

Minutes

Cammo Estate Advisory Committee

Tuesday 23 March 2021 at 2.00pm via Microsoft Teams

Present:-

Representing the National Trust for Scotland – Colin Wren.

Representing the City of Edinburgh Council – Councillor Work (Convener in the absence of David Chamberlain).

In Attendance:- Peter Scott (Cramond and Barnton Community Council), Simon Gillam (Friends of Cammo), Susan Dickon (Senior Natural Heritage Officer), Nick Bengé and Veronica MacMillan (Committee Services).

Apologies:- Councillor Hutchison, David Chamberlain and David Kyles.

1. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the 10 February 2020 as a correct record, subject to an amendment to the third bullet point of item 6 – Work of the Friends of Cammo, to read as follows:

‘Welcoming deadwood, with the help of volunteers, such as “dirty weekenders” and scouts.’

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.

- Woodchip had been deposited on heavily mudded paths and interceptions had been arranged with the suitable social distancing by Friends of Cammo over the autumn/winter period of 2020/21.
- Due to being in lockdown for much of the period and due to covid restrictions only essential maintenance had been carried out on all of our sites, including Cammo.
- Cammo Lodge had had a broken window early in 2020. This had been boarded and so was not considered essential maintenance. A date has yet to be agreed on when the window would be fixed.
- The Turnhouse boundary wall repair was being undertaken at the beginning of this week at the south-west corner.

- Fly-tipping had been removed from the north car park. The height restriction barrier in the north car park had been damaged and would be repaired. Similarly, the height restriction barrier in the south car park had also been damaged and would be repaired.
- There had been multiple instances of litter clearing by Friends of Cammo and other dog walkers when they had encountered it. A query was raised about how quickly litter was picked up by the Council after it had been collected. Members of the Committee advised that it varied in terms of the frequency that it was picked up. Sometimes it was daily, sometimes it was every three days. It was advised by Committee members that it would help if a larger bin was provided.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To agree that officers would investigate the possibility of providing a larger litter bin.

2.2 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Forthcoming Activities

- The site management plan ran out in 2020. A draft had been produced by officers that David Kyles was looking at. Officers would circulate the draft site management plan to the Committee as soon as they had received as much input as possible from the Friends of Cammo and the Advisory Group before it went out for public consultation.
- The plan followed the Green Flag guidelines because it was intended to put Cammo forward for Green Flag status for 2022.
- Other capital budgets had been secured. One would be used for structures on all of the sites that National Heritage managed, and Cammo was already quite high up on that list. There were a few structures within Cammo that were required to be made safe in the first instance.
- Capital had been secured to improve footpaths and footways across all of parks, and Cammo was on the list for that. Cammo had the advantage in terms of being able to use some of the money from the homefarm which could be coupled with the money from the capital budget.
- There were also other grants coming through from the Scottish Government and Nature Scot. Funding could be used for improving pathways and footways and outdoor areas. This would be over a five to 10 year period.
- The home farm funding was being used to enrich the large field areas, particularly with cutting and lifting.
- Preparing Cammo Lodge for lease – there had been a request for a pop-up café on a short-term temporary basis. This was currently being looked into. A longer-term lease may be sought in the future.
- Wet patches of grass had been scraped and ditch and drainage creation had taken place in the low meadow. These were the sorts of tasks that the capital funding would be used for.
- Planting was taking place today of three of the four iconic trees in the pinetum.

- Other current maintenance issues that required remedial action were:
 - the low meadow flooding and drainage and there was a lot of puddling on the path between the lodge and the south car park which required attention. Drainage would be looked at there.
 - There was puddling at the Northgate entrance opposite 36 Cammo Road and drainage was required to be looked at there.
 - Turnhouse boundary wall repair was to be undertaken at the south-west corner.
 - Surfacing improvements were taking place outside the lodge at the roadside entrance.
 - Surfacing path was being considered outside the perimeter of north field.
- Funding for the above could be topped up from the capital budget previously mentioned.

Decision

To note the update.

2.3 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Cammo Improvement Project

- Priorities were agreed at the previous Committee based on the LUC document. This included habitat improvements to the field areas through the creation of a wet meadow, canal outflow, de-culverting through the cattle trough. A planning application was being prepared.
- The Committee asked if there was a link from the lodge to the cattle trough, an all purpose path and seating as part of the plans for that project. Committee were advised that this was something that could be considered as part of the project but it would mean that someone would have to design it. The capital and grant money referred to earlier could be used for this because it would be creating access to an area that did not exist in the past.
- Work on consolidation of the stables, the cottage, north-west corner of the walled garden was hoped to be carried out this year. Input from estates was awaited to enable plans to be drawn up for this.
- South car park expansion – this had been stalled because clarity was required on whether the Committee could approach developers for contributions to improvements on this boundary. A response was also awaited in terms of whether the developers would contribute to a community hub, but it was noted that they may not wish to contribute to both. It was agreed that Councillor Work would find out if the S75 funding had already been allocated.
- Discussion took place about the possibility of approaching the Cramond Hill Estate for funding. It was noted that Council approval would be required to do this, and clarity would be needed in terms of the amount of funding sought and what the funding would be used for.
- Issues were discussed and noted in relation to providing more car parking and in turn attracting more people to the site. The land was at risk of being denigrated and there could be an increase in litter left behind by those visiting the area.

- It was agreed that officers would work up these projects with details of the work, associated costs and would clarify who would manage them.
- It was noted that the City of Edinburgh Council webpage for Cammo was required to be updated, including capital spend.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To agree that Councillor Work would find out if the S75 funding had already been allocated in relation to funding the expansion of the south car park and the community hub.
- 3) To note that consideration was being given to approaching Cramond Hill Estate for funding and that Council approval would be required to do this. To further note that clarity would be needed in terms of the amount of funding sought and what the funding would be used for.
- 4) To note the issues discussed in relation to expanded car parking provision.
- 5) To note that the City of Edinburgh Council webpage for Cammo was required to be updated.

2.4 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society

- Activity on site had been limited due to Covid, although officers had been out on site last summer.
- Plans of Cammo cottage had been drawn and submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council to assist with making it safe.
- Further plans had been made to continue activity at the workshop.

Decision

To note the update.

2.5 Cammo Estate Management Plan – Site Interpretation

- Works had been limited and only essential works had been carried out. However, most of the directional fingers had been installed to the extent that they had been vandalised. They would continue to be installed as would the waymarkers.
- The threshold signs had all been put up and the Cammo house panels had been put up. Two display cases had been put up near the cottage and workshop the archaeological field society would be able to display their information there about the activities they were involved in.
- The Committee was advised that the vandalism to the directional signs had mostly occurred at night and it was mainly groups of young people that were responsible. The lighting of fires was also an issue in the area.
- The good work of the Friends of Cammo was recognised in terms of clearing up litter and the remnants of fires that people who had visited had left behind.
- Officers advised that they had posters that could be displayed if the lighting of fires was becoming an issue. The posters had information that would educate

the public in terms of what they could and could not do in relation to lighting fires. Social media could also be used for the same purpose.

- Officers further advised that if there were regular issues with anti-social behaviour, vandalism and littering then community safety and the police may be able to provide support. Evidence would be required to be provided in terms of dates, times and the incidents that had occurred.

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To note that posters could be displayed advising the public on what they could and could not do in relation to lighting fires. To further note that social media could be used for the same purpose.
- 3) To note that if there were regular issues with anti-social behaviour, vandalism and littering then community safety and the police may be able to provide support. Evidence would be required to be provided in terms of dates, times and the incidents that had occurred.

3. Walled Garden

The Natural Heritage Officer advised that in terms of the Walled Garden, consolidation works were taking place in the north west corner through de-vegetation and mortar repair. Consideration was being given to putting up a fence for safety reasons.

Decision

To note the update.

4. Work of the Friends of Cammo

The National Heritage Officer expressed thanks for the work that the Friends of Cammo had carried out during the pandemic in terms of litter picking and reporting concerns and issues they had to the National Heritage Officers. Without Friends of Cammo, Cammo would not be the place that it was, even more so throughout the pandemic.

Decision

To note the hard work of the Friends of Cammo, especially throughout the pandemic.

5. Nature Conservation

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

- A barn owl fledgling was unfortunately found dead in Montrose, which showed how far the fledglings could fly. It was hoped that there would be more of them out there that were alive.
- The Friends of Cammo Christmas Tree initiative worked well on site. It reduced waste and increased habitat provision. People brought their Christmas trees to Cammo for recycling as habitat provision and the numbers reached 500. The initiative was very successful.

- All the grass was cut and bailed in the north, south and home fields in the autumn. The area had been re-seeded so should flower in the summer.

Decision

To note the update.

6. Forest Kindergarten

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

- Cammo was the pilot for the forest kindergarten scheme and it had now started to be rolled out across Edinburgh and had been very successful.
- Children and Families received additional funding to provide temporary pods that had gone in the north car park in Cammo and other sites across Edinburgh.
- The pods would provide storage, somewhere for the children to warm up during adverse weather conditions and would provide toilet and handwashing facilities.
- Regular meetings had been set up with the onsite kindergarten staff to discuss and resolve teething problems that had been identified.
- Hedging was being installed today around the pods and also some seeding and surfacing was required to be carried out.
- The impact on the canopy layer had been significant due to the number of children and families that had been visiting. Friends of Cammo had been putting down woodchip which had helped to strike a balance.
- Staff had wanted to move to a different site but this had been discouraged because of potential damage that could be caused elsewhere.
- The site was being used by many different groups which could cause conflict. Resolution would come from encouraging the groups to respect the right of everyone to use the space. Discussing issues with the groups would help to resolve things going forward.

Decision

To note the update.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Decision

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