shown on the plan on page 28: there are additional grassland and woodland areas where FKH has purchased and planted thousands of spring bulbs. These will be maintained, and some additional bulbs planted around the new and refurbished paths at the northern end of the site.

A5 : Continue to respond to dead, diseased or dangerous trees

Any trees that suffer damage or appear to be dead, diseased or dangerous will be reported to, and dealt with, by NCC in accordance with its policy.

A6 : Continue to undertake work on other trees, including management of fruit trees

Work on other trees on the site will be undertaken by FKH volunteers where feasible, and by contractors where necessary, subject to funding being available. This work will include:

- Regular pruning and other maintenance of fruit trees and shrubs
- Keeping trees cut back so that they do not intrude on the view from the view point
- Managing the woodland areas to encourage biodiversity

A7 : Continue to undertake litter-picking and bin emptying

A clean and tidy site is important for the enjoyment of visitors, and may help to reduce anti-social behaviour. FKH volunteers will continue their regular litter-picking and clearance, and NCC will continue its contract with NCSL for weekly emptying of the two litter bins.

A8 : Continue to report instances of graffiti, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour to NCC and the police

Local people will avoid the site if it is perceived as a haven for anti-social behaviour. FKH volunteers will continue to report instances of graffiti, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour to NCC and the police, and where appropriate, will respond rapidly to graffiti with a paintbrush.

A9 : Initiate accessibility audit and respond to its findings

The NCC project to create a new step-free and vehicle access is a significant improvement with substantial investment from the Greater Norwich Growth Board. However, providing step-free access does not of itself make a site accessible or safe for those for whom steps cause problems. In order to realise the full benefit of the investment in the NCC project for those with mobility problems an accessibility audit is needed together with liaison with users with mobility issues and their representatives as part of any audit process.

The plan on page 28 shows which paths are step-free. However not all those paths will be considered suitable for wheelchair users for reasons such as:

- Inadequate width (as low as 70cm between railing and wall)
- Rough or unmade surface
- Lack of turning circle at end of path, or where path meets steps
- Steep gradient

There is guidance on how to access sites: study of the Sensory Trust's guidance (see Appendix 2) suggests the following as examples of what might be findings from an audit:

- Providing step-free surfaced access to the seat and picnic table on the lower grassland from the path behind and above the seat
- Providing a level surface to the two seats at the lower viewpoint area
- Providing surfaced access to the picnic table on the upper grassland
- Surfacing the path that runs south from the viewpoint and around the chapel terrace area and then back to the entrance to the herb/sensory garden (it is already step-free but surface is not good) so as to enable wheelchair users to enjoy a circuit
- Building resting places into the walls alongside the paths leading to the viewpoint

Publicity and information is considered in objective C5.

A10 : Initiate reopening of southern access to William Kett Close and associated improvements to paths and steps on the southern side of the site

With investment from the Greater Norwich Growth Board work has recently been completed to open up a new step-free and vehicle access from Ladbrooke Place. Reopening a southern access point would provide a green corridor and make access easier and more straightforward for many people.

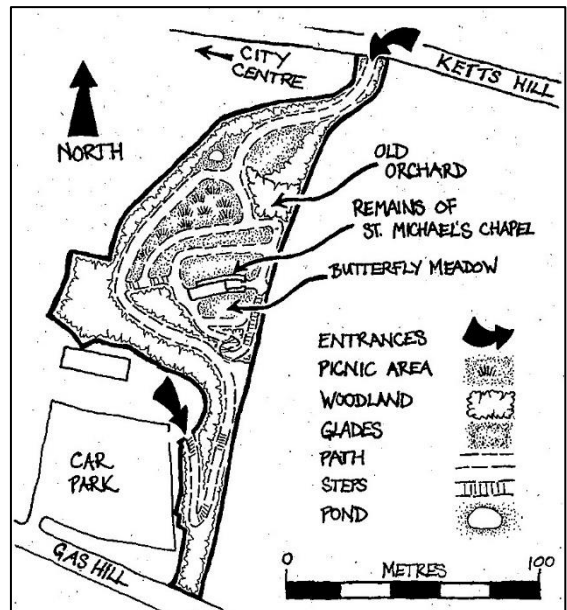
The original way up from the gasworks to the gas workers' gardens and



greenhouses was by a path from the works, and this provided a southern access to the site when it was reopened as a public open space in the 1980s. The car park that existed on the gasworks site was sold off by NCC with no provision for retaining public access. The land is now owned by Broadland Housing.

The first Management Plan contained an objective “to investigate the reinstatement of the footpath between Kett’s Heights and Gas Hill via William Kett Close”. Action by NCC and FKH in pursuance of this objective has been:

- Investigation of the physical state of the path by an engineer, with a conclusion that it is basically sound, but work is needed to clear tree growth and the surface, and replace the handrail
- Discussion with Broadland Housing about allowing access through their site and consultation with residents, with no objection in principle
- Consideration about whether the former entrance gateway should be re-opened or a new set of steps and entrance created to make a more direct and visible access from those entering from William Kett Close (WKC).



As the plan on page 28 shows, re-opening this access would make the site much more accessible to residents in locations such as Gas Hill, Bishopgate and Rosary Road (where there has been significant recent residential development) but also provide better links to the city centre and riverside walk via Bishop Bridge. It would also, in conjunction with the new access off Ladbrooke Place, provide an alternative route through a green open space route for residents in St Leonard’s Road and adjoining streets to Bishop Bridge that avoided using either Gas Hill (the steepest hill in Norwich, if not Norfolk) or Kett’s Hill and Bishop Bridge Road, both busy roads. These factors would combine to increase the return on the investment made by the Greater Norwich Growth Board.

Work that is envisaged as being needed, most of which would be undertaken by FKH volunteers:

- Replace handrails on pathway from WKC
- Clear accumulated debris from path
- Prune overhanging branches
- Consolidation and repairs to steps and retaining walls
- Either reopening of existing gate at bottom of steps or creation of more direct stepped access between the lower end of the path and WKC and installation of lockable gate at the entrance
- Landscaping on lower part of path to protect the privacy of WKC residents
- Removal of chain-link fence and posts at the bottom of the steps by the eastern boundary wall

Additionally, implementation of this project would lead to greater use of the paths on the southern side of the site, and the following further improvements might be considered necessary or desirable:

- Provision of handrails on both sets of steps (three separate sets of steps on the middle path)
- Review of steps to see if step height can be reduced (a particular issue in the top flight on the middle path and the lowest step on the steps going down to the north of the viewpoint)
- Resurfacing throughout of the lower path

Publicity and information is considered in objective C6.

A11 : Initiate safety and security improvements to the boundary in the north-western corner of the site

The north-western corner of the site, below and beyond the pond, has received relatively little attention from the Friends beyond some initial clearance work, and work on and around the pond itself. There are three issues to do with the boundary of the site:

- On the west side there is a chain-link fence, overgrown with ivy, and now horizontal in places. This is on the edge of a sheer drop, a concern about the safety of visitors.
- At the northern side, from the end of the chain-link fence running east, any existing boundary fence has disappeared, so there is nothing to prevent access from the Kett's Hill properties below.
- At the eastern side, there is a wooden fence running from the corner of the old Sunday School Hall which does not mark the boundary and appears to be superfluous.

Work to be done:

- Remove the superfluous wooden fence
- Create a new safe and secure boundary along the whole of this area

Subsequent biodiversity improvements are considered under objective B3.

A12 : Provide a new western access via Bishop Bridge Road

As noted on page 9, there is likely to be a requirement in the revised Greater Norwich Local Plan that any new residential development on brownfield land along Bishop Bridge Road should provide access to Kett's Heights. Such provision depends on development proceeding, but it will be for NCC (as local planning authority) to ensure that the requirements are complied with, and, as site owner, to agree with the developer what will be provided.

3.3 Objectives : Biodiversity

B1 : Continue to manage existing planted garden areas

The areas which have been cleared and established by FKH as planted areas are shown on the plan on page 28. FKH volunteers will continue to manage these, and also undertake work in other areas of the site with a view to improving biodiversity.

B2: Continue to maintain the pond

Ensure that the pond continues to be maintained by topping up with water and the removal of debris as and when required. Biodiversity across the site depends on adequate water supply, especially with increasing pressures of climate change. The newly installed water supply pipe to the piggeries area will ensure that the pond remains topped up with water.

B3 : Initiate landscaping and planting adjacent to the paths the subject of the NCC project to create a new access and refurbish the existing access

The new vehicle access from Ladbrooke Place will rest on a bank of gabion terraces. Heavy machinery used in the construction of the track will have churned up the earth, which will need to be planted out to soften the landscape and improve the aesthetics. FKH volunteers will undertake the work, with assistance from NCC in acquiring suitable plants.

As noted on the plan on page 28, there has been substantial bulb planting (principally snowdrops) by FKH volunteers in the grass bank on the western side of the entrance path from Kett's Hill. Those nearest the path were taken out in anticipation of the works causing disruption and replanted elsewhere on the site. Additional bulbs will be acquired to replace them now that the works have been completed.

B4 : Initiate biodiversity improvements to the area proposed for boundary work under objective A9

If the work proposed under objective A9 takes place there are opportunities to improve the biodiversity of this corner of the site, for example by:

- Considering thinning out the trees to the north of the pond
- Planting new shrubs and other plants to screen the fence

There may also be a possibility to create a new path through the area ending below the pond.

3.4 Objectives : Community engagement

C1 : Continue to provide information on site

FKH will maintain notice and information boards at entrances and at key points on site, and will take opportunities to promote the site in the locality (e.g. posters in the church or on community noticeboards and distribution of leaflets to visitors to the site).

C2 : Continue to provide information in publications and online

FKH will maintain and develop its website (see Appendix 2) to publicise the site and provide information, advertise events and describe volunteer opportunities. FKH will also continue to produce a monthly digital newsletter, send it to members and include it on the

website. FKH will also continue to use Facebook to publicise its activities and the site to a wider audience.

NCC will consider whether more information about Kett's Heights can be provided on its website, including on the My Norwich page.

C3 : Continue to provide regular monthly tours and Heritage Open Day events, and additional tours by request

FKH will continue to provide free monthly tours for the public between April and October, with specialist events for Heritage Open Days in September. FKH will also be willing to provide additional tours by request.

C4 : Continue to work with others to help them run tours, stage events, etc using the site

NCC Events team and FKH will continue to work with other providers to help them run tours, stage events etc. The easier access provided by the wider, step-free access from Ladbrooke Place may lead to greater interest in providing events.

C5 : Initiate additional signage at the new entrance provided by NCC in Ladbrooke Place

Additional signage will be required at the new Ladbrooke Place entrance. This is envisaged as being:

- FKH information board (similar to the one at the Kett's Hill entrance)
- FKH entrance sign (similar to the one at the Kett's Hill entrance)
- Updated information board at Kett's Hill entrance
- Updated information board on the lower green.

C6 : Initiate additional signage, interpretation and publicity if the reopening proposed in objective A8 proceeds

If the southern entrance from William Kett Close is re-opened additional signage will be required. This is envisaged as being:

- Direction signs from Gas Hill to the KH entrance via William Kett Close:
- FKH information board (similar to the one at the Kett's Hill entrance)
- FKH entrance sign (similar to the one at the Kett's Hill entrance)
- Direction sign at top steps of path up from William Kett Close
- Direction sign at bottom of east boundary steps, at the end of the lower path, to indicate the way to the viewpoint
- Updated information board at Kett's Hill entrance
- Updated information board on the lower green

3.5 Objectives : Heritage

H1 : Continue to reuse materials found on site

A considerable amount of waste material has been left on site from the demolition or decay of past structures or walls. Some of this material can be identified as coming from the gasworks, and, as such, is evidence of industrial history and part of the site's heritage. FKH has endeavoured to re-use such materials where possible, for example using bricks embossed with makers' names in the seating constructed into the wall in the herb garden, and recovering large materials to be used in the additional seating constructed at the lower viewpoint. This practice will continue where possible.

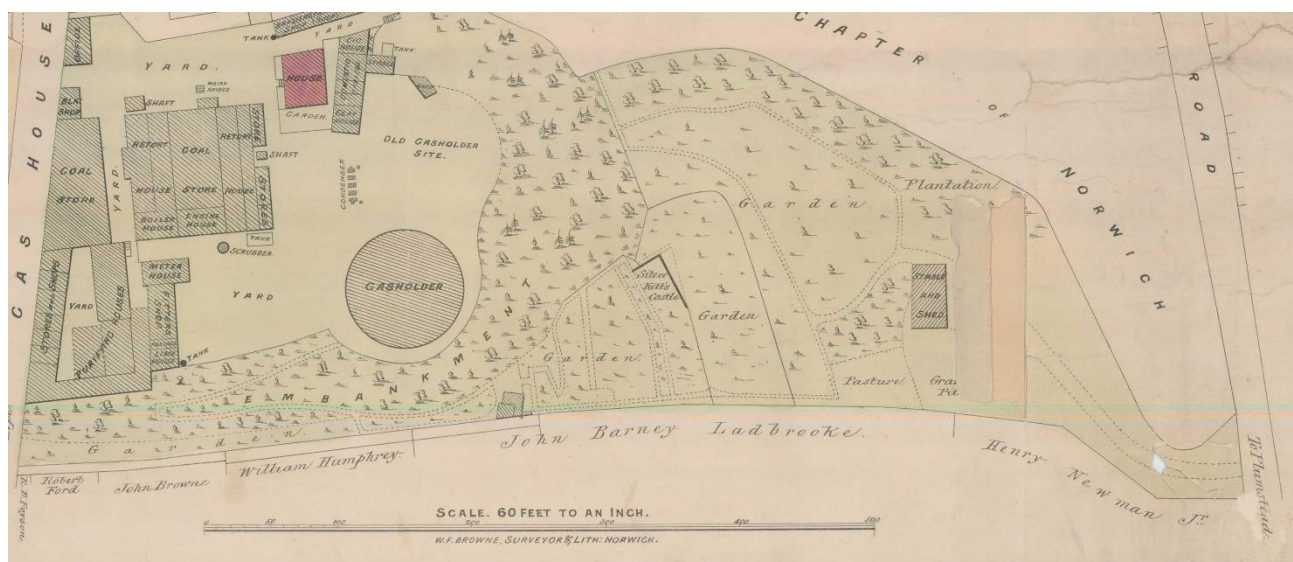
H2 : Continue to undertake repairs to the chapel and boundary walls

The wall repair work described at section 2.1.4 is a continuing process. Most of the chapel wall that can be dealt with by FKH volunteers (up to head height) has now been tackled, but some remains. NCC will be responsible for any repairs at higher level.

Although a substantial length of the eastern boundary wall was tackled as the initial stage of this project, the wall is around 500 metres in length in total (possibly one of the longest continuous walls in Norwich) and continuing work will be needed. Again, FKH volunteers can tackle work up to head height, but NCC will be responsible for any repairs at higher level.

H3 : Continue to research and interpret the history of the site

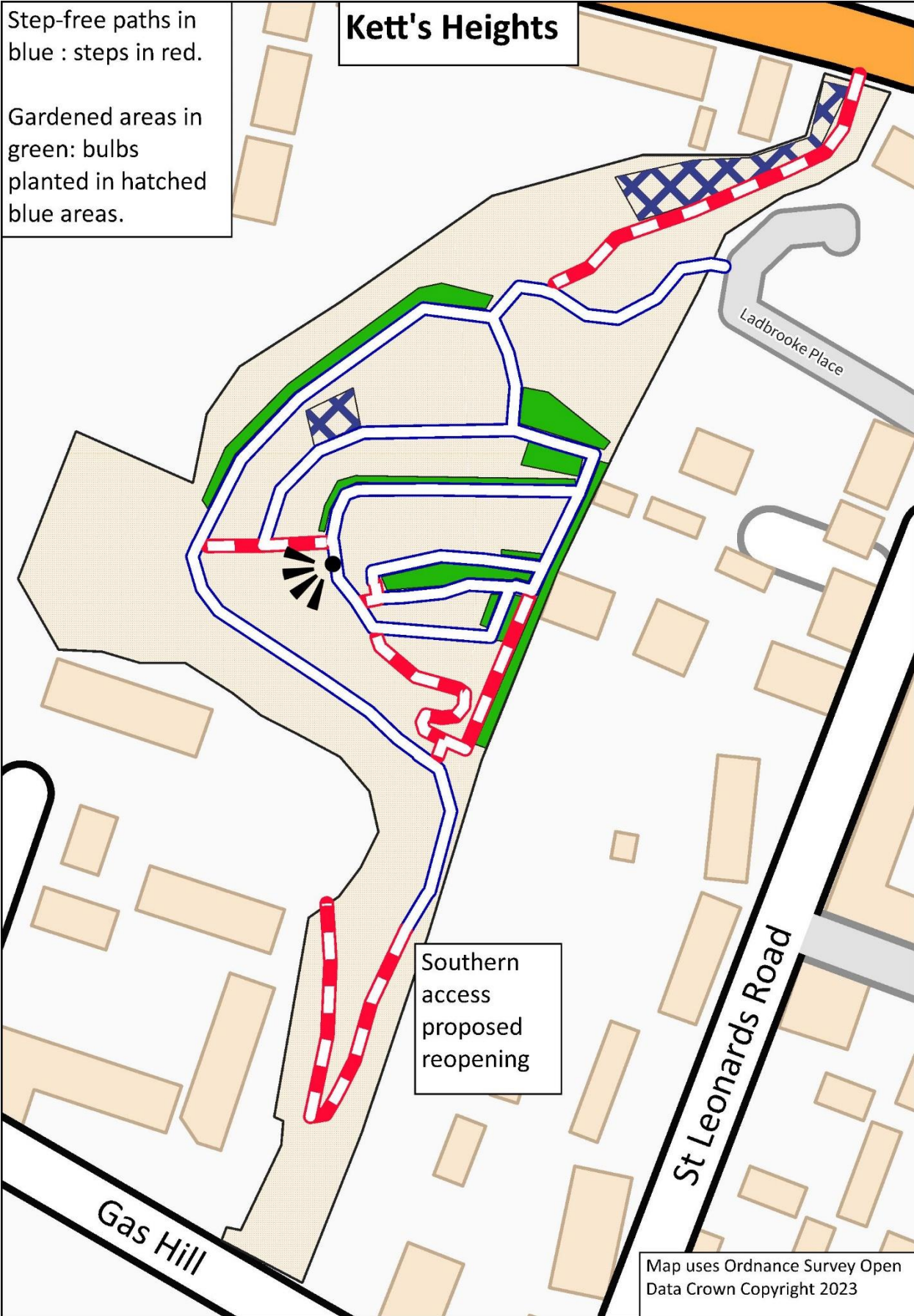
FKH volunteers have researched aspects of the history of the site, including visits to Norfolk Record Office in relation to the use of St Michael's Chapel and the National Grid Gas Archive. This work will continue.



1875 plan, courtesy National Grid Gas Archive

H4 : Initiate the provision of a plaque relating to Kett's Rebellion

Only visitors in the know would be aware that St. Michael's Chapel was used as the command post by Robert Kett during the rebellion of 1549. This was a significant event and was the largest uprising of its kind in Tudor England. NCC can approve the placing of a blue plaque, subject to funding being provided. Alternatively, it may be a suitable subject for funding under the national blue plaques scheme to be developed by Historic England (see Appendix 2).



APPENDIX 1 : Five-year work plan

Objective	24	25	26	27	28
Accessibility and enjoyment					
A1 : Continue to keep paths and steps clear and safe to use, including repainting railings	*	*	*	*	*
A2 : Continue to maintain and repair existing signage	*	*	*	*	*
A3 : Continue to keep lower and upper grassland areas cut in accordance with NCC contract	*	*	*	*	*
A4 : Continue to manage planted garden areas	*	*	*	*	*
A5 : Continue to respond to dead, diseased or dangerous trees	*	*	*	*	*
A6 : Continue to undertake work on other trees, including management of fruit trees	*	*	*	*	*
A7 : Continue to undertake litter-picking and bin emptying	*	*	*	*	*
A8 : Continue to report instances of graffiti, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour to NCC and the police	*	*	*	*	*
A9 : Initiate accessibility audit and respond to its findings	*	*			
A10 : Initiate reopening of southern access to William Kett Close and associated improvements to paths and steps on the southern side of the site	*	*			
A11 : Initiate safety and security improvements to the boundary in the north-western corner of the site		*			
A12 : Provide a new western access via Bishop Bridge Road (<i>dependent on development taking place on brownfield site</i>)					
Biodiversity					
B1 : Continue to manage existing planted garden areas	*	*	*	*	*

B2: Continue to maintain the pond	*	*	*	*	*
B3 : Initiate landscaping and planting adjacent to the paths the subject of the NCC project to create a new access and refurbish the existing access	*				
B4 : Initiate biodiversity improvements to the area proposed for boundary work under objective A9		*			
Community engagement					
C1 : Continue to provide information on site	*	*	*	*	*
C2 : Continue to provide information in publications and online	*	*	*	*	*
C3 : Continue to provide regular monthly tours and Heritage Open Day events, and additional tours by request	*	*	*	*	*
C4 : Continue to work with others to help them run tours, stage events, etc using the site	*	*	*	*	*
C5 : Initiate additional signage at the new entrance provided by NCC in Ladbroke Place	*				
C6 : Initiate additional signage, interpretation and publicity if the reopening proposed in objective A8 proceeds		*			
Heritage					
H1 : Continue to reuse materials found on site	*	*	*	*	*
H2 : Continue to undertake repairs to the chapel and boundary walls	*	*	*	*	*
H3 : Continue to research and interpret the history of the site	*	*	*	*	*
H4 : Initiate the provision of a plaque relating to Kett's Rebellion	*				

APPENDIX 2 : Links

Norwich City Council

www.norwich.gov.uk

Friends of Kett's Heights

www.kettsheights.co.uk

Greater Norwich Growth Board

www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk

National Blue Plaques Scheme

historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/national-blue-plaques-scheme

Outdoor Projects Network

www.lumi.org.uk/organisations/view/outdoor-projects-network

Paul Dickson tours : Shardlake's Norwich

www.pauldicksontours.co.uk/shardlakes-norwich

Sensory Trust : Outdoor Accessibility Guidance (2023)

www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/guidance/outdoor-accessibility-guidance

Tombland, by C J Sansom

pages.panmacmillan.com/c-j-sansom/