

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Edinburgh 14 August 2014

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – David Chamberlain.

Representing the City of Edinburgh Council – Councillor Norman Work.

In Attendance:- Bill Weir (Cramond Association), Peter Scott (Cramond and Barnton Community Council), Jenny Hargreaves (Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager) and David Kyles (Natural Heritage Officer), (Services from Communities), Lesley Turner (Senior Estate Surveyor, City Development) and Blair Ritchie (Committee Services).

Apologies:- Councillor Karen Keil, Christopher Cassels, Nick Benge, Margery Naylor and Lesley Price.

1. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of 7 May 2014 was approved as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Work Plan

In response to a question from the Cramond and Barnton Community Council it was confirmed that rather than note the position for the Work Plan, The Natural Heritage Officer could produce a miniature work plan at the end of the financial year.

Discussion took place on the work being planned for the forthcoming year, planning for the new budget, the potential funding available for activities and the impact on this of the sale of the Home Farm.

It was thought that to enable the Cramond and Barnton Council to plan their work activities, it would be advantageous for them to see the annual work plan linked to funding. It was explained that work was being prioritised across the 12 sites and Cammo would have to share its allocation of resources. However, it would be possible to produce a projected work plan for the following year.

Decision

That the Natural Heritage Officer report to the next meeting of the Advisory Committee to outline a projected Work Plan for Cammo, and the members to discuss what was to be prioritised.

3. Cammo Home Farm

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

The Senior Estates Surveyor reported on the sale of the Home Farm, indicating that there had been a fire at the end of June which had damaged the roof and the first floor. However, the building was still under offer of sale to the proposed purchaser and there had been discussions with them to establish if they still wanted to proceed with the transaction. The building was now unsafe to enter and a “cherry picker” had been hired to check out the inside of the building. The department was waiting for reports from the fire service and the structural engineer on the extent of the damage. A report would also be submitted to the next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee on the proposed sale of the Home Farm.

Further works were required to avoid further damage and to ensure that the building was safe. However, as the Home Farm was a C listed building, it was difficult for major works to be undertaken.

Discussion took place on the outcome of the site meeting to discuss the fire, and the structural engineer’s report. There was further discussion on the need to stabilise the building, access, and progress with the sale.

Decision

- 1) That the Senior Estates Surveyor provide an update to the Advisory Committee, once she had received the report from the structural engineer.
- 2) That the Senior Estates Surveyor forward the report to Committee Services, providing an update on the sale of the Home Farm for circulation.

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

4. Cammo Estate Management Plan

The Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager provided an update on the Service. She referred to the staff structure and indicated that due to staff leaving, the existing staff had additional areas of responsibility. She then introduced the new Natural Heritage Officer for Cammo.

The new Natural Heritage Officer indicated that he was familiar with Cammo, but he was responsible for other sites, which meant spending less time at Cammo. He then gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

4.1 Site Management:

- Weekly patrols were being carried out onsite (including a farmhouse check, car park checks, litter pick and site health and safety).
- There had been several more breaches and a subsequent fire raising incident at Cammo Home Farm. Surrounding vegetation had been cleared and Heras fencing had been erected, restricting access to the immediate vicinity of building.
- The taskforce was regularly notified of overflowing bins.
- The north gate orientation panel had been graffitied with a marker and this had been removed.
- A dangerous limb of a tree (still attached) and another had fallen but was leaning on a wall within the walled garden, which had been reported to forestry and cleared. The fallen beech limb on the path above the North Field towards the North Gate had been cleared at the same time.
- A couple of incidences of Friends of Cammo (FOC) literature within the lodge had been removed without payment – perhaps the service should review the protocol with FOC.
- There had been reports of fire lighting within Walled Garden next to bee enclosure – no evidence had been encountered.
- A site user had been struck by golf a ball. Contact made with the club. There was emphasis on the golf club to prevent such incidents. The Natural Heritage Service (NHS) was keen to hear of similar incidents or “near misses”.
- There had been reports of anti-social behaviour on Mausley Hill. This had been investigated and no evidence had been found. The only action would be to notify landowner of litter/debris.

4.2 Management Plan:

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

4.3 Volunteers/Groups:

- George Heriot's and John Muir Award volunteers were completing drainage works at the South West corner.
- The local nursery had use of Visitor Centre, for several half days in July.
- The Friends of Craiglockhart Woods and Nature Trail had toured the site with an interest in wildflower areas and the Fibredec path.
- The South Field wildflower survey had been completed with two volunteers.
- The Love Parks Week had taken place (25/07/14 – 01/08/14). A River Almond Ramble including Cammo Estate had been delivered, with eight attendees.

4.4 Projects:

- The replacement of tree protection in Pinetum was ongoing.
- The Cammo Walk boundary fence costs were included within the NHS workplan. Short term provision for repairs rather than complete replacement was taking place at this stage.

4.4 Forthcoming activities:

- Costs to be established for pineapples wall/sculptures.
- The North, Home and South Fields were to be cut and lifted imminently.
- The Path edges, walled garden and Larch tree Meadow were to be cut by Glendale (Framework Contractor). Office and piggery structures were also to be cleared. In the SW Meadow, it was not established if a cut was necessary as floral blooms were evident with good diversity. Although not of a typical wildflower meadow, most species were more robust.
- The Larch Tree Meadow chespaie fence removal was scheduled for the end of the nesting season.
- A group of regular users who had a friend who loved Cammo and died young had fundraised to produce a bespoke bench/seat in his honour. The initial site meeting had taken place with two possible locations discussed – the SW Meadow and replacement of seat in front of Cammo House. The group would discuss this with FOC before any final decisions were made. The design was to be in keeping with the natural atmosphere of Cammo. Robin Wood, the sculpture, had been approached to produce the bench/seat.

Details were provided of the issue of golf balls on the estate. It was explained that a walker on the estate had been injured by a golf ball.

Discussion took place about the issue of golf balls, the cost for repairs, the replacement for the Cedar tree and the failed Chilean Yew Plum.

Decision

- 1) That the Natural Heritage Officer put up a notice inviting people to notify the Natural Heritage Service of the instances of golf balls on the estate and that these instances be monitored.
- 2) That the Natural Heritage Officer liaise with the Friends of Cammo and the Bonanic Gardens to help deal with the failed Chilean Yew.

(References – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 7 May 2014 (item 3); Cammo Estate Officer's Report – May - August 2014).

5. Nature Conservation

The Natural Heritage Officer reported on nature conservation on the Estate, giving a verbal update on the following:-

5.1 Nature Conservation:

- The Usual Himalayan balsam patch by the back wall at the North Gate had been pulled. A new invasion had been noted by the Beech Roundel/top of North Field – all were strimmed prior to seeding.

- Ragwort had been hand pulled from the Home, North and South Fields. The top corner of the North Field had been left, due to a huge number of Cinnabar Moth larvae.
- The South Field wildflower survey had been completed with two volunteers.

It was reported that there would be a meeting with the Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager and the Bio-Diversity Officer to discuss the Nature Conservation Local Nature Reserve report.

Decision

The Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager to inform the Biodiversity Officer that the Cramond and Barnton Community Council would welcome a presentation on Local Nature Reserve designation.

6. Work of the Friends of Cammo

It was reported that the Friends of Cammo had engaged in grass-cutting activities and had helped deal with overflowing bins.

Decision

To note the position.

7. Interpretation of the Estate

At the previous meeting of Cammo Estate Advisory Committee, there was support for the valuable interpretation provision at Cammo Lodge, such as displays and, publications, the Pinetum and wildflower site. However, concern was expressed at the lack of on-site interpretation of the important cultural heritage interests of Cammo Estate. It was agreed that initial ideas for interpretation should be sought and discussed.

The Cramond and Barnton Community Council indicated that there was nothing illustrating the historical aspect of the estate and thought that there should be a consultation on this. They put forward some ideas for on-site interpretation for Cammo House, designed landscapes, Mauseley Hill, Tower and Portugal Garden and historic trees and then suggested some potential stages in progressing their ideas for interpretation.

Discussion took place on progressing the ideas for interpretation. This included the number of display boards that was appropriate and how they would be set up, the funding required, the views of the neighbouring farmer, and the need to establish what visitors wanted, with a possible “survey monkey”, with the aspect of involving the Natural Heritage Service and Historic Scotland.

Decision

- 1) That the Cramond and Barnton Community Council compile 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.
- 2) That the Cramond and Barnton Community Council send the proposed questionnaire to the Natural Heritage Service and a link would be forwarded to Committee Services, for circulation.
- 3) That the Acting Natural Heritage Service Manager check the figure for funding interpretation in the Management Plan.

(References – Cammo Estate Advisory Committee 7 May 2014 (item 7); Cammo Estate Interpretation – Initial Discussion Paper, circulated).

8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10 December 2014 at 1.30 pm.