



Minutes of Friends of Cammo General Meeting held outside Cammo Lodge on 14th June 2023

Present: Nick Benge (Chairperson), Simon Gillam (Secretary), Bruce Angus, Claire Wallace, Sheena McRobie, Bert Scott, Euan Drysdale, Liz Drysdale, Katherine Thomson, Maïke Neuhaus, Stuart Martin, Carol Smith, Ann Currie, Esther Davidson, Barbara Braham, Roger Buchanan, Euan Smeaton, Dora Kiss.

Apologies: Lynn Whitehead (Treasurer), Karen Edwards, Michael Roe, Gill Harris, Grahame Whitehead, Christine McPherson, Callum Towns, Carol Turnbull, Harry Taylor, Lorraine Clarke, Mark Adderley.

As it was warm with good daylight, the meeting was moved to the woodchip-covered area near the Lodge.

Membership Update (Simon Gillam for Karen Edwards)

On behalf of Karen, Simon reported that the latest records (to early/mid May) show 17 new members since the start of 2023, mostly from the leaflet drop at Cammo Meadows in March. This takes the total to 244, of whom 73 had still to pay following the annual sub request in late March. Lynn has sent welcome emails to the new members, and has followed up with a few who have paid twice.

Treasurer's Update (Simon Gillam for Lynn Whitehead)

Lynn reported that we have £6621 in the bank, including £215 restricted funds for information panels. We have spent £1132 this year on plants, including the planting for bees in the walled garden, and £125 on bird boxes. Annual subs and donations are coming in at a satisfactory rate. Overall our finances are satisfactory.

In reply to a question, there is more than £400,000 remaining from Cammo Home Farm capital, ring-fenced for Cammo, managed by the Council. We are content with David Kyles's plan to use most of these funds for consolidation of the ruins based on the Atkins report and for an extension to Cammo Lodge, and David had drawn up an annual spend profile, but nothing further had been done since he moved on.

Environmental Update (Nick Benge)

- The park is looking stunning, with more flower than usual.
- A valve has been installed in the pipe taking water from the Canal to the wetland stream, allowing the rate of flow to be varied; this is working well. The pond in the stream has been planted with flag iris. Five stones have been placed in the stream to form a series of steps, which should reduce erosion, more to follow. Water in the wetland is now mostly clear. There are many frogs from the wetland, with toads expected soon. Ducks had nested in the wetland, but the eggs had not hatched. Sheena reported that the ducks nesting at the Canal had produced 6 ducklings, but all had been lost.
- The earth banks beside the new paths that were seeded with annuals (poppies, cornflowers, etc) are now flowering. The wildflowers in fields and newly planted hedgerows are doing well; the hedgerows are growing slowly.
- Logs, brash and woodchips continue to be delivered; there are now many piles of woodchips awaiting use.
- TCV had laid the hedge in SW Meadow and scythed some of the grass there. They will tackle some invasive rhododendron ponticum.
- Birds seen include kestrels, barn owls (breeding in South Field and perhaps at Tower), buzzards and sparrowhawks (maybe breeding) and 3 tawny owl chicks.
- The two areas of the Walled Garden, which had been cleared and dug over, had been planted during a volunteer morning, and later by Forest Kindergarten. The areas had been watered when planted, but the lack of nearby water is making further watering difficult. Two of the shrubs had died during the dry spell, and other plants had been lost to animals. Lynn and Barbara have both done some weeding and watering. It was suggested that the areas should be mulched with woodchips.

- The bees are doing well, with additional colonies. Some of the equipment may need to be replaced this year. We hope that honey will again be available in August or September.

Archaeology Report (Esther Davidson)

Esther reported based on an EAFS report prepared by Christine. The ends of the glasshouse have been located and investigated producing some finds including labels for roses and grapes. Some ironwork was unearthed in the areas planted for bees. A well has been located. Student volunteers continue to work with the group, and Craigmount School pupils have visited. There had recently been vandalism at all the ruins, and one of the temporary information panels had been destroyed. Activities at Cammo have reverted to Mondays. In discussion, it was suggested that information panels could be surfaced with layers of clingfilm rather than glass or perspex, easier to remove graffiti and replace.

Cammo Management Group (Nick Benge)

Nick reported that the group is working well to improve liaison between the Council, Friends of Cammo, EAFS and Forest Kindergarten (with Forest School also invited). Meetings are now every second month, with the next due for 15th June. Forest Kindergarten have commissioned a report on mitigating their environmental impacts, for which an ecologist has now visited Cammo.

Social Media (Nick Benge and Stuart Martin)

Nick had discussed this topic with Stuart, a new member of the Friends who is a professional working in this area, and Stuart had drafted some ideas, which were passed round the meeting. They included QR codes to link to relevant messages, a redesigned logo, a tagline “Cammo Sense, Common Sense”, a simple message to enjoy the Estate responsibly, the use of infographics and other educative/fun content. Stuart was thanked for the work that he had done so far on this. It was agreed that the Committee will take this forward with Stuart.

Any Other Business

- The Forest Church will be meeting at Cammo on Sunday 18th June, 3pm at Cammo House.
- In previous rounds of public consultation, Friends of Cammo had commented on aspects of the City Plan 2030 (Local Development Plan) and City Mobility Plan that affect Cammo Estate. For City Plan 2030, Scottish Government officials have now sought additional information from CEC, on which we will have a further opportunity to comment in July, if any of the new information affects Cammo. To take forward the City Mobility Plan, CEC have now produced draft action plans, on which the Community Council (CBCC) have produced a draft response, to be considered at their meeting on 15th June. The draft CBCC response is mostly in line with our views, so there may be no need for us to provide a separate response.
- Peter Scott has been liaising with the Council and Cala about a new pedestrian entry to Cammo from the Cammo Meadows development, seeking funding from Cala/DWH for the entrance, path work and a map board redesign. In the absence of a reply from Cala by early May, Simon had prompted Caroline to commission the map board design work, using Cammo Home Farm capital if necessary. This week she had come back to say that Council staff planned to postpone the whole project, because of lack of staff time. At around the same time, Cala had emailed to say that the developers would provide all the funds requested, so Caroline is now reconsidering the postponement.
- Dora Kiss had contacted Friends of Cammo offering to help create habitat mapping for Cammo, using a freely available map base, and adding various data layers. One issue would be the availability of GPS to get the locations of features to be added. It was agreed that this would be a good idea, and the Committee will take it forward with Dora.
- Two storage cabinets had been installed behind the Lodge, with the intention that Forest Kindergarten trolleys should be stored in one, clearing space in the Lodge Office, but the specified cabinet size was too small. The cabinets were also unsuitable for EAFS. Friends of Cammo equipment, community litter pickers and Council tools have now been moved to the lower cabinet, where they are more accessible than at the back of the Lodge office; a key for this cabinet is on the Lodge key ring. Forest Kindergarten are looking into how they can best use the other cabinet.
- It was suggested that we should seek to develop links with RBGE (Botanics). Nick commented that RBGE had done recent work on how planting should change to address impacts of climate change, could be a

possible talk for Cammo. There had been links through the Council for the Pinetum planting, but nothing current.

- Two of the Lodge volunteers suggested that we review what the volunteers do on Sunday afternoons. They are no longer required to open and close the Lodge, as Leaf & Bean do this to provide access to the toilets. Relatively few visitors go into the Lodge, except to use the toilets, so there is little chance to engage with visitors. There are few publications sales, although there could be a few more if we could take non-cash payments. One suggestion is that in good weather the volunteer could sit outside the Lodge to be seen by more visitors. Possible changes will be considered by the Committee and discussed with the volunteers.

Meeting Dates in 2023

Further ordinary meetings in 2023 are on 6th September and 6th December, at 7.30pm in Cammo Lodge.

Friends of Cammo

June 2023