



Registered Scottish Charity No. SC033394

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Minutes of the Friends of Cammo Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 7.30pm via Zoom

Present:-Nick Bengé - Chairperson, Simon Gillam - Secretary, Lynn Whitehead - Treasurer, Karen Edwards - Membership Secretary, Michael Roe, Peter Scott, Shay Dean, David Kyles (Forestry & Natural Heritage Service), Esther Davidson, Joanna Morris, Grahame Whitehead, Carol Turnbull, Carol Smith, RG (Bert) Scott, Alan Childs, Fiona Briglmen, Anne Currie, Gill Harris and Julie Wilkinson.

No apologies for absence.

1. Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting (including AGM) held on the 4th March 2020 were approved. There were no matters arising.

2. Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for 2020

The Trustees Annual Report and Accounts had been approved by the committee and our independent examiner, submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and posted on our website. It reported our achievements in 2020 and reviewed our financial position. At the end of 2020 we had £4342 in general funds and £1290 in restricted funds (donations for information panels and the proposed Wetland project).

Chairman's review of highlights

- In January 2020 trees and hedgerows were planted in the South Field bringing the total planted to 2700.
- Floral diversity has been increased by planting wildflower plug plants and seeds, the results should be seen this spring.
- The cutting and baling of the fields this year will also promote a lot more diversity. The bales have proved useful as mulch for the trees and very popular with the children who love climbing on them.
- Lynn decorated a Christmas tree representing Friends of Cammo for the Cramond Kirk.
- The Website and the Facebook pages are seeing a lot of interest.
- There has been good use of dead wood and trees around the park to improve wildlife habitat.
- The hedgerow information panel was installed.
- We produced our first ever batch of Cammo honey.

3. Election of Officer Bearers and Committee

The three office bearers (Nick, Simon and Lynn) were willing to continue in post and were proposed by Carol Turnbull and seconded by Peter Scott. The other Committee members (Michael and Karen) were willing to continue, and were proposed by Nick Bengé and seconded by Esther Davidson. Gill Harris said that she would like to become a Committee member and was nominated by Shay Dean and seconded by Michael Roe. There were no other candidates, so all six were elected.

4. Date and time of 2022 AGM

It was agreed that the next AGM will be on Wednesday 2nd March 2022, 7.30, Cammo Lodge.

Other Business

5. Membership update

Karen Edwards reported that we have had 25 new members this year and that the membership roll currently stands at 193. In an effort to recruit new members we have highlighted the work of Friends of Cammo on notices at the gates and with Christmas and New Year Banners at the main entrances. With the increased usage of the Park, this year especially, it had been hoped that new membership would be higher. The real impact of the work of Friends of Cammo however, and the best way to increase its profile and attract more new members is through the large work parties. This gives us a more visible presence where the new visitors who are not aware of the Friends of Cammo can see us and ask questions. Unfortunately this has not been possible over the last 12 months and as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted it is hoped that these will be able to resume. We are also looking at laminated notices for the gates and application form boxes for the North and South entrances.

6. Treasurers Update

Lynn reported that January and February had been quiet months and there was nothing extraordinary to report.

7. Environmental Report by Nick Bengé

Paths – One of the consequences of the Pandemic has been the very large increase in the use of the Park. The increased footfall has put additional pressure on the paths, and despite the use of woodchips to absorb the mud in places this is a situation which needs to be addressed in more detail.

Forest Kindergarten – This initiative, although commendable in its intentions, has had a very big impact on the woodland environment and the habitat where the kindergarten are based during the day.

Overall Cammo has lots of positives to report with the planting of the hedgerows, native shrubs and trees and the success of the bees, but the threats, as with many similar facilities, are the additional use and litter. Joanna commented on the general lack of litter in the park, but Nick advised that this was largely down to public spirited visitors who collect rubbish on their walks.

Future Plans for paths and parking.

Alan raised the point that with the many new houses under construction in the vicinity there are likely to be 1000's more pairs of feet walking in Cammo, even allowing for some reduction in pressure after lockdown. Was there a plan to try and pre-empt the problems Cammo may face in the near future, before it was too late?

Peter commented on the additional problem caused by the success of Cammo, that of car parking and the pressure on the surrounding roads. Whilst he acknowledged that the priority for the Friends of Cammo was the Wetlands, he wondered whether consideration should be given to a sustainable path from the Lodge to

the North Car Park, and more focus given to increasing the car parking space, which is favoured by the Community Council.

Michael felt that we would not want to start cutting down trees or encroaching into the park itself for car parking, and that residents in the local vicinity would most likely walk. There was also a concern raised by Simon, that an enlarged South Car Park would increase cars on Cammo Walk, which is too narrow for a two way flow of traffic

This is clearly a big issue for the park and it was decided that this would best be addressed in a separate meeting with David Kyles and other interested parties.

Other Questions

Esther asked if consideration could be given to additional perch seating to help those with mobility problems. Peter thought that benches may be more appropriate.

8. Report by David Kyles - Forestry & Natural Heritage Service

- Wet Meadow – Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust are applying for funding for grants and Technical drawings (by Council staff) are being prepared which will be sent to Friends of Cammo for comments.
- The walls of the stables, the cottage and the walled garden need consolidating; hopefully this will be taken forward this year.
- Car parking is a problem around all Edinburgh's parks – see earlier notes.
- David will be seeking input for the next 10 year Management plan for Cammo.
- Joanna asked about the possibility of the Lodge re-opening. The Forest Kindergarten is unlikely to move into the new cabins fully until after the Easter holiday. The Estates Department are looking for Cammo Lodge to generate income and plans are being taken forward now, however, David felt that it may be a part of any new arrangement for the premises that Friends of Cammo publications would still be available.
- On the matter of the Forest Kindergarten the staff indicated that they would like to move to a new site (beech roundel) near their new base. There are various environmental and cost implications for this and it was felt that a meeting would be useful to discuss this further.
- The Cammo Estate Advisory Committee may re-start soon
- Contractors should be in place to repair the damaged Turnhouse boundary wall once temperatures allow.
- Work will be undertaken with a digger to clear the path by the House, resolve the drainage by the Lodge and in Low Meadow and level the ramp between Home and North Fields. Carol Turnbull raised the issue of uneven ground here.

Peter mentioned the problem with drainage behind the old farm house. He thought that as this area used to be a golf course there may already be drains in existence. David will look at this.

9. Archaeological Report by Esther Davidson

Work on The Cottage has been completed but vandalism has caused some of the stones to be displaced and made unsafe. The Steading/Piggery work is continuing and someone had offered the use of a drone to take

aerial photographs. Peter mentioned that there may be problems with this so close to the airport – Esther will make further enquiries.

Esther also highlighted some interesting articles on Margaret Maitland-Tennant and the housekeeper who lived in The Cottage. Details are on the website of the Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society EAFS.org.uk.

Alan asked what had happened to the archaeological dig which had taken place in the fields off Craigs Road. Esther wasn't sure, but thought that it had revealed the entranceway to a Neolithic Fort, but that the time allowed for the dig may have run out.

10. Interpretation and Orientation

The information panel has been installed in front of Cammo House.

Work has started on the self-guided walks way marker posts.

The outline of Cammo House and the illustrated benches have been delayed due to Covid.

11. Planning

The Council are seeking views on retaining Spaces for People measures, including the traffic/pedestrian measures on Cammo Walk and Cammo Road. The link can be found on our Facebook page post of the 24th February.

The City Mobility Plan was presented to the Council in February, It was not very specific in some details such as Park and Ride and we await further information.

City Plan 2030

The Liberal Democrats update states that this has been postponed until summer 2021.

Alan asked whether Friends of Cammo comments on matters outwith the Park. Simon responded that if it affects Cammo Park in any way then we do.

12. Any other matters

Esther raised the matter of Council vehicles cutting back vegetation without consideration of the early flowering plants. David said he would investigate this.

Alan raised the idea of holding open air church services in the summer at Cammo.

Nick thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and the meeting was brought to a close,

Karen Edwards

Membership Secretary

Friends of Cammo Committee.