

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Edinburgh 15 January 2014

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – David Chamberlain.

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

In Attendance:- Nick Bengé (Friends of Cammo), Jenny Hargreaves (Senior Natural Heritage Officer) and Lee Rankin (Natural Heritage Officer), Francesca Pandolfi (Biodiversity Officer) (from Services from Communities), Lesley Price (Estates Manager, City Development) and Blair Ritchie (Committee Services).

Apologies:- Christopher Cassels and Sinclair Williamson.

1. Chair

In the absence of the Convener, David Chamberlain of the National Trust for Scotland was appointed to the Chair.

2. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of 2 October 2013 was approved as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Projects (item 4.6)

Decision

1. That the Natural Heritage Service would work with the Botanic Gardens to carry out the work on the Iconic Tree Project.
2. That the Natural Heritage Officer progress the clearing of trees round the Pinetum.
3. To note that that work on the Pineapple Sculptures would be progressed in the future.

3.2 Forthcoming Activities (item 4.7)

Decision

That the Natural Heritage Officer progress the management of the South West Meadows, Stables Meadow, Larch Tree Meadow, High and Low Meadow and

West Park. This included the implementation of “cut and lift” regime and the removal and pruning of trees on Vista Avenue.

4. Presentation on Local Nature Reserves

The Biodiversity Officer was introduced to the Advisory Committee. She then gave a presentation on Local Nature Reserves, which included the following themes:

Local Nature Reserves Places for People and Nature

‘...a protected area of land designated by a Local Authority because of its local special natural interest and/or educational value’

What is a Local Nature Reserve?

- Protected
- Special
- Educational Value
- Accessible
- Managed

Why designate a Local Nature Reserve?

- Legislation
- Commitment
- Status
- Funding

Declaring a Local Nature Reserve

Local authorities could declare Local Nature Reserves under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). This would involve the following:

- Securing legal interest
- Agreeing land management
- Consulting Scottish Natural Heritage
- Reporting to Council Planning Committee
- Publishing public notice of declaration

Discussion took place on the possible implications of designating Cammo as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This included funding, land ownership, and the benefits of LNR status. There was broad agreement on the potential benefits, however, all aspects had to be considered. Further discussions would be required and a management agreement put in place with the neighbouring landowners if the LNR boundary was to the River Almond.

Decision

- 1) That the Senior Natural Heritage Officer and the Biodiversity Officer to progress the proposal to make the Cammo Estate a Local Nature Reserve.
- 2) That the Biodiversity Officer send plans of the area around the Cammo Estate to the Estates Manager for the National Trust for Scotland.
- 3) That discussions took place with regard to the extent of the LNR boundary.

5. Cammo Estate Management Plan

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

5.1 Site Management:

- Weekly patrols were being carried out onsite (this included a farmhouse check, car park checks, litter pick-up and site health and safety).
- Removal of redundant post and wire fencing, which was ongoing.
- Removal of vegetation and undergrowth encroaching the Pinetum, which was ongoing.
- Several more breaches at Cammo Home Farm were reported to the Estates Team and repaired.

5.2 Management Plan:

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

5.3 Volunteers:

- Friends of Cammo Estate.
- Trust for Conservation Volunteers (formally British Trust for Conservation Volunteers).
- City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service Volunteers.
- New Caledonian Woodlands.
- Green Team.

5.4 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. This work would be carried out by the Botanic Gardens and the Natural Heritage Service.
- Draft meadow management and restoration plans had been drafted for the Stables Meadow, the Larch Tree Meadow, High and Low Meadows and West Park. It was hoped that the management of these sites might be undertaken as part of the urban pollinator project. Copies of the

proposals were available from the Natural Heritage Officer if required. West Park should be added to the cut and lift regime currently in operation on the North, South and Home Fields.

- Specifications to be drawn up for drainage and footpath improvements in the South West of the site.
- Regarding the installation of a pedestrian gate off Cammo Road connecting the site to the River Almond Walkway, this was a long term project and it was unlikely that this would be progressed in the near future.
- Outline costs had been drawn up for the removal and replacement of boundary fencing running along Cammo Walk from the lodge to the car park. The current fencing was collapsing under vegetation and was beginning to obstruct the road. Funding currently being investigated for the completion of this project. Costs would be approximately £3500, including disposal of old fencing.

5.5 Forthcoming activities:

- 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 and along the main drive.
- The Forestry Team to remove the Sitka Spruce leaning against the Atlas Cedar in the Pinetum.
- The replacement of the Atlas Cedar with a memorial tree of the same species, subject to a specimen of suitable provenance and condition being found.
- The removal of redundant fencing around maturing larch in Larch tree meadow and clearance of rank vegetation around the Larch trees.
- The removal of hanging branches and a general tidy up of forestry along the main avenue through the estate.
- Specifications to be drawn up for repairs/improvements to the path from the lodge to the car park. The majority of the works would be simple infill and resurface and a suitable volunteer or corporate group would be identified to carry out the necessary works.
- Scraping and clearing of the fibredec path through the walled garden. Also, clearing the path to its original width.

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer provided details of the Work Plan for the Estate. She referred to the objectives, updates and progress that had been made with the aspects. It was explained that the plan would be reviewed in 2015 and that feedback on the plan would be welcome.

Discussion took place regarding pro-formas for the meadows, the benefits of meadow management and on the replacement of the Atlas Cedar with a memorial tree. There

was further discussion about the need to remove trees and vegetation in the Walled Garden, which were harmful to the wall. However, some concern was expressed about cutting down trees to preserve the wall and it was thought that there was a need to ensure that sufficient tree planting took place to mitigate the impact of tree cutting.

Decision

- 1) That the Natural Heritage Officer progress the matter of the replacement of the Atlas Cedar tree with a memorial tree and liaise with the Botanic Gardens to effect this.
- 2) That the Natural Heritage Officer forward information on Pollinator/Meadows for 2014 to Committee Services for circulation.
- 3) That the Natural Heritage Officer investigate the issue of large trees in the walled garden and liaise with the Acting Chair and the Friends of Cammo.
- 4) That the Acting Chair liaise with the Natural Heritage Officer regarding the cutting of the ivy.
- 5) To acknowledge the contribution of the Friends of Cammo to tree planting and that this activity should continue as part of the management plan.
- 6) That the Natural Heritage Officer would update the next meeting of the Advisory Committee on tree management on the estate, which would include mature feature trees.
- 7) That there should be a “walk round” of the estate by members at the conclusion of the next meeting of the Advisory Committee to clarify issues such as tree-planting.

6. Interpretation of the Estate

At the previous meeting, amongst other matters, the issue of signage on the estate had been discussed.

Details were provided of the proposed signage and it was explained that it was necessary to balance types of signage, such as Quick Response Codes, with the traditional aspects of the estate.

Discussion took place on signage and anything that could be learned from Local Nature Reserves, in respect of interpretation.

Decision

- 1) That the Natural Heritage Officer investigate the addition of Local Nature Reserve Status to interpretation.
- 2) That members of the Advisory Committee provide feedback to the Natural Heritage Officer of their views on interpretation after the Walk Round of the estate.

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

7. Cammo Home Farm

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

The Estates Manager indicated that CALA Homes had withdrawn its offer as a result of the decision by the Scottish Minister not to grant consent to demolish the building. The Estates Section would be remarketing the house for restoration only.

Discussion took place about the possible restoration of the building, the economic considerations surrounding this and the timescales involved.

Decision

That the Estates Manager send the Sales Particulars, once they were ready, to Committee Services, for circulation.

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

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Resignations

It was reported that the members of the Friends of Cammo and the Cramond Association had resigned from the Advisory Committee, after a considerable number of years in attendance.

Decision

To thank to the members from the Friends of Cammo and the Cramond Association for their long service to the Advisory Committee and to wish them well.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 7 May 2014 at 11.00 am in the Cammo Lodge.