

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Edinburgh 27 March 2013

Present:-

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

Representing the City of Edinburgh Council – Councillor 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) and Lee Rankin (Natural Heritage Officer) (from Services from Communities), Lesley Price (Estate Manager, City Development) and Blair Ritchie (Committee Services)

Apologies:- Councillor Karen Keil and Alan McGregor.

1. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of 5 December 2012 was approved as a correct record subject to the amendments detailed in the appendix.

2. Natural Heritage Service

2.1 Matters Arising

Natural Heritage Service

Further details were provided of the new staffing structure for the Natural Heritage Service (formally the CEC Countryside Ranger Service). Vacancies existed and a worker was being employed on a trial basis.

Each site has a lead contact. The Council supported the service. Health and safety work was prioritised according to risk and the Natural Heritage Officer would coordinate some aspects of the work on the estate. The

remit of the Natural Heritage Service was explained. There was a mixed range of sites and the advantage of the structure was that there was now a pool of resources that could be accessed.

Decision

To note the structure for the Natural Heritage Service.

2.2 Traffic Management

It had been previously agreed that the Natural Heritage Officer would clarify traffic management and parking issues and that the Council's responsibility for Cammo Road would be investigated.

It was explained that the previous Natural Heritage Officer had discussed these issues with the Roads Department.

Decision

To continue consideration of the matter.

2.3 Green Flag Award

The Advisory Committee had previously noted that the Natural Heritage Service had been unsuccessful in their bid to attempt to attain the Green Flag Award and that the service would get feedback and decide what action should be take for the future.

It was reported that a site visit had taken place and the Natural Heritage Service did not submit a bid for the award this year. Having received feedback from the Green Flag judge, it was decided that bidding for the award would be considered at a later date. In the meantime, park quality standards were being maintained, which were similar to the award.

Decision

That the Natural Heritage Service would consider bidding for the Green Flag Award at a later date.

3. Cammo Estate Management Plan

The Natural Heritage Officer gave a verbal update on the following issues:

3.1 Site Management:

- Weekly patrols were being carried out onsite (including a farmhouse check, car park checks, litter pick and site health and safety) and the removal of damaged ash trees from the walled garden.

- The cutting/coppicing of veteran large leaved lime tree on the periphery of the Pinetum and the removal of redundant post and wire fencing, which was ongoing.
- The removal of vegetation and undergrowth which encroached the Pinetum.

3.2 Farmhouse Sale

- The sale of Cammo Home Farm was not complete as the planning application for demolition of the building has been called in by the Scottish Ministers
- Historic Scotland advised that the planning application to demolish Cammo Home Farm, which had been approved by the Council, had been referred to the Scottish Ministers in view of the proposed development's possible implications for national policies about the demolition of listed buildings.
- The referral would be dealt with by a Reporter who would examine all the evidence submitted so far, together with any additional information invited from persons who had already commented on the Planning Application. This further documentation had to be received by 2 April 2013. The Reporter would visit the property and hold a Planning Enquiry Hearing on 2 May 2013.
- Thereafter the Reporter would submit a report with recommendations to Scottish Ministers for their consideration and determination.
- The Inquiry would only deal with the issue of the proposed demolition of the listed building. It would not deal with the question of how the cleared site will be redeveloped thereafter.
- If the Scottish Ministers refused the application to demolish the building, CALA would have the right to appeal against the decision, if it wished to do so.

3.3 Management Plan:

All site works carried out to be in accordance with the adopted management plan.

3.4 Volunteers:

- Friends of Cammo Estate.

- The Conservation Volunteers (formerly British Trust for Conservation Volunteers).
- Edinburgh College (formerly Stevenson College).
- City of Edinburgh Council, Natural Heritage Service volunteers.
- New Caledonian Woodlands.

3.5 Projects:

- ICONIC tree project - following visits and advice from Royal Botanic Gardens, the dead Chilean Yew Plum was to be replaced and the specimen, which had been in poor health, was to receive a soil conditioning treatment which should restore the tree to full vigour. This work would be carried out by the Botanic Gardens and the Natural Heritage Service. This would be progressed and a progress report drafted.
- Restoration of 'pineapple' sculptures - specialist stonemasons were to be consulted and prices requested for the restoration of the sculptures to the stone stairway.

3.6 Forthcoming activities:

- Wildflower meadow establishment - further preparation and new seeding of wildflower areas.
- The Natural Heritage Officer was currently looking at the feasibility of introducing Yellow Rattle in to areas on the North Meadow to parasitize existing grasses, thinning the sward further and allowing natural regeneration of wildflower species. Various methods of sowing and preparation would be used at sites across the City in order to ascertain the most successful and cost effective method of utilising the species in aiding meadow management.
- The cutting of rank vegetation on the Larch Meadow by a task force; the cutting of woody and rank vegetation from the area; the removal of the cut material to be carried out by various volunteer and corporate groups when available.
- New Caledonian Woodlands would be carrying out a range of practical conservation and estate management tasks on site with various volunteer groups. The number of groups had yet to be confirmed.
- The proposed early cut and removal of "arisings" for meadows in April by the contractor, subject to availability of contractor and weather.
- The removal of encroaching vegetation from the Pinetum.

Discussion took place on the possible development of the Estate to provide additional recreation facilities. It was explained that any development would have to comply with the Management Plan and the Strategic Plan, development required funding and would have to be balanced against the historical aspects of the Estate. The land had been bequeathed to the National Trust for Scotland who conveyed it to the Council with conditions regarding its future use and redevelopment, as contained in a Conservation Agreement. In the event that any development was agreed with the National Trust for

Scotland, planning permission might be required as well as a tendering process for the new services. Any consideration of development of the Estate would require a proper report and a full discussion by the Advisory Committee before referring the matter for consultation with the wider community.

There was further discussion on the possible development of the walled garden and the funding required. It was explained that funding was allocated to sites throughout the city according to need and funding had been allocated to Cammo for various types of work.

Reference was made to the presence of bats on the estate and the need to address this.

Decision

To note that the Advisory Committee would discuss the issue of possible future commercial development of the Estate at a future date, if required.

4. Interpretation of the Estate

It had been previously agreed that the Natural Heritage Officer would investigate the installation of directional signage.

Directional signage had not yet been installed. This was an important part of interpretation and discussions would take place with the Senior Natural Heritage Officer to progress this. The Natural Heritage Service was also investigating different types of medias, such as audio trails, and that this work would be undertaken in the summer.

Decision

That the Natural Heritage Officer discuss the installation of directional signage with the Senior Natural Heritage Officer.

5. Cammo Home Farm

5.1 Sale of Home Farm

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

The Estate Manager indicated that the Scottish Government Reporter would visit Cammo Home Farm, followed by a Planning Hearing. She then outlined the planning process as referred to in the management plan.

Discussion took place about the planning application by CALA Homes and other applicants for the Home Farm.

Decision

To note the position.

5.2 Plaque in Memory of Previous Tenant

The Estate Manager referred to correspondence received from an individual requesting that a plaque be erected in memory of the previous owner, Percival Maitland Tennent.

Discussion took place and it was indicated that Percival Maitland Tennent was already referred to on interpretation boards on the Estate and in the Lodge as well as in the Management Plan.

Decision

- 1 To note the position.
- 2 That Committee Services send a letter to the correspondent, indicating that the previous owner had already been referred to on notices in the Estate and to enclose a copy of the management plan.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 5 December 2012 (item 6; letter in relation to request of plaque, tabled.)

6. Resignation

The Convener indicated that he had held the post for nearly fourteen years and that he thought that it was time to step down. A new convener would be appointed by the National Trust. He indicated that he had enjoyed his time as Convener and thanked everyone for their support, and he hoped that there would be progress with the development of the Home Farm.

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer thanked the Convener for the considerable time that he had dedicated to the Advisory Committee. The Convener was then presented with a long-service certificate from the National Trust.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 26 June 2013.

Appendix

Item 3.1 - To amend title Ranger Service to Natural Heritage Service

Item 3.2 - To amend title to New Natural Heritage Service Officer

To amend Countryside Ranger to Natural Heritage Officer

Item 3.3 To amend decision to “That the Natural Heritage Officer...”

Item 4 To amend the Countryside Ranger to the Natural Heritage Officer

Item 5 To amend decision to “That the Natural Heritage Service...”