



Minutes of Friends of Cammo General Meeting held in Cammo Lodge on 3rd December 2025

Present: - Michael Roe (Chairperson), Simon Gillam (Secretary), Lynn Whitehead (Treasurer), Thornton White, Barbara Braham, Grahame Whitehead, Sheena McRobie, Peter Scott, Marian Allen. Liz Drysdale, Euan Drysdale, James Murray, Mike Young, John Finn, Jayne MacGregor, John Jeffrey, Christine Shaw Tait, James Kistruck.

Apologies: - Carol Smith, Judy Arrowsmith, Roger Buchanan, Christine McPherson.

Thanks were expressed to Lynn and Grahame for providing Christmas drinks and nibbles, and to Lynn and Simon for cleaning the meeting room.

1. Membership: Simon reported that total membership is 290 households, an increase of 6 in three months. This included only 3 so far from Cammo Meadows, where we had delivered around 300 leaflets with membership forms; we had a good turn-out of volunteers to help with this and completed quickly. 43 subs for 2025 are still outstanding, little progress in the last 3 months, and Lynn has sent an email reminder to most. The planned gate day was postponed because of illness, and will next be in early spring. Membership Secretary tasks are currently split between Simon and Lynn; Barbara is now learning about the ones done by Simon with a view to taking them on from early 2026.

2. Treasurer's update: Lynn reported that general funds are up £717 so far in 2025. The main items recently have been £498 Gift Aid, thanks to Grahame for processing the claim, and £151 spent on leaflet and form printing for Cammo Meadows. Subs and donations have been at a satisfactory rate. We still have £215 restricted funds for information panels. We have applied for a grant towards the Victorian garden, not yet heard outcome.

3. Walled Garden: Lynn reported that her gardening group has started clearing the area for the Victorian garden, but the lack of rain followed by frost has made this difficult. Thornton will check whether the well is still dry. Labels from NTS have been added to most of the apple trees. Deer have been coming into the Walled Garden but don't seem to be damaging our planting. The proposed second work party of corporate volunteers from Cirrus Logic did not take place.

4. Environmental Update: Thornton reported that after recent rain the wetland is now full and some water is running into the canal and out down the stream. Some steps in the stream are being repaired to stop the water going round them. Sheena recommended that we get professional assistance to reduce the vegetation in the wetland; it was agreed that something should be done, but it may be a Council responsibility. John Jeffrey commented that the Council had done similar work at Lauriston Castle.

Thornton has started cutting wildflower areas using a sickle and strimmer; we may want to buy additional sickles. We have started raking leaves off the surfaced paths, with the next work party planned for Sunday 14 December at 10am. Bird boxes will be cleaned again this winter. We hope soon to get some bird and bat boxes from local Brownies. Goat willow cuttings will be planted in Walled Garden. Michael commented that butterfly and bumblebee surveys are done at Cammo, but no bird survey. Simon had photographed a white squirrel near Cammo House, and after several shares it had over 32,000 views on Facebook within a day.

5. Archaeology report: Christine McPherson had provided a report from EAFS. Work continues in the Walled Garden, with a break over the festive period between finishing on 15 December and restarting on 19 January. In the sales brochure of 1895, Cammo walled garden was described as including 'a vinery, a

peach house and a conservatory'. Since November 2024 EAFS have been investigating a structure to the north west of the centre of the walled garden which we hoped would be the Conservatory. We found an entranceway to the North of the structure, which led into an area with a range of brick walls built on stone foundations. Uncovering the site to the North East, pipework and a saddle boiler were discovered. On the 1895 plan this area had a covered roof whereas the rest of the structure was shown to have a glass roof. On a ledge beside the boiler we found yet another grape variety sign, this one for 'Buckland Sweetwater. A rose label for 'Amy Laxton' (registered in 1864) was also found here. As we moved to the East of the site we uncovered a U shaped floor of large slabs with steps leading up from the path which bisected the garden from East to West. Two large concrete lined oblong 'tanks' were found filled with whinstone chippings. From plastic bags found within the chippings marked 'Edinburgh District Council' we assume the tanks were filled in by the Council when they took over the Estate around 1980. The purpose of these 'tanks' has caused a great deal of speculation as we have not found any intake or outlet pipes associated with them. Measured drawings of the site have been made and a photographic record kept.

6. Cammo Estate Advisory Committee: This committee has strategic oversight of Cammo, with the Council reporting to NTS as required by the Feu Charter. It had been revived, thanks to pressure from the Community Council and others, and a meeting had eventually been arranged for 13 November at Hermitage of Braid. Michael and Simon participated for FoC, Peter for the Community Council. Committee Services had given the option of online participation, taken up by the two Councillors, but the poor wifi connection at the venue made things difficult. There was a good turnout of those invited, and good reports by Jen and David for the Council, including a report from EAFS, and by Simon for FoC, but there was little discussion at the meeting. Simon had proposed drafting an action plan, to which Council actions could be added, and NTS welcomed such a plan. It looked likely that formal meetings would be annual in November, supplemented by a site visit to Cammo in the spring. Minutes are not yet available, but there is a webcast of the meeting.

7. Cammo Management Group: Simon reported that Forest Kindergarten had again been unable to participate in the latest CMG meeting on 23 October, at which Simon and Barbara for FoC met Jen for the Council. It was still a good opportunity to check on progress, but most issues were still outstanding, including graffiti at Stables, Leaf & Bean power supply, permission to use new map, our additional 7x3 cabinet, and our requested meeting to discuss Pinetum trees. Lodge cleaning had also been outstanding, but subsequently Council cleaning and restocking of Lodge toilets had been agreed to start at the end of November, although no cleaning arrangements have been made for the rest of the Lodge. In discussion of the lack of progress on Leaf & Bean power, it was noted that their storage of fuel at present is a hazard. Euan commented that FRAW are having problems in getting new storage agreed by Council staff.

Simon had raised issues about lack of security at the Lodge and it had been agreed that a change of key code would be desirable, but no progress on that. He had also asked about installing a defibrillator, originally proposed by Forest Kindergarten, but was told that this could raise Listing Building issues so would not be taken forward. After a plank broke on the wooden bridge over the Bughtlin Burn, Lynn did a temporary repair, now replaced by a Council temporary repair, awaiting decision on a permanent repair.

8. Dates of meetings in 2026: AGM: Wednesday 4th March. Proposed dates of other meetings: Wednesday 3rd June, Wednesday 2nd September all agreed. All at 7.30pm in Cammo Lodge.

9. Any other business:

a) Michael said that we would like to hear from anyone interested in joining the Committee. John Jeffrey expressed an interest.

b) Jayne said that Edinburgh Southern Orienteering Club planned their usual event at Cammo on 17 January, still awaiting Council approval including for use of the Lodge. Lynn offered to help with key for early access to the Lodge that morning. Labels with QR codes linking to ESOC will be put on the permanent marker posts, and Jayne gave 3 to Simon to put in the notice boards next map boards.

c) The Santa & Elf dash will be in the morning of Sunday 21 December, with a 1km event for kids round North Field, 5km event round Cammo and paths by Almond and 10km event doing two circuits of 5km. Simon had alerted the organiser and Council that the descriptions had confused the main drive with Cammo Walk and that a different 10km route had been shown in error.

d) The Committee had considered the value of continuing with Lodge volunteers on Sunday afternoons, taking account of the views of the volunteers, and concluded that it is not worthwhile at present. Leaf & Bean provide daily access to the toilets, and they are now maintained by Council cleaners, so there is no need for us to help with this. There is little to attract visitors into the Lodge, with no new displays other than the Autumn newsletter. There are few publication sales, the card reader has had little effect and some of the cash has been lost from the cash float in the Office. Instead current volunteers can be invited to participate in more frequent gate days, and we could explore the possibility of open days or other events at which they could help. The meeting agreed with this approach, and Simon will email the current volunteers to thank them.

e) Michael thanked the committee, FoC volunteers, gardening group and corporate volunteers.

Meeting Closed

**Friends of Cammo
December 2025**