

Minutes

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Tuesday 28 April 2022 at 10.00am via Microsoft Teams

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – David Chamberlain (Convener) and Colin Wren.

Representing the City of Edinburgh Council – Councillor Work.

In Attendance:- Peter Scott (Cramond and Barnton Community Council), Simon Gillam (Friends of Cammo), Nick Bengel David Kyles (Natural Heritage Service) and Blair Ritchie (Committee Services).

Apologies:- Councillor Hutchison.

1. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the 23 March 2021 as a correct record.

2. Cammo Estate Management Plan

2.1 Cammo Estate Management Plan – General Maintenance

The Natural Heritage Officer gave an update on the Cammo Estate Management Plan.

- It was reported that general maintenance of the park was undertaken as scheduled (i.e. formal grass cutting) and when remedial actions were encountered such as storm damage to trees, damage to height restrictions barriers at car parks or topping up of whindust/woodchip on paths and field entrances. This was undertaken through a combination of Friends of Cammo (FoC) volunteers and the Council Estate Team, Council Greenspace Teams, Council Forestry Teams or contractors.
- Over the last period (since March 2021 and in no particular order) there had been regular litter picks; remedials undertaken to the height restriction barrier and wall at the south car park; surface top ups of woodchip to Forest Kindergarten sites and field entrances; surface top ups to the path running by Cammo Walk; resurfacing of tarmac at the entrance by the Lodge (part funded

Thursday, 28th April, 2022

by FoC); replacement storage heaters in the Lodge; surfacing to the rear of Cammo House ruin; protection of newly planted trees in the pinetum; clearance of storm damaged trees; replacement litter bins with larger capacity; maintenance of newly planted trees; graffiti removal from stables and other structures; debris clearance from the Bughtlin burn; seasonal signage warning of wasps nests by path edges; meadow management; removal of some redundant barbed fencing; repairs to timber rail and wire fencing at the north car park; liaison with adjacent landowners re access, security, infrastructure; removal of grass bale twine and use for mulching; liaison with events organisers and volunteer groups; liaison with councillors/ministers for site visits; tacking INNS (FoC).

- Other actions had also been completed associated with additional grant money spend: NatureScot Nature Restoration funding was successfully accessed to allow Cammo wet meadow construction, boardwalk to be constructed in coming weeks (Home farm capital expenditure). Perimeter hedge planting had also taken place round most of the larger field areas.

Discussion took place and it was confirmed that In the Wet Meadow, the contractor had done a good job and the planting went well. The only issue was a leak in the Meadow. A possible solutions would be to replace a 40 metre section of the big main drain. Otherwise, matters were progressing well.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) The Friends of Cammo would liaise with the Natural Heritage officer about the leak in the Meadow.

2.2 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Forthcoming Activities

- Renewal of site management plan. Draft plan update to be made available for comment by June.
- Action plan for mitigation to areas tarnished by Forest Kindergarten use to be formed.
- Enquiry for lease for pitch for food/beverage provision to be administered (lack of communication with successful bidder lately perhaps due to pandemic).
- Report which was sent to Council Property Strategy Group for Cammo Lodge use (last year) to be considered. Again, lack of action noted here. Consideration also to be made for extension to Lodge to cater for ever increasing demand on the facility the building provides.
- Repairs to be made to fencing and gates at north car park once we receive materials (now ordered as budget available in new financial year, awaiting delivery).
- Consideration to be made for Community ownership/more autonomy for FoC in site management actions and decisions.

Thursday, 28th April, 2022

- Submit application to HES for Heritage and Place grant money. SMT selected 3 projects out of a possible 14 put forward – Cammo, South Queensferry town centre improvements and Granton Waterfront at risk historic buildings were selected.
- Graffiti – the Council graffiti team had operational equipment issues and a long list of priority removals to undertake, the graffiti at Cammo was on their “to do” list.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) That the Natural Heritage Officer would have a draft management plan available for comment by June 2022.

2.3 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Cammo Improvement Project

- Environmental improvements such as enrichment to large field areas, Cammo wet meadow construction and interpretive measures had been completed through a combination of Cammo Home Farm capital expenditure and additional grant aided finance.
- Atkins had been commissioned to produce a report into design and cost estimates for built structures – wg, stables and Cammo cottage/steading or piggery. Ecological report received, final draft report delayed, expected March 2022, hopeful to receive soon to be made available for comment.
- The Brief that Atkins received was based on the outcome of the consultation that Land Use Consultants undertook in 2018. It was possible to apply for additional money and adopt a minimalist or maximalist approach for the work to be carried out. The brief that they have received was to target some specific areas to make the Wall safe and to re-vegetate.

The FOC were satisfied with this approach by Atkins for built structures. The Walled Garden (WG) was in the middle of the estate, it was important for wildlife and biodiversity. A minimalist approach should be adopted to make it safe without spending an excessive amount.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- The forestry team who surveyed tree stock said there were no issues with large adjacent trees falling on the wall.
- Whether more orchard trees could be planted in the Walled Garden.
- The FOC thought about planting flowers for honeybees, however, a more holistic approach was needed to planting.
- Once the report from Atkins was received, some of spending would be allocated to target areas in the WG to make it safe. It would be then necessary to develop a cohesive plan regarding environmental

Thursday, 28th April, 2022

improvements. There was still a significant amount of capital money to be spent and annual funding would be available once the report was received.

- The Heritage Fund would go towards built structures. This would include work on Cammo Lodge, the WG and consolidatory work on the stables. It was hoped not to spend too much of capital spending on this. As seed money was available, it might make the application for heritage funding more successful.
- Whether interpretation would come into that grant.

Decision

To note the update.

2.4 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society

- Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society (EAFS) had steadily been working at Cammo with some breaks due to Covid. Most activity lately had centred on the steading, walled garden and stables. Vegetation had been removed from built structures in these locations (surrounds and internally) with recovered artifacts recorded and displayed on their website, see <http://www.eafs.org.uk/>. Also, to celebrate the organisations 50th year, an exhibition was hosted at the Museum of Edinburgh (now closed with Cammo evidence relocated to the Maltings, Cramond Heritage Trust). Earlier in 2021, the Lord Provost was hosted by EAFS at Cammo detailing the extent of their work to him.
- Alongside regular Monday outings for members, open days had been held across many weekends, the next scheduled for Saturday 30th April 2022.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- That the EAFS created huge piles of soil next to where they were digging in the WG.
- That some remedial action needed to be taken regarding the spoil, caused by digging and piled at the side, although it would be used at some stage.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) The FOC to liaise with EAFS to find some means of minimising the impact they were having when they were digging in the WG.
- 3) The Natural Heritage Officer to liaise the EAFS directly to get plan of action about rectifying the pile of soil caused by digging in the WG.

2.5 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Site Interpretation

- Directional signposts were all now installed with the exception of one at Cammo

Thursday, 28th April, 2022

Walk where a new link path was expected to be constructed at some point leading across to the new housing development. The waymarker route markers had been installed with additional ones requiring smaller posts to be delivered to mount – thanks to FoC, especially Simon Gillam.

- A draft seating plan had been put together with basic timber seating in desired locations to be purchased and installed soon. Other seating with themes or associated with particular areas and structures within the park were still to be progressed, the delay here was due to the wet meadow construction and consolidation work.
- The interpretive panel at Cammo House ruin had been relocated and was now offset to the southwest corner of the house.
- 2 x lockable lectern mounted display cases were on order and were due to be installed imminently. These were of the same design as the 2 that are in place by Cammo cottage and steading/piggery.
- The FOC indicated that they had held discussions with the EAFS about marking the outline of the maximum extent of Cammo House. The FOC had been looking at old plans. It would be possible to walk round in order to consider where the outline of the north and east extension would be and how it could be marked. Then for the EAFS to produce a better plan, where the outline of the building was marked on top of what was there at present. There should be progress in drafting proposals in the next few weeks.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) Representatives of the FOC and the Natural Heritage Officer to circumvent the maximum extent of Cammo House and EAFS to come up with an improved plan, where the outlined could be marked.
- 3) To note that there should be progress in next few weeks.

3. Walled Garden

The Natural Heritage Officer advised that EAFS work had progressed into the Walled Garden. The gardeners potting shed/howff had been cleared and excavated. Efforts were now directed on the north wall at the location of the old glass houses with the boiler to the rear now fully exposed.

The beehives had been tended to and populations were good and ever expanding. FoC had successfully harvested additional honey resource with it being in high demand when offered for sale.

Path edge maintenance had been undertaken seasonally with additional cutting late season over areas know to hold vast quantities of snowdrops allowing a greater spectacle to be observed when flowering.

Decision

To note the update.

4. Work of the Friends of Cammo

The National Heritage Officer reported that liaison with the Friends of Cammo (FoC) and Council officers had been ongoing over the last year. The efforts from FoC in keeping the site clean, reporting issues, initiating improvement works, staffing and maintaining the Lodge are most welcome and much appreciated.

Nick Bengé (FoC) was put forward and had successfully been awarded a British Citizen Award for his efforts at Cammo over the last couple of decades.

FoC hosted Christine Jardine MP to site to share and highlight their successes. FoC had indicated a desire to have more input into how Cammo was managed. Information was provided on a similar model conducted by the Friends of Craiglockhart Hills and also how the process of Community ownership might be achieved.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- The FOC had carried out significant work in the last year. This included setting up the planting around the field perimeters. It had created some mess, but that had been rectified.
- They had planted a Jubilee Hedgerow, brought in woodchip and deadwood for paths and woodland areas, which prevented them being mud baths and carried out frequent litter picks.
- Forrest Kindergarten contributed to work on the Wetland. FOC had set up a meeting with Forrest Kindergarten to ask them to draft a report of the environmental impact of Forrest Kindergarten projects in Edinburgh, which would be actioned.
- The FOC generally kept a watch on the park and fixed anything that required attention or reported it to the Natural Heritage Officer.
- They had previously held meetings of the FOC in Cammo Lodge, however, there had been problems with this venue because of the lockdown and of excessive numbers. Consequently, they had held outdoor meetings and had also made use of Turnhouse Gold Club.
- Instead of summer barbeques, which had sometimes been postponed or cancelled due to bad weather, they were considering having a picnic in the park to attract families. Stalls and activities would be provided.
- The membership of the FOC had increased and the FOC were trying to get new members from the Cammo Meadows Development, besides the Maybury Road. It might be possible to liaise with CALA to facilitate this.

Thursday, 28th April, 2022

- The lockdown provided a possible insight into the future when all the proposed housing developments were completed, with the greatly increased footfall in the estate. One of the reasons for planting around the margins of the fields was to protect wildlife from the increasing number of users.
- The Cramond and Barnton Community Council had held discussions with CALA regarding the proposed Link Path from the Cammo Meadow Site into the Cammo Estate. CALA might be prepared to provide funding to install a new gate and fencing along Cammo Walk and pay for new signage. They were waiting for the Natural Heritage Officer to provide some estimates for signage.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To note that the Natural Heritage Officer approved of the above approach and he would look to provide specification for paths and costings for updated panels.
- 3) To note that there was a happy relationship between the FOC and the Natural Heritage Service and to thank the Natural Heritage Officer and the FOC for this.

5. Nature Conservation

The Natural Heritage Officer reported on Nature Conservation which included the following:

- Cammo field areas had continued to be cut and arisings removed which would improve biodiversity within the sward. Enrichment had also occurred within these areas. The smaller existing wildflower areas had continued to be managed this way by FoC.
- Approximately 3000 new hedge trees had been planted at Cammo over the last year.
- FoC ran their local Xmas tree recycling scheme again this year where discarded trees were used as habitat and protection for younger establishing trees onsite.
- FoC had also been tackling the invasive non-native few-flowered leek with success.
- FoC had also purchased and installed new habitat boxes across the site.
- New habitat creation had been created in south field through the de-culverting of the canal outflow to form a burn and wet meadow. Suitable plant species for such habitat had been introduced. Thanks again to FoC and especially the expertise provided by Nick Bengé to realise this project.
- Butterfly transects had continued to be undertaken mostly by FoC volunteers and continued to do so.

Thursday, 28th April, 2022

The FOC indicated that here had been a big improvement with habitat and biodiversity which included large amounts of cowslip flowering. The botanical diversity in the field had greatly improved and were full of different species. That was helped by the process which included cutting IT short and bailing IT. Additionally, the hedgerows were teeming with wildlife, which included birds and insects. There were also more visitors to the park and more wildlife, which included Rowe Dear and Barn Owls.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To note that grass cutting had not been done this year, but would be done, when necessary, with the help of the Natural Heritage Officer.

6. Forest Kindergarten

The Natural Heritage Officer reported on Forest Kindergarten which included the following:

Forest Kindergarten (FK) at Cammo was the first pilot in Edinburgh and as a result of the success had been further rolled out across sites in Queensferry, Granton, Corstorphine and Craigmillar. Other sites were now also under consideration for such educational provision. FK staff continued to use Cammo Lodge for welfare and tools/materials storage alongside the new pods located at on the boundary of the north car park in north field.

FoC and other volunteer groups had assisted in providing woodchip replenishment on the woodland floor in the areas that FK activities take place. It was always understood that erosion and denudation would occur due to such heavy footfall in such areas and whilst other sites and Forest Schooling activities dictated and could tolerate movement from these bases to allow them to recover, Cammo could not, due to its relatively small size. As a result, and alongside ever-increasing footfall within the park, a plan was required to prevent further degradation of the park associated with this. Senior Officers from the Early Learning Team within the Council had met with FoC and Parks Officers to put together a plan on how best to mitigate these concerns and were due to meet again in early May to update. The outcome of these discussions would not only benefit Cammo but all the other sites where FK activities took place.

It was worth noting that across the pandemic period, most parks experienced an increase in usage due to people working from home and looking for areas to recharge/explore nature; many informal desired routes have popped up in all sites over this period.

Because of lockdown and the increased footfall, it was noticeable that 30 small children and staff, with more watering and feeding had a noticeable impact on the park.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To note that the Advisory Committee should take pride that Cammo Estate was the pilot for the Forest Kindergarten scheme and this was due to the work of the

Natural Heritage Officer and the FOC.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Restructuring

The Natural Heritage Officer reported that the Parks and Greenspace Manager had retired with the Head of Neighbourhood Environmental Services taking on this responsibility alongside other remits such as waste, cemeteries and scientific services. Two officers in the Natural Heritage Service had also left the Council. Restructuring of Park Rangers, Natural Heritage Officers, Parks Development Officers and Greenspace Teams across the city was due, with a job matching process underway at certain levels. Some temporary posts were now filled and seasonal roles had been established to pick up any slack.

7.2 Muddy Paths

The Ranger Service found it difficult to deal with muddy paths because of the nature of Natural Heritage Parks. Paths were the responsibility of the Natural Heritage Officer and the FOC. Hot spots had been addressed with the help of the FOC and other volunteers. A few paths had not received treatment, they would be dealt with over the next few years.

One possible solution would be to look at what drainage there had been in the past and if this could be restored, especially near the entrance to the Home Farm. Woodchip was not the ideal solution.

7.3 Anti-Social Behaviour

3 new litter bins had been installed by the Council last month, at the entrance of the north car park and south car park. This was welcome, but they had not been emptied frequently enough. One issue was the amount of dog fouling on the estate. The solution might be having wheelie bins in the park which could be wheeled to entrances. The other issue was parties of teenagers in the Stables Ruin, leaving rubbish in stables.

There had been regular reporting of incidents and anti-social behaviour to the police or the Heritage Service. More reporting was better, as it was possible to establish a better profile and allocate the necessary resources.

Decision

That the Natural Heritage Officer could send information onto environmental wardens, who could allocate resources. It would also be possible to erect informal signage relating to responsible access.

7.4 Memorial Seat

That a seat in the Estate was being used as a memorial seat

Decision

The Natural Heritage Officer would check this out with the relevant officers within the division.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Decision

To agree that Committee Services would liaise with officers to agree a suitable date for the next meeting.