



Minutes of Friends of Cammo General Meeting held in Cammo Lodge on 5th June 2024

Present: Bruce Angus (Chairperson), Simon Gillam (Secretary), Karen Edwards (Membership Secretary), Claire Wallace, Bert Scott, Barbara Braham, Sheena McRobie, Rhona Paterson, Rachel Doughty, Carol Smith.

Apologies: Nick Bengel, Lynn and Grahame Whitehead, Michael Roe, Harry Taylor, Joanna Morris and Katherine Thompson.

Bruce thanked Lynn in her absence for the refreshments and for cleaning the lodge.

There were no matters arising from the last meeting

Membership: Karen Edwards reported that we have 252 members on the books at present and following two recent Gate Days we have recruited 16 new members up to the 3rd May this year, which is excellent news as our membership year only starts on April. Apparently, there are more in the pipeline, but we are awaiting the next bank statement to confirm this. Another recruitment drive around the new housing estates is planned for later in the summer and when we did this before it resulted in 14 new members.

Financial report read by Simon in Lynn's absence

We have £5,567 in the bank made up as follows -

RESTRICTED FUNDS - £265

- £215 specifically for the production of INFORMATION PANELS.

- £50 for a tree.

GENERAL FUNDS - £5,302

General Funds are down £79 since the 31 December 2023 year end.

The main income and expenditure so far this year have been as follows -

Regarding INCOME -

- annual subscriptions and donations have continued at a satisfactory rate.

On the EXPENDITURE side -

- we have spent £269 on plants and shrubs.

- we have spent £150 on bird boxes.

- we have spent £800 on garden tools for use by work parties.

- we have also spent £500 on completing the upgrade to our web site.

Overall, our finances continue to be in a satisfactory condition.

Simon mentioned that the figure for plants and shrubs included £80 for the Dirty Weekenders work party and the figure for the garden tools included £40 for a flow key for the canal. As many of the new garden tools as possible are currently being stored in the facility behind the Lodge, with the excess being housed in Lynn's garage. Simon also advised that we had agreed to contribute towards the cost of the map boards for the Park, using the remaining restricted funds for panels plus some general funds.

There was also comment that since the upgrade the FoC Website did not appear at the top of the list when you search online for it, there are also two pages from the old site, one of which (the membership page) diverts you to 'site not found'. Simon advised that Michael Roe was currently working to rectify these niggles.

Claire also commented that when you click on the "join us" link it just takes you to a printed application form, however, at the moment we are not able to do fully automated membership applications.

Environmental Report Read by Bruce in Nick's absence

- The kestrels still seem to be around but the duck eggs in the duck house were taken by a fox.
- Lots of brash coming into the park and some logs and woodchip as well.
- There is a new person taking on the bees – John Jeffrey who has the hives at Lauriston. He has already had a look at the hives and is starting to look after them. He is talking to Rachel which is good. Rhona confirmed that two of the original hives are healthy. Rachel commented that he is a very experienced beekeeper and that he is working on plans for the future of the Cammo bees. He may be looking at raising funds or seeking sponsorship to contribute towards the cost of the bees. Rachel also suggested looking at volunteer services to see if other people might want to look after the bees, But Rhona, who has been a helper to Rachel for many years, thinks that John will want to recruit his own helpers and train them up
- There is lots of wildflower coming out in the park – huge amounts of yellow rattle but lots of orchids too and bird's foot trefoil plus the oxeye daisies are starting.
- The wetland is doing well with the plants very well established. Sheena commented that the Irises have been lovely this year. Thousands of toad tadpoles are developing, there is a moorhen nesting and there are red damselflies beginning to come out.
- Generally, the park is flourishing.

Barbara said that regarding the task of pulling the grass out from the tree tubes of the 3000 recently planted tree saplings she had not been able to do as much as hoped, however Bruce advised that he had lots of volunteer parties lined up who would be able to assist with this.

Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society (EAFS)

In the absence of an update from EAFS Simon reported the following.

- Two display cases have been installed in the Lodge to show EAFS finds from Cammo. EAFS have not been able to retrieve their finds from the Murrayburn store, so only a limited range is available at present.
- EAFS are currently working on an area at the edge of the green in front of Cammo House, to confirm that there were buildings there, and have made various small finds.

In response to comments Simon advised that EAFS say that it is their intention to fill in the excavated glasshouse area in the Walled Garden in the autumn when they finish recording there, but there has been little progress in recent weeks.

A large stone has been displaced from the top of the wall at a back corner of Cammo House. This has been reported to Caroline by Forest Kindergarten and mentioned by Simon to John Lawson and to Caroline. Sheena said that Harry was very upset about this as it should have been securely cemented with lime mortar in the first place.

Sheena commented that the areas that had previously been excavated such as the cottages were now becoming very overgrown. Simon advised that the consolidation work was still awaited and that progress with this was very slow, however, whilst it was overgrown it was less liable to further damage through vandalism.

Cammo Management Group report by Simon

- The last meeting was in April and the next is in two weeks' time.
- Leaf and Bean is to be relocated to the other side of the Lodge and given a power supply.
- The map boards which are to replace the existing ones, together with two new boards, one to be located at the new entrance opposite the Cammo Meadows exit onto Cammo Walk, the other at North Car Park gate into North Field are not progressing as smoothly as hoped. Council staff now want to change the wording and there is a danger we may now miss the designer's window in June.
- There has also been an absence of information on the new entrance itself, with responses awaited from Caroline.
- The specifications for the consolidation of the ruins and walled garden are also still awaited from David Kyles.
- We have still not seen the Environmental Impact Report on the Forest Kindergarten, although Nick has been doing preventative work to try and mitigate any damage caused.

- Although we had requested a new bin at the North Car Park the council advised that one is not needed but they have agreed to relocate one from the North Gate. Caroline is to chase this up.
- Lodge Cleaning - There is still no progress with regards to having the main room of the Lodge cleaned, although the toilet cleaning is now slightly better. The Forest Kindergarten are happy to contribute funds to the cleaning costs, we just require a contract to be put in place.
- Lodge office – Caroline has removed half of the Council documents from the office; we are just waiting for this job to be completed, following which the FK can house their items on the vacant shelves.

AOB

- There are two groups of 20 pupils from Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools (ESMS) working in Cammo on the 6th and 7th of June mainly in the Walled Garden area. They are also being given a guided Nature Walk by Michael Roe, hopefully, if the weather is good featuring the butterflies to be found in Cammo.
- Sheena and Carol both mentioned that there have been groups from Cargilfield School visiting the Park, but we were not aware of this.
- Bruce advised that there were several volunteer groups lined up to help in the Park, through from June to November.
- Simon mentioned the Dog Show which has been run by the Lewis Leap charity for the last two years very successfully. This year unfortunately the council wanted to impose quite restricting and unreasonable conditions on this event, however Simon has been dealing with the council to have these lifted and they have now agreed. Claire said that she would let the family know that we had done this.
- Carol Smith asked about the Ash die back and was anything being done about the affected trees. Bruce and Barbara both confirmed that this was on the Council's radar.

Next Meeting 4th September 2024

Meeting Closed

**Friends of Cammo
June 2024**