

Minutes

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Edinburgh 26 June 2013

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – Christopher Cassels and Sinclair Williamson.

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

In Attendance:- Harry Taylor (Friends of Cammo), Dr David Osler (Cramond and Barnton Community Council), Alan McGregor (Regional Park Manager) 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:- Carol Smith.

1. Chair

In the absence of the Convener, Christopher Cassells of the National Trust for Scotland was appointed to the Chair.

It was explained that the National Trust for Scotland was looking for a replacement for the previous convener. There would be a meeting of the National Trust on 5 July 2013 and it was hoped that a new chair would then be appointed.

2. Welcome

A staff member of the National Trust for Scotland was welcomed to the meeting.

3. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of 27 March 2013 was approved as a correct record subject to the amendment of:

Item 5.2 to "Plaque in memory of previous owner".

Item 6 to "National Trust for Scotland".

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Traffic Management

The Senior Natural Heritage Office indicated that there was nothing to report on traffic management.

4. Cammo Estate Management Plan

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

Site Management

- Weekly patrols were being carried out onsite (including a check of the farmhouse, car park, a litter pick and site health and safety).
- The cutting of rank and woody vegetation on South West and Larch Tree Meadows was undertaken in April by Natural Heritage Service (NHS) Staff.
- The ongoing removal of a redundant post and wire fencing.
- The repair of holes in the wall of the old house by a stonemason.
- The removal of vegetation and undergrowth encroaching the Pintetum, which was ongoing.
- The removal of fly tipping from the car park by the task force on 23 May.
- Butterfly transect surveys were carried out on a weekly basis by a National Heritage Service officer as part of their duties on a Thursday at Cammo Estate.
- The removal of an unauthorised structure from the vicinity of the badger sett. Plywood boards and posts were left after the construction of the structure. These were removed by NHS staff.
- Two breaches to the farmhouse were repaired by Estates on 23 May.

Farmhouse Sale

- On 7 May 2013, there was a site visit by the Planning Reporter from the Scottish Government regarding the development of the Home Farm. Boards were removed from the building and viewed from the exterior. The group was given a tour of the site by the former Natural Heritage Officer for Cammo.

Management Plan

All site works were carried out in accordance with the adopted Management Plan, which included:-

Volunteers.

- The Friends of Cammo Estate.

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

Projects

- ICONIC Tree Project- following visits and advice from the 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. The work would be carried out by the Botanic Gardens and the Natural Heritage Service. The Natural Heritage Officer would pursue this and provide a progress report.
- The restoration of “pineapple” sculptures - specialist stonemasons would be consulted and prices requested for the restoration of the sculptures to the stone stairway. Potential contractors had been identified and estimates and quotes had to be obtained.

Forthcoming Activities

- The removal of encroaching vegetation from the Pinetum - the Forestry Squad would assist with work, clearing felled and fallen tree debris. Timber would be chipped and utilised on site as path surfacing material. The Natural Heritage Officer would look at the possibilities for additional volunteer and corporate groups to assist with path construction.
- Further cutting of the Larch Tree and South West Meadows would take place to further weaken wood and rank vegetation regeneration. Vegetation regeneration would be assessed and a meadow restoration strategy would be drafted looking at methods of woody vegetation removal and suppression, soil condition and suitable species for each site. The Larch Tree Meadow might be more suitable to be developed as a woodland glade type habitat, requiring less intensive management. The South West Meadow would contain a more traditional meadow species mix.
- Yellow Rattle would be introduced into the North Meadow following the autumn cut and lift. A conservation task was planned for 1 October, sowing yellow rattle seed. Various sowing methods and ground preparation methods would be employed on marked plots to ascertain the best method of site preparation for future introductions.
- The removal of a fallen beech from the path at the south west corner by Natural Heritage Service staff.

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer indicated that there would be a team day with Parks and Greenspace staff in August which included the Forestry Team to undertake

activities on site. The farmer who had cut the fields previously had been contacted to carry out with grass-cutting and discussions would take place with the head of the Forestry Team regarding the Walled Garden.

Discussion took place on the possible use of the Walled Garden, which included the planting of orchard trees, the use for allotments, and the condition of the walls.

Decision

To note the position.

4. Interpretation of the Estate

It had been previously agreed that the Natural Heritage Officer discuss the installation of directional signage with the Senior Natural Heritage Officer.

Details were provided of the various methods of signage for the estate, which included self-guided trails. Various designs were shown to the members and it was explained that these should be in harmony with the estate. It would be possible to use Quick Response (Q.R.) codes, as opposed to the traditional boards, which could be scanned and linked to web-sites.

Discussion took place on the type of signage being considered. This included the cost of the signs, the type of material, the possible location and the possible use Q.R. coded boards. There was further discussion on the need for a balanced approach for signage, so that modern methods would complement traditional methods and that the colour of the signage should be appropriate for the estate.

Decision

- 1) That the members study the maps provided of the site and provide suggestions on where the signage should be located.
- 2) That the members then provide feedback to the Natural Heritage Officer for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 27 March 2013 (item 4.))

5. Cammo Home Farm

The Advisory Committee had previously discussed the proposed sale of the Home Farm.

The Estate Manager indicated that there had been no change regarding the proposed sale of the Home Farm. Services for Communities was still waiting for the decision of the Reporter from the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals, but in the event of any progress, she would forward the information to Committee Services, who would then forward this to the members.

Decision

To note the position.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 27 March 2013 (item 5.)

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Resignation

The member from the Barnton and Cramond Community Council indicated that he was resigning from the Advisory Committee.

The Acting Chair thanked the member for his contribution to the Advisory Committee.

6.2 Wild Flowers in Field

The "cut and lift" method which was being employed in grass-cutting was encouraging wild flowers, but this method would help the quality of the grass in the long term.

6.3 Map of Estate

Decision

The Natural Heritage Office indicated that he would e-mail the map of the estate to Committee Services, who would forward this to the members of the Advisory Committee.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 2 October 2013 at 2.00 pm in the Cammo Lodge.