



Minutes of Friends of Cammo General Meeting held at Cammo Lodge on 7th September 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Nick Benge Chairperson, Simon Gillam Secretary, Lynn Whitehead Treasurer, Karen Edwards Membership Secretary, Sheena McRobie, Harry Taylor, Esther Davidson, Judy Arrowsmith, Rachel Doughty, Liz Drysdale, Euan Drysdale, Katherine Thomson, Norma Johnstone, Joyce Herriot, Marian Allen, Peter Scott, Grahame Whitehead, Rhona Paterson.

Apologies: Michael Roe, Bruce Angus, Claire Wallace, Gill Harris, Cllr Lewis Younie, Cllr Louise Young, David Kyles and Carol Turnbull.

Membership Update: Karen Edwards reported that while we have 241 members on the books at present we only have 197 paid up members, but that reminders have recently gone out to those remaining unpaid. There are 27 new members so far this year (5 months) including 8 from the various gate days. This compares favourably with last year when we had a total of 42 new members for the whole of the year, but only 11 at this point. We are currently working on an initiative to mail drop the new houses on the Cammo Meadows estate, and the proposed flyer was distributed to members for information.

Treasurer's Update from Lynn Whitehead: We have £6,634 in the bank of which £941 Restricted Funds

- £215 remaining from information panel donations and gift aid in 2019.
- £100 for the Wetland , donated by Kathryn Hanson in 2020, which Nick is intending to spend on marsh marigolds.
- £626 from the winding up of the Cammo Residents Association - designated for a park bench.

The Wet Meadow: The Boardwalk is expected to be installed by the end of this month according to David Kyles, although a delay will not matter as it will allow the plants to become established. Nick was pleased to report that the canal has trickle fed water into the wetland so even during the very hot spell it did not dry up. Most people are respectful of the notices not to allow dogs to enter the wetland and as a result it is doing well. He has known other similar projects in public parks which have been destroyed by dogs. It was reported that herons, moorhens, sticklebacks, newts, frogs and dragonflies have all been seen.

Cammo Bees – Report by Rachel Doughty: Due to climate changes the bee keeping year has lengthened. Extra colonies have been introduced and the hives had been made taller. Rachel thanked Rhona and Bryan for all their assistance. In August bees can become more aggressive because of wasps, but the Cammo bees were fine. Honey has been produced and 31 boxes of honeycomb were brought along by Rachel with the expectation of 31 more. This year the predominant flavour has been heather whereas in previous years it has been tansy. We have a waiting list of approximately 9 who will get first option, followed by members and then it will be advertised on Facebook. There was some discussion on price but it was felt that we should ask for a minimum donation of £10 as we did last year. Nick thanked Rachel for all her help and asked her to make sure she put in a request to cover her expenses from our funds.

Report from David Kyles (in italics) from which a summary was read out by Simon.

Thank you to everyone in the Friends who has either reported issues, undertaken maintenance tasks such as during the bin strikes, clearance of fallen trees or removal of redundant fencing materials. It is much appreciated and valued. I don't have the level of input from other groups on other sites as I do at Cammo and am delighted for this to continue. I'm also pleased to welcome Nick's suggestion for a more cohesive approach to site management with the instigation of a Management Group whereby the regular site users such as EAFS, FK and FoC alongside the Parks Service will all input regularly to this. This should ensure everyone is aware of

each other's objectives and how these will be delivered going forward. Apart from meeting regularly, the hope is to set up a mechanism to be able to instantly communicate keeping everyone in the loop.

Seating has been constructed and a site meeting held that morning had proposed locations for the 8 seats. These are intended to include Home Field, by the hedgerow panel, 2 by the wetland, the pinetum and the walled garden. Simon handed out pictures of the benches for information.

Leaf and Bean – you'll have seen I've created a gap in the fencing outside the Lodge to accommodate the Piaggio that we will be welcoming to Cammo as an added facility. It was hoped by all involved that it would have been onsite already. There were a couple of concerns regarding erosion to the grass and root compaction of the large tree in the vicinity – after a brief discussion with Nick we think a thick layer of woodchip in this area to form an area where the Piaggio will sit and to direct footfall will be a good short term measure. I will monitor wear and tear of the area once the facility is in and come up with a more permanent solution if this is deemed insufficient. The latest from the proprietor is as follows, "We made a trip to Hull 2 weeks ago to do the snagging and one sink was missing :(it's now completed and the van is booked for delivery to Edinburgh on Monday 12th. Await confirmation in when environmental health can carry out the checks (compulsory before we can come on site). Then I need sign off from Estates re our license. Word appears to have got out that we are coming!"

Atkins consolidatory reporting – after chasing Atkins most of the summer I received the following last week, "Hi David, apologies, I've been trying to gather the team together to get a full update but it has proved to be difficult to do this in August with everyone being on leave at different points in the month. I'm hopeful to have a catch up in the course of this week though and will get back with a full update as soon as possible. Thanks very much for your patience with this – between people being on leave or being unwell with Covid the summer seems to have flown by" As soon as I have the rest of the report in I'll send on for comment.

Heritage and Place grant application. Submission made in time. Nick said that he had just heard from David that this and a related grant funding applications were not successful. David expects the Home Farm money to be spent on the consolidation works to be outlined in the Atkins report and on any future extension to the Lodge. Peter Scott said that Home Farm money should not be spent without making further grant funding applications.

Site management plan – apologies for the delay, skeletal plan almost ready for input from FoC. I've failed in producing this for previous deadline dates but aim to have it to you very soon!

*Dutch elm diseased trees and ash infected with *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* is currently being managed.. Unfortunately now that many ash are now infected across the city containing the disease is not feasible, fungal spores have the potential to be dispersed by the wind for many tens of miles. Even just considering Cammo singularly we are only likely to start removing ash that present the greatest health and safety risk, thus many diseased ash within woodland areas may remain for at least another year as they present low risk to public safety. Although less dangerous these ash are still a huge source of infection. Having discussed the disease with many experts, current estimates project somewhere between 85 - 95% of all common UK ash will succumb to *H.fraxineus*. Further to David's report Nick confirmed that ash trees are being cut down in the Forest Kindergarten area and the children have had to move out temporarily.*

Maintenance – graffiti detailed on priority list with the graffiti team to be removed (the team is bedded within Waste Services so were on strike and still likely to be tied up with recovery operations but I am very keen for them to get to Cammo to remove asap). Some gates beginning to show wear and tear to latches/hinges, repairs made and replacement materials ordered. Esther wondered whether varnish could be used to prevent graffiti but Nick said that this would be too big a job.

Meadow management – no cutting and baling for large field areas scheduled this year. We should have appropriate meadow cutting machinery available to be able to cut the small meadow areas, allow the material to sit for a week or so, ted it then bale. I'll keep you updated. Nick confirmed that not baling this year will encourage the vole population which in turn will encourage the barn owls to return. It will also be interesting to see what effect it has on the wild flowers. The experiment may be repeated for a further year.

Groups – Green Team, Edinburgh College, Craigmount High School have all been in touch with a view to coming to Cammo for educational and conservation activities. Site meeting held with leaders and low impact tasks such as woodchip barrowing, tree and hedgerow mulching, overhanging/encroaching vegetation removals offered up. No dates scheduled yet but should be forthcoming. Some groups have requested to undertake fires – this will be allowed only if they are contained, raised from the ground and own fuel is brought in.

Environmental report from Nick Bengé

On Wednesday September 21st Nick is giving a talk in the Millennium room at Cramond Kirk hall on his rewilding project in Devon.

Some of the trees planted by Glendale, especially the willow, failed in the drought.

Special Branch continue to supply Cammo Estate with brash and woodchip and we will continue to put this down on the paths and make habitat piles.

There have been more wild flowers this year especially yellow rattle and orchids and the wild flowers which have grown round the new wetland were highly praised by members.

Walled Garden Apples. There have been well over 500 this year although the pears and plums have again done very poorly. Rachel said that the glut of apples may have something to do with the bees! Lynn again suggested that a group be started to plant for the bees in the walled garden. An email will be sent out asking for volunteers. Apparently there is a gap in flowering plants at this time of the year – suggestions were made for sedums, Michaelmas daisies and buddleia. We are interested in extending the orchard, but don't plant to take action this autumn.

Park Management - Over the past few months the Committee have been pursuing a participation request with the Council in order to be more involved in the management of the park. In the end this did not prove possible, however, a Cammo Management Group has now been formed including Forest Kindergarten, Forest Schools, The Archaeology Group, The Edinburgh Council and ourselves. It is hoped that regular meetings of this group will facilitate better communication and coordination amongst those involved in the Cammo Estate. Nick is confident that this will be a positive way forward and that other groups such as the Leaf and Bean will also be included in the future. This will also help the formulation of the Management Plan which David Kyles is producing and it will have a better chance of being implemented which hasn't happened before. It is believed that this is the first time a Friends Group has been involved in a project like this.

Leaf and Bean – Peter asked whether we had been consulted on the licensing agreement with the Leaf and Bean café, which we were not although we were involved in an informal meeting with them. Some concerns were raised about litter and a suggestion was made that the council should get another bin installed. There have been problems with the litter collections and the timings and there was mention of the fact that commercial waste was being dumped in the park. Nick thanked Simon for all his hard work recently in bagging up the extra litter and dog waste bags. Rachel mentioned the possibility of an environmental dog toilet, although she did not know the details involved. Judy asked whether the Leaf and Bean would be allowed access to the Lodge for seating but this was not going to happen.

Archaeology Report from Esther Davidson: A lot of digging has been done in the walled garden with 18th century tiles and the earliest greenhouse circa 1794 being discovered. They are awaiting removal of stones from the steading before they can carry on. Joyce Harrison who has been working at the stables said that people are very interested in the digs and there have been lots of volunteers including the Green Team people who have enjoyed uncovering history. Norma Johnstone said that two walls had been uncovered with pantiles and slates which were a mystery as you would not normally expect both. Lots of pottery has been found and they have managed to put two bowls together. The next open day will be the Open Doors day on the 24th September with tours at 11am, 12.30 pm and 2.30pm

Short History of Cammo Estate: A new revised and updated Short History of Cammo has been produced which will go on sale for £5. Thanks to Harry Taylor who produced the original version and to Simon for taking the update forward. A new updated plan of the Pinetum is also being produced with the assistance of Clark Whitehead.

Planning

The result of the appeal on whether to grant planning on the land North of Craigs Road has been delayed until the 18th September

The temporary closure of Cammo Walk beyond the South Car Park has been extended by the TRO for another 18 months, with consideration still being given to how it ties in with nearby developments.

There is no further information regarding the closure of Cammo Road beyond the North Car Park.

Construction of new Craigs Road junction with Maybury Road is expected late 2022, with removal of temporary pedestrian crossing.

Any Other Business

Link path from Cammo Meadows to the Cammo Estate – Cala are required to provide a link path from Cammo Meadows to Cammo and a location for a new entry gate to Cammo has been agreed. We are now awaiting a decision from Cala as to whether they will contribute to the cost of a gate, path improvements in Cammo and a new map board. A decision as to the definitive name to be given to the Cammo Estate is needed. Various options were discussed, namely Cammo Park, Cammo Estate, Cammo Local Nature Reserve and Cammo Estate Local Nature reserve. A straw poll was undertaken amongst the members present and Cammo Estate Local Nature Reserve received almost unanimous approval which Simon will pass on to David.

Memorial Bench - This matter was raised as it really is unusable as a seat in view of all the memorabilia which is placed on and around it. It was acknowledged that this is a sensitive issue but Peter has offered to raise it with Councillors at the next Community Council meeting to see if a way forward can be found with the family concerned.

Date of the next meeting - the first Wednesday (7th) in December 2022.

Meeting closed

Friends of Cammo
September 2022