

Minutes

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Edinburgh, 5 December 2012

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – George Holmes (Convener).

Representing the City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Karen Keil and Norman Work.

In Attendance:- Harry Taylor (Friends of Cammo), Dr David Osler (Cramond and Barnton Community Council), Carol Smith (Cramond Association), Jenny Hargreaves (Senior Natural Heritage Officer), David Kyles (Countryside Ranger) and Lee Rankin (all from Services for Communities), Lesley Price (Estate Manager, City Development) and Blair Ritchie (Committee Services).

Apologies:- Christopher Cassells and Alan McGregor.

1 Welcome

The Convener welcomed Lee Rankin to the Advisory Committee.

2. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of 29 August 2012 was approved as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Ranger Service

Details were given of the new staffing structure for the Ranger Service, which had been provided by the Pentland Hills Regional Park Manager.

Decision

- 1 That the Senior Natural Heritage Officer provide a fuller description of the new staffing structure of the Ranger Service, with a description of the remit of the individual posts at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.
- 2 That the Senior Natural Heritage Officer provide a list of the natural heritage sites at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

3.2 New Countryside Ranger

The new Countryside Ranger, who would be replacing the current Ranger, was introduced to the Advisory Committee and his role on the estate was briefly outlined.

3.3 Traffic Management on Cammo Estate and Parking on Cammo Road

It was reported that discussion had taken place between the Ranger Service and the Council's Road Services in respect of traffic management on Cammo Estate and parking on the corner of Cammo Road. However, no progress had yet taken place.

Decision

That the Countryside Ranger provide clarification on traffic management and parking issues at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee and that the Council's responsibility for Cammo Road be investigated.

3.4 Bid for Green Flag Award

The Advisory Committee had previously noted that Cammo Estate had been unsuccessful in their bid for a Green Flag Award and the Senior Natural Heritage Officer had been asked to seek feedback on the bid.

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer provided details on the desk assessment feedback and the field assessment feedback, which had been received, on the criteria used for judging the Green Flag Award. This included the following:

- Presentation
- Health, Safety and Security
- Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings and Landscape
- Litter, Cleanliness and Vandalism
- Environmental Sustainability
- Conservation of Heritage and Nature
- Community Involvement
- Marketing Strategy
- Overall Management
- The Estate being a Welcoming Place
- The Estate being Clean and Well-Maintained
- Sustainability

Discussion took place on the reasons given for Cammo not receiving the Green Flag Award and what remedial action should be taken. It was agreed that the comments should be taken on board by the Ranger Service and consideration should be given to re-applying for the award.

Decision

- 1 That the Senior Natural Heritage Officer and Community Parks Officer visit the estate to analyse the feedback on the unsuccessful bid for the Green Flag Award and to decide what remedial action should be taken.
- 2 That the Ranger Service consider the feedback with a view to making a bid for the award in the future.

4. Cammo Estate Management Plan

The Countryside Ranger gave a verbal update on the following areas:

4.1 Maintenance

- The Ash tree with a seam crack to one stem, to the rear of the walled garden, had been made safe.
- The Oak tree in the northern corner of the north field had a damaged, suspended limb. The Council Forestry Service had been on site to clear this, however bats had been discovered, therefore, all work had been postponed.
- Sections of a poorly conditioned/redundant post and wire fencing were removed from the boundary with the East Avenue and South Field, as part of ongoing activity.
- The path between the Visitor Centre and the car park had received a surface upgrade, with drainage installation and repair to the wooden rail by the Bughtlin Burn.
- A land lease had been set up for Turnhouse Golf Club, in early November, to enter the Estate and undertake clearance of silt/debris in the ditch and culvert leading to the wilderness area. There had been no progress yet and the latest update was that the golf club would continue with exploratory works on their ground before undertaking work within the Estate.
- Some hanging limbs and high stumps had been removed from the woodland strip adjacent to the Visitor Centre/car park path and diseased elms at the main entrance had been dealt with. A fallen lime on the boundary of the South Field and East Drive had been made safe, but still had to be cleared.
- Fire site and fireworks debris had been cleared from the lawn area in front of the house after bonfire night on 5th November.

4.2 Site Management Prescription

- There had been continuation of the wildflower area, which had been instigated down the north side of the Home Field by the Friends of

Cammo and the Natural Heritage Service. They were actively seeking volunteers and corporate groups to assist with this project.

- There had been a site meeting with experts from the Royal Botanic Gardens regarding iconic trees. The Chilean Plum Yew, above the Pineapple wall, was in a bad state. It would be replaced and the other Plum Yew would be given soil improvers, specific to the needs of this tree, which would hopefully sustain it.
- Recommendations had been made for the removal of scrubby/shrubby trees on the margins of the Pinetum area. The large leaved lime tree was not particularly special and should be removed.
- There was willingness to come back in the future to mark up or assist with targeting the specific trees to be removed. This process would benefit the existing trees and create room for more trees.
- The Friends of Cammo had applied for a Central Scotland Green Network grant for various tools and materials and the purchase of three new trees for the Pinetum. One Monkey Puzzle, one Brewer's Weeping spruce, one White Spruce and some hedgerow species for infilling gaps for existing planting.

4.3 Farmhouse

- Minor breaches had been temporarily patched and reported to Property Care for permanent repair.
- CALA Homes had still not been granted planning permission for their proposals. An approach had been made to the Council regarding the use of area of Cammo Estate as a site compound. Consultation would take place with the Friends of Cammo, but the decision lay with the Natural Heritage Service.
- Final consent from Historic Scotland had still not been received, for the planning application and there had been a 28 day extension to their timescale.

4.4 Groups Visiting the Estate

- Several local Walking Groups.
- Several local Nursery Groups.
- Stevenson College had helped provide additional protection to newly planted Pinetum trees
- The Green Team had helped with path scraping and fence removal.

4.5 Wildlife

- A dead fox had been encountered on the path behind the walled garden. Reports from regular users suggested that it was caused by an attack from a dog, but this could not be confirmed.

Discussion took place and it was indicated that the Friends of Cammo had received a grant from the Central Scotland Green Network to further the project covering the wildflower areas, the Pinetum and hedgerow planting.

Decision

To thank the Countryside Ranger and to note the report.

5. Interpretation of the Estate

It was reported that fresh signs had been erected and that directional signage should be checked out.

Decision

That the Ranger Service investigate the installation of directional signage.

6. Cammo Home Farm

The Advisory Committee had previously discussed, amongst other matters, the proposed sale of Cammo Home Farm to CALA Homes.

The Estate Manager indicated that the planning applications lodged by a third party for the refurbishment of the existing building had been approved. The planning applications lodged by CALA for the demolition of the existing building and its replacement with two houses had been approved by the Planning Committee, but as it related to a listed building, the application had to be referred to Historic Scotland who would decide if it should be called in by the Scottish Ministers. Therefore the applications for demolition were still pending. Historic Scotland had asked for an extension of 28 days, for further consideration of the applications and representatives had visited the site.

Members discussed the planning process, the issues to be addressed and ways in which the planning application might progress. It was confirmed that the Advisory Committee should not make a recommendation on the planning applications, as it would be considered a conflict of interest.

Decision

- 1) To note the position.
- 2) That the Estate Manager forward information regarding progress of the Cala planning applications to Committee Services who would then forward this information to the Advisory Committee.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 29 August 2012 (item 6)).

7. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 6 March 2013 at 10.30 am in the Cammo Lodge.