

Minutes

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Edinburgh 10 December 2014

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – David Chamberlain.

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

In Attendance:- Margery Naylor (Cramond Association), Peter Scott (Cramond and Barnton Community Council), Nick Benge (Friends of Cammo), Jenny Hargreaves (Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager) and David Kyles (Natural Heritage Officer), (Services from Communities), Lesley Price (Estate Manager, City Development) and Blair Ritchie (Committee Services).

Apologies:- Christopher Cassells.

1. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of 14 August 2014 was approved as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Presentation Seat

The Natural Heritage Officer had indicated that there had been one enquiry for a presentation seat, information had been provided and he was awaiting a response from the enquirer.

2.2 Work by Friends of Cammo

The work by the Friends of Cammo was ongoing.

2.3 Work Plan

Clarification was given of the potential funding available for activities, across the various sites in the care of the Natural Heritage Service.

2.4 Overflowing Bins

Members of the public had been phoning the Service and Taskforce directly, regarding overflowing bins.

Decision

To note the position.

3. Interpretation of the Estate

At the previous meeting of Cammo Estate Advisory Committee, it had been agreed, amongst other matters, that the Cramond and Barnton Community Council compiled a basic questionnaire to ascertain the public's views on interpretation, which would then be discussed at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee with a view to progressing the matter.

The representative of the Cramond and Barnton Community Council indicated that he had been involved in a survey for the River Cramond, of which details were provided. He thought that this would be useful for the Cammo Estate

Discussion took place and members made the following points:

- The Cramond and Barnton Community Council agreed to provide the Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager with the results of this questionnaire when it was compiled.
- Alternative funding options were being investigated. If the Friends of Cammo became involved in interpretation, they could apply for grants, however, any involvement by them would have to be in the context of the work they were carrying out.
- The way in which the management plan was put together was outlined. The Natural Heritage Service were trying to build in flexibility.
- It was difficult to integrate the activities carried out by the Council and the Friends of Cammo, however, they could undertake different tasks. Additionally, there was the problem of implementation, as some of the activities were of a seasonal nature.
- Details were provided of the way in which the Council allocated funding to the Cammo Estate.
- Funds could be used as "seed" money to generate bigger grants.
- The National Trust for Scotland were interested in the historical aspects of the estate and on 23 January 2015, they would be carrying out a review in relation to this.
- There would soon be many more people living in walking distance of the estate, due to extensive house building.

Decision

- 1) To note the position.
- 2) The Convener to provide details of the meeting with the National Trust on 23 January 2015 to the Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 14 August 2014 (item 7).

4. Cammo Home Farm

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

The Estates Manager reported on the sale of the Home Farm. She referred to the fire at the end of June which had damaged the roof and the first floor. The Council was required to ensure that the building was made safe and details were provided of the work that had been carried out and the assessment process. Further details were provided of progress being made in the disposal of the building.

Discussion took place on the repairs to the building, on the timescale for the disposal of the building and on its listed building status.

Decision

The Estates Manager to advise the Cammo Estate Advisory Committee of the outcome of discussions on the disposal of the Home Farm.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 14 August 2014 (item 3).

5. Cammo Estate Management Plan

The Natural Heritage Officer gave a verbal update on the following aspects of the Cammo Estate Officers report:-

5.1 Site Management:

- Weekly patrols were being carried out onsite (including a farmhouse check, car park checks, litter pick-up and site health and safety).
- Cammo Home Farm had received less attention lately. There had been one incident of a padlock being broken off, which had now been replaced. Heras fencing was being monitored for breaches. (There was no information regarding sale).
- The large ash tree (one of Sir John Clerks – which was approximately 300 years old) at the top of South Field had failed. Brash and encroachment had been cleared, the main stem would be left.
- There had been an informal investigation whilst onsite regarding the frequency of golf balls coming into the Estate. The occurred more in the summer season more so than in winter. Most balls which were encountered, were already on the ground. It was necessary to monitor the situation.
- Seven new orienteering control posts and markers went missing. All were replaced with more robust posts concreted, into the ground. Temporary markers were used until the official metal ones were produced and appended by the orienteering club.
- Two perches in the South West Meadow were rotten at base and had snapped off. Two new replacements were concreted to ground level.

- The Walled Garden vegetation had been cut, office and piggery vegetation had been cut, both of these by the Framework Contractor, Glendale.
- Debris/blockage within Bughtlin Burn had been cleared.
- The redundant gate on North West perimeter path had been removed.
- Internal Parks Quality Assessment (PQA) results had been received. There had been a 3% improvement to 68% and the overall class was "Very Good". Recommendations had been made to replace a poor conditioned boundary fence, to cut back low hanging branches across paths and improve the quality of muddy footpaths.

5.2 Nature Conservation:

- The Friends of Cammo (FOC) proposal for hedgerow planting and wildflower seeding across the South Field were investigated. CEC Planning, Historic Scotland and the City Archaeologist had no objections in terms of site designation. Liaison was continuing with FOC, with planting to begin in January 2015.
- There were very few Dutch elm diseased trees, the small numbers were being dealt with behind the stables and towards the north gate.
- The North, Home, South Field and West Park had all received a cut. Unfortunately, no lifting of arisings was carried out.

5.3 Volunteers/Groups:

- The Green Team.
- Environmental Outdoor Learning (EVOL).

5.4 Projects:

- The replacement of tree protection in Pinetum was ongoing: the Green Team and (EVOL) was still ongoing, with some to be completed.
- Cammo Walk boundary fence costs were included within the NHS workplan. There was short term provision for repairs, rather than complete replacement at this stage.
- There was liaison with FOC regarding the information panel in relation to wildflowers.

5.5 Forthcoming activities:

- Costs would be established for pineapples wall/sculptures.
- FOC fundraised for the relocation of bee enclosures from the Walled Garden to the Beech Roundel by the north gate; the old enclosure in the Walled Garden were due to be removed; the existing fenceline round Beech Roundel was to be improved; a secondary fence within, was to be constructed; some poorly conditioned sycamore trees would be felled to create space; and a tree Preservation Order exemption had already been sought and approved.
- Larch Tree Meadow chespaie fence removal was scheduled for the end of nesting season.

- Another application for a presentation seat had been received. Officers had yet to meet with the interested party onsite.
- Dropped limbs from standard trees within Home and South Fields were to be cleared and removed to field marginal areas, retaining the formal element in line with designed landscape status.
- The East Drive was to be crown lifted to approximately 3-4metres to improve access.
- The Local Nature Reserve status application would be taken forward by Planning if staff were available.

Details were provided on the proposed replacement of the Chilean Plum Yew and work carried out by the Roads Department. Further details were provided on possible improvements to paths, to the track along the golf course and work which needed to be carried out in the Larch Tree Meadow. It was explained that there were staff shortages which made it difficult to complete some of the work around the estate.

Decision

To note the report by the Natural Heritage Officer.

(Reference – Cammo Estate Officer's Report – August to November 2014).

6. Work of the Friends of Cammo

The representative from the Friends of Cammo reported that they had received funding to put a fence round the estate. They intended to plant a hedgerow of 720 trees, planted in three rows, beginning on 25 January 2015. It was confirmed that the Friends intended to chop down the laurel and plant yew in February 2015.

It was reported that trees had been planted without permission, in unusual places around the estate and that some of them might have to be removed. When the fields had previously been cut, the mower had created gaps, Yellow Rattle had been put in the gaps and this created more diversity.

Decision

To thank the Friends of Cammo for their ongoing work and to note the position.

7. Nature Conservation

It was reported that there were now many birds on the estate, including flocks of Gold Finches.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Paths on the Estate

Details were provided that some of the paths on the estate were in a poor muddy condition, due to leaf litter and needed to be swept. It was explained that not all the paths were in a poor condition, the main drive was being swept, but it might be necessary to ask volunteers to clean the smaller paths, for which tools could be provided. It was intended to mechanically sweep the paths in March 2015, and it was indicated that it was necessary to avoid damaging the trees in the process.

Decision

To note the position.

8.2 Green Flag Park Quality Assessment

The Park Quality Assessment was circulated and there were three recommendations highlighted in the assessment. These were for more historic interpretation, considering “way finder” posts and improving historical aspect of the site by ensuring the view from the House to the Pentlands was maintained through the trimming of trees. It was explained that the assessment was carried out by people from different backgrounds and details were provided of the judging process. Progress was being made in meeting these recommendations

Decision

To note the position.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 25 March 2015 at 1.30 pm in the Cammo Lodge.