



Registered Scottish Charity No. SC033394

Email: friendsofcammo@yahoo.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendsofcammo

Website: www.friendsofcammo.org

Minutes of the Friends of Cammo Ordinary General Meeting held outdoors in the wooded area situated behind Cammo House on Sunday 5th December 2021 at 2.00 pm

Present – Simon Gillam (Secretary), Nick Benge (Chairperson), Lynn Whitehead (Treasurer), Karen Edwards (Membership Secretary), Gill Harris, Michael Roe, Grahame Whitehead, Harry Taylor, Sheena McRobie, Ian Rodger, Barbara Braham, Liz and James Murray, Peter Scott, Joanna Morris, Alistair Emery, Derek and Diana Jackson, Claire Wallace, Bruce Angus, Stuart Leckie and Bert Scott.

Apologies from Liz and Euan Drysdale, Judy Arrowsmith, Fiona Briglmen, Esther Davidson, Martyn Hawthorn, David Kyles (provided FNH report in advance), Christine McPherson (provided EAFS report in advance), Carol Turnbull.

Matters discussed

- 1. Membership Update.** Karen Edwards reported that we now had 213 fully paid up members. This year (2021/2022) so far we have had 35 new or returning members, compared to 27 in the whole of last year (2020/2021). The greater appreciation given to green spaces and the extra visitors has clearly helped raise the profile of Friends of Cammo, together with the two gate days which have recently taken place. It was suggested by Gill Harris that it might be better to run future Gate Days 6 months apart, say spring and autumn. This was agreed especially as April is the start of the membership year. Diana Jackson asked whether we had done leaflet drops. It was said that we had in the past and that the residents in the streets around Cammo probably knew of us. Diana felt that outwith Cammo itself, for example Craigmount, there may be less awareness and that she would be happy to help with leaflet distribution if required.
- 2. Treasurer's Report by Lynne Whitehead.** The Friends of Cammo currently have £4816 in the bank of which restricted funds are £315 and general funds are £4501. Since the September general meeting our honey donations were very good and more than covered our honey related expenditure, we have spent £871 on trees for the Jubilee Hedgerow, we contributed £1300 towards the cost of resurfacing the main entrance and we received £507 for gift aid. In conclusion, our finances are in a satisfactory position with good receipts from subscriptions and donations. Simon added that the restricted funds had reduced since the last report as some of it (which had been earmarked for environmental projects) had been used towards the purchase of trees for the Jubilee Hedgerow. Nick also explained why we had contributed towards the costs of resurfacing the entrance to the Park. That particular area had been a problem for Park users in recent years

as it was very slippery in icy conditions and that by contributing some of the funds the work did not have to go out to tender and it could be completed quicker. It was felt that the Company concerned had done a good job.

3. **The Wet Meadow project by Nick Benge.** This is currently in for planning approval; however, it was felt that as the planned project was within 15/17 km of the airport the team of consultants who are employed to look into these matters for Edinburgh Airport might still block it. Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust and the Council have obtained grants from the Nature Restoration Fund to pay for the full cost, but the money has to be spent by end-March. Comments on the plans were closing on the 6th December (there had been no objections thus far) and a report is due by the 11th January 2022. Peter Scott said that the proposed boardwalk should be 2 metres wide and have a hand rail to meet all abilities compliance. Nick responded that boardwalks are normally 1.8 metres and that if 1 handrail was added it would look odd and that 2 would dominate the landscape. Nick thinks it is pretty safe and if the Council think it is ok they will pass it, we will just have to wait and see. The Council archaeology response recommends an EAFS watching brief and metal-detecting survey before/during work to record any archaeological remains. There has been no response so far from the Airport. Derek Jackson asked about the purpose of the wetland and whether it was to support wildlife and he was advised that it was. It will be planted with flag iris, purple loosestrife, water mint and marigold. The area floods anyway when there is heavy rain so it is good value for money as it will be easy to do. A question was asked about whether island areas would feature, but in this particular plan they will not.
4. **Jubilee Hedgerow report by Nick Benge.** This will be planted at the bottom of the Home Field and will be done by Friends of Cammo volunteers on the 23rd January at 10.30 am. All the supplies have been organised by Nick and there will be 100 Holly, 40 Yew and 20 Oak. Planted in 2 lines 1 metre apart they will help to screen the big house from the park. It has been part funded by Friends of Cammo general funds and part by donations given to support environmental projects and is in line with the 'Plant a tree for the Jubilee' campaign.
5. **Other Planting.** Glendale, the Council contractors are going to be planting further hedgerows around the perimeters of the fields starting on January 13th at a cost of £15,000. There will be Hazel, Rowan and Goat Willow amongst others and these will be formed in 3 lines. Nick said this has been funded through the Nature Restoration Fund and that the money needs to be spent by the end of March.

Nick commented that because we look after the Park we are more likely to get favourable responses to our projects and that David Kyles is very positive about the good working relationship he has with Friends of Cammo.

6. **Environmental Matters.** Nick provided an update on things that had taken place in the park recently. Grass cutting in the fields was done this year but will not be done for the next two years to allow the vole population to increase and attract more barn owls. Duke of Edinburgh volunteers have been cutting back the wildflower areas. A plentiful supply of woodchips has been distributed around the park where required to improve paths. Thanks given to Simon who has done much of this work. We will be taking Xmas trees this

year as they have been a real benefit in trapping leaves and improving biodiversity, but only domestic ones and not those from businesses. There have been no organised letter picks but Park users have been doing these informally.

7. Butterfly Conservation and Cammo Bees.

Michael Roe spoke about the butterfly recording work that had been taking place this summer. There are 12 sections within the park which are visited by a team on a rota, namely Michael, Dorothy Lyle, David Kyles and Simon Metcalfe who record the species seen. There were not many red admiral, peacocks or painted ladies this year although a small skipper and some speckled woods were seen. Overall, it had not been a good year for butterflies due to the cold spring; however it has been a good year for our bees.

The bees did very well, thanks to Rachel Doughty who does a lot of work to look after them, producing enough honey for 32 boxes this year. A question was asked about whether the bee boles in the walled garden were used but this is not the case. Barbara Braham asked whether the bees would be well enough protected and it was felt that maybe not now but in their original state in the garden they would have been. Claire Wallace raised the question of increasing flowers which bloom later in the year in the walled garden to help the bees, mention was made of buddleia which Nick said would be possible, and it was acknowledged that a walled garden group should be set up to take this matter forward. Several members indicated they would be happy to be involved in this.

8. **Other environmental issues** raised by the members were the problems of dog poo bags which get left in large numbers. This is a perennial problem and various suggestions were made such as a designated area for dog toileting but it was felt that it would be difficult to keep other park users such as children from straying into the area. Unfortunately it is more an attitude problem by irresponsible owners but the Forest Kindergarten is planning to do a campaign to raise awareness of this issue.

9. David Kyles Report read by Simon Gillam

- Approval has been given to The Rabbit Hole for an artistic hunting game (a variant of geo-caching) at Cammo from 6-19 December, open to all.
- Lodge reopening for public and volunteers has been suspended.
- A couple of trees from the Botanics are available for the Pinetum area but he is unsure if there is space to accommodate – Serbian spruce and dwarf mountain pine. He will liaise with us about this.
- The plan for discussion for new seating in the estate will be with us soon. He has been engaging again with Parks admin about the presentation seat, flowers and mementos.
- EAFS are wondering about undertaking some cutting of some areas within the walled garden to better allow access and the spectacle of the snowdrops – the Council may cut some of the area in the NW corner and a few pockets off the main path but nothing like the cutting it did in there a few years back. If this is to be done it will need done soon to prevent any damage to snowdrops -This may suit the Friends of Cammo for the purposes of planting in there to extend the flowering season for the bees.
- David needs to chase Atkins re design work for consolidation at stables, steading, cottage and walled garden. They are working on it and should be in touch with stakeholders.
- Type 1 and whin dust infilling [at north car park entrance, near Cammo House and on path near Cammo Walk] still to be arranged. Estate workers are busy with other work at the moment, but he does need to

get their time in Cammo to move this material. Bruce Angus volunteered to help with the type 1/ whin dust and Fraser and Xander Smith were mentioned as volunteers who had done this type of work before. Nick said it was important to have volunteers who knew what they were doing and noted that Bruce did the spreading excellently at NE pedestrian gate.

- No progress on draft Management Plan, still lacking content. He will put time in his diary to get it to us before Xmas.

Derek Jackson mentioned the abundance of grey squirrels in the Park. Nick said that they are a problem to the wildlife which would be solved if we had goshawks or pine martens on the estate. Opinions amongst the members as to the value of this non-native species differed.

10. Archaeology Report read by Simon Gillam.

- In the Steading, the area at the back (south) of the Byre has been investigated. It is believed that there were animal pens in the field beyond the buildings, but EAFS have not been allowed access even for field-walking. The enclosure to the east of the Steading is the next area to investigate.
- At the Walled Garden, after opening up the outbuildings (Gardener's Bothy on the SE corner and two flue houses on the back of the north wall), investigation has shown that the hot wall system was superseded around 1880 by the installation of a boiler to heat the newly installed glasshouse. Investigation of the glasshouse is ongoing and helped by the University of Edinburgh Student ArchSoc who are getting excavation experience at Cammo.
- It was asked whether the archaeological report was fed back to Atkins, the company drawing up plans for the consolidation of these areas. Simon said he did not know but that he would mention it to David.

11. Any Other Business

Planning Issues read by Simon Gillam

- The Planning Permission in Principle for West Craigs North (the land north of Craigs Road) is due to be decided by 5th Dec. As there have been over 100 objections, it should go to committee. The statutory consultees (other than the Community Council) have not objected (but have given some conditions), although Historic Environment Scotland said that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) understates the potential impact of the development on views from Cammo, particularly South Vista Avenue from Cammo House and view from Mauseley Hill. The development would be contrary to City Plan 2030. If planning permission isn't granted, consideration will have to be given to repairing and making good the ground
- The planning proposal for widening a section of Cammo Walk was due to be decided in June, but is still outstanding. There seems to have been no action since July, except for a scoping opinion that says an EIA is not required.
- Comments on City Plan 2030 must be submitted by 20th December. There are no adverse issues for Cammo, but Friends of Cammo will submit comments supporting the principle of no additional greenfield development and some other aspects.

Sheena mentioned the fact that the hedgerows which had been cut back had been absolutely decimated. This view was supported by Claire Wallace. Claire had spoken to the people actually doing the cutting back to explain about the damage but apparently it made no difference. Simon is going to email the Parks department expressing the views of the Friends of Cammo.

There was discussion about the number of new houses which were going to be erected in the near future, 650 at Cammo Meadows, 2000 at West Craigs, 7000 between the tram depot and the airport and another 6000 elsewhere.

Cammo Publications. Simon mentioned the Cammo Publications which were available.

Japanese Knotweed. Bert Scott raised the issue of Japanese Knotweed and that people were working on the idea that insects could be introduced which would kill this plant, he would be happy to email details if required.

12. Forthcoming Meeting Dates

AGM 1st Wednesday in March (2nd), OGM's 1st Wednesday of June (1st), September (7th) and December (7th). It is intended that these meetings be held in the Lodge at 7.30pm, however, this will be dependent upon restrictions pertaining at the time

3.30 pm Meeting Closed.