



Registered Scottish Charity No. SC033394

Minutes of Meeting held on 5th September 2018 in Cammo Lodge at 19.30

Present: Nick Benge (Chair), Simon Gillam (Secretary), Shay Dean (Membership Secretary), Grahame Whitehead, Michael Roe, Joanna Morris, Peter Scott, Fiona Briglmen, Karen Edwards, Sheena McRobie.

Apologies: David Kyles and Velda Weir (Forestry & Natural Heritage Service), Lynn Whitehead (Treasurer), Cllr Graham Hutchison, Carol Turnbull, Judy Arrowsmith, Sally Macpherson, Marian Allen, Douglas Seale, Cath Gillies.

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th June were approved.

1. Membership Secretary's Update:

- a. Shay reported that membership is 169 households, of whom 23 have not yet paid annual subscriptions. 141 have provided Data Protection consents and over 100 Gift Aid. Even if we lose all who have not paid, membership numbers will be up from last year, but down on a few years ago. It was agreed that the Committee should try to organise a Gate Day to attract new members. Shay reported that Craigmount pupils may be able to help in delivering a membership mailing to East Craigs. There was discussion of getting commercial dog walkers to join.
- b. Shay reported that a website for Friends of Cammo was being developed by Royal High School pupils. We had been impressed by what had been done so far. There will be an agreement with RHS for it to be maintained. The only costs for FoC will be for website hosting and domain name.
- c. Shay read a report from Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society. During visits to Cammo on 11 August and 1-2 September they had investigated areas at the rear of Cammo house.

2. Treasurer's Update: On behalf of Lynn, Grahame reported that the balance is £2860 in general funds, after paying for insurance and BBQ. We have still to claim about £200 in Gift Aid, so our year-end balance will be around £3000. The cancelled BBQ had cost us £364 for hiring tables and chairs. Adding the cost of leaflets and purchase of additional equipment (2 cool boxes) the overall BBQ deficit was around £500. The total net deficit over all BBQs (5 that took place and 2 cancelled) has been about £150 after paying for purchase of marquee and other equipment costing around £950; this is a satisfactory outcome as the BBQ is aimed to be a community event not for fund-raising.

3. Environmental Update: Nick reported that things are mostly going well. There had been no sign of the buzzards nesting this year. At present there is no inflow to the Canal, so the water level is low; Nick will take this up with Velda Weir. The Bioblitz on 19th August had found some interesting fungi and plants; a report was awaited.

4. Forestry & Natural Heritage Service Report: Velda Weir had provided an email update. Simon spoke about the main points:

- a. A CEC Kindergarten play team will be using Cammo Estate and the Lodge from end-September, initially on a one-month trial. It will not affect use of the Lodge by Council staff and the opening as a Visitor Centre on Sundays.
- b. A section of Cammo House wall, damaged in early August, has been fenced off and quotes are being sought for urgent repair.
- c. FoC comments on the Parks Quality Assessment for Cammo Estate have been passed to the co-ordinating team. Some of the issues identified can be addressed in the Cammo Estate Regeneration Plan.
- d. There will be a wedding in front of Cammo House on Friday 10th May 2019.

5. Cammo Estate Regeneration Plan: Nick outlined the background, of an original large Heritage Lottery Fund bid, which the Council now intend to take forward as a smaller HLF bid for the Walled Garden, with the rest (excluding development of the stables building) being taken forward as smaller projects. The draft Cammo Estate Regeneration Plan, produced by consultants for City of Edinburgh Council, is available from <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cammo> . The Masterplan proposals are summarised in paragraphs 7.13-7.14 and Figure 6.1, sent out with the Agenda for the meeting. The meeting discussed the priorities and gaps, and reached consensus outlined below.

The Walled Garden addendum is not yet available, so the proposals are not yet clear. Based on what is in the Report's costings and text, it seems likely that it will introduce more formality than we would like. It could damage what is there now, including native fruit orchard, snowdrops and plants of high value to biodiversity. It was not clear how allotments or commercial growing would be consistent with open access to the Walled Garden. Vehicular access past the stables and other ruins could clash with visitors on foot. It was noted that electrical and water supply should be in the Walled Garden costings, and costings for the drive up to the Walled Garden were missing. By making an HLF bid, proposals would be constrained by what fits the scheme, rather than what we most want to see. A better outcome could come from a smaller project, with walls being repaired / made safe rather than fully rebuilt, and low-impact developments including more community planting of fruit and a quiet seating area.

For the rest of the Estate, the following elements were supported as high priority, to be taken forward with available funds from the Cammo Home Farm, together with whatever other Council funding and grants can be obtained for each element:

- a. Repairs to boundary walls and fences, stabilisation of stable block and other ruins and conservation of Pinetun wall;
- b. Repairs and resurfacing of paved areas and paths, but in a lower cost programme addressing the areas of need with appropriate solutions (eg making more paths suitable for all, especially steep path below stables, hard standing at potentially muddy gateways) instead of 2m-wide aggregate for all;
- c. Drainage repairs and appropriate tree work and biodiversity enhancements;
- d. New car parks, but with south car park initially 30-40 spaces rather than 70;
- e. Wetland area with boardwalk;
- f. Small natural play installations around the Estate;
- g. Picnic tables, benches and bins;
- h. Orientation and interpretation boards and waymarking.

The following elements should be added:

- a. Investigate possible extension to Lodge, establishing demand for use (eg café) while ensuring availability for visitor and community use;

- b. At least two disabled parking spaces near Lodge (especially if Lodge expanded);
- c. A new entrance from Cammo Fields development if it goes ahead, possibly with assistance from developers;
- d. Creating a water feature with seating, at the water trough outflow in South Field;
- e. The costs for orientation and interpretation panels, including design, are likely to be higher than in the report (based on experience at Cramond).

The following elements should be low priority, or opposed:

- a. Canal pavilion, further conservation and bank clearance/planting;
- b. The large play area in woodland (but increase the smaller natural play areas around the estate);
- c. Cammo House platform; and restoration of formal terrace overlooking Pinetum (in Objectives, but not in Masterplan summary or costings);
- d. A proportion of the footpath spend, not aiming for 2m-wide aggregate for all;
- e. A proportion of south car park spend: instead of 70 spaces initially build for 30-40 cars;
- f. The large events space in South Field (uncosted).

These Friends of Cammo views on priorities will be communicated to the Council staff taking this forward, and discussed with them at a meeting planned for early October. The resulting plans and priorities are due to be presented to a Cammo Estate Advisory Committee meeting in November.

6. Any Other Business: Simon reported that a decision had been expected on the Cammo Fields housing development by end-August, but the developers will now be resubmitting on 24th September, to be followed by further consultation and a decision expected in early December. Peter said that the revised plans will include changes to the internal road structure and the reduction of some blocks from 4 to 3 storeys. They are also addressing objections from CEC Roads, although these are not the roads issues of most concern to us (congestion and rat-running).

Simon Gillam
Secretary
Friends of Cammo