

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Edinburgh 2 October 2013

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – Sinclair Williamson and David Chamberlain.

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

In Attendance:- Harry Taylor and Nick Benge (Friends of Cammo), Carol Smith (Cramond Association), Jenny Hargreaves (Senior Natural Heritage Officer) and Lee Rankin (Natural Heritage Officer) (from Services from Communities), and Blair Ritchie (Committee Services).

Apologies:- Christopher Cassels and Lesley Price.

1. Chair

In the absence of the Convener, Sinclair Williamson of the National Trust for Scotland was appointed to the Chair.

2. Welcome

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

3. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of 26 June 2013 was approved as a correct record.

4. Cammo Estate Management Plan

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

4.1 Site Management:

- Weekly patrols being carried out onsite (including a farmhouse check, car park checks, litter pick up and site health and safety).

- The removal of a redundant post and the ongoing removal of wire fencing.
- The ongoing removal of vegetation and undergrowth encroaching the Pinetum.
- Butterfly transect surveys were carried out weekly by a NHS officer as part of their Thursday Duty at Cammo Estate.
- Several more breaches at Cammo Home Farm were reported to the Estates Team and were repaired on 26.06.13, 4.07.13, 18.07.13 and 8.08.13.
- The Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) had completed the barkchip path around the Pinetum on 4.9.13 and 5.09.13 after work was started as part of the Cammo Action Day.
- The North, South and Home Fields had been cut and lifted by a contractor on 15.08.13.
- The orienteering course had been re-jigged and plates moved to refresh the course. New maps would be produced and would be available soon. Part of the new course was given a dry run as part of a Sports Scotland Festival of Sport on 4/09/2013. New maps were to be produced by Edinburgh Southern Orienteering Club and would be available soon.
- Approval had been given for the siting of two bee hives within the walled garden. A wire mesh cage had been constructed to protect the hives and was constructed so that the bees flew through the top of the cage (apiary) keeping the flight path of the bees away from visitors in the walled garden.

4.2 Cammo Action Day 14 August 2013

The Natural Heritage Service organised a Cammo Action Day attended by staff from the City of Edinburgh Councils Parks and Greenspace team, Natural Heritage Service, Forestry and Specialist Ground Maintenance sections.

A number of practical tasks were undertaken, making the most of the equipment and practical skills of the staff on site. The tasks included:

- Cutting of the Larch Tree, Stables and High and Low meadows and West Park.
- Removal of undergrowth and encroaching vegetation from the Pinetum.
- Commencing the construction of a bark chip path in the Pinetum.
- Removal of trees from the walled garden and stables.
- Clearing of the South Vista.
- The installation of bird's mouth fencing in the car park.
- The installation of new metal fencing at the visitor centre.
- Strimming of path edges.
- Removal of the fallen beech monolith from the South West corner of the site.

4.3 Farmhouse sale:

- Details were given of the sale of Cammo Home Farm.

4.4 Management Plan:

- All site works carried out were to be in accordance with adopted Management Plan.

4.5 Volunteers:

- Friends of Cammo Estate.
- Trust for Conservation Volunteers (formerly British Trust for Conservation Volunteers).
- City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service Volunteers.

4.6 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. The Natural Heritage Officer would chase this up and give a progress report. This had been carried over from the previous report.
- The restoration of the 'pineapple' sculptures - Specialist stonemasons were to be consulted and prices requested for the restoration of the sculptures to the stone stairway. Potential contractors had been identified estimates and quotes were to be obtained. The prices for this were still awaited.
- Quotes were to be obtained for the removal and replacement of the boundary fence running along Cammo Walk from the entrance at the lodge to the car park.

4.7 Forthcoming activities:

- Planning for the management of South West Meadow, Stables Meadow, Larch Tree Meadow, High and Low Meadows and West Park. Each meadow was to be assessed for future vegetation management. Also, the possible addition of the West Park to the "cut and lift" regime, which was currently in operation on South Field and Home Field.
- The replacing of tree guards around the young trees in the Pinetum and re-mulching the saplings.
- The removal of redundant fencing from South and Home Fields.
- The further removal and pruning of trees on Vista Avenue.

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer gave further details on the Cammo Action Day on 14 August 2013, which was part of Love Parks Week. The day was a great success with 80 members of staff in attendance. She described that some of the cutting in the meadows had greatly improved the views on the site and the overall effect of the intensive cutting had been beneficial for the estate.

Discussion took place regarding the cutting and clearing process, which included the possible benefits of cattle-grazing. This had both financial and bio-diversity implications, issues regarding dog-walkers and required an educational programme for members of the public. Further discussion took place on the “cut and lift” option, the design landscape of the estate and the need for further discussions with all interested parties.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) That the Senior Natural Heritage Officer look at the Work Plan and provide an update column for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

4. Interpretation of the Estate

At the previous meeting, the location of signage had been discussed.

Details were provided of the proposed methods of signage for the estate, including the Quick Response Codes (QRC). It was indicated that it was necessary to balance the QRC's with the traditional aspect of the Estate and to consider how it would fit in with the general appearance and the history of the estate management.

Discussion took place on biodiversity, the use of the available resources and the need to maintain broad appeal for members of the public.

Decision

- 1) That the Natural Heritage Officer forward maps of Cammo Estate to Committee Services, to be circulated to members, for them to identify what feature they thought were important for Interpretation. They would then provide feedback to the Natural Heritage Officer for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.
- 2) That the Natural Heritage Officer liaise with the National Trust for Scotland with a view to getting ideas to promote interpretation on Cammo Estate.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 26 June 2013 (item 4.)

5. Cammo Home Farm

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

Cala had informed the Council that the target date for the decision regarding the planning application for the demolition of Cammo Home Farm from the Scottish Government was 24 September 2013, with a longstop date of the 24 October 2013.

Decision

To note the position.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 26 June 2013 (item 5.)

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Work on Cammo Road

Decision

That the Senior Natural Heritage Officer check out the work that was being carried out on Cammo Road and report back to the Advisory Committee.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 15 January 2014 at 2.00 pm in the Cammo Lodge.