



## **Minutes of Friends of Cammo General Meeting held in Cammo Lodge on 6th March 2024**

**Present:** - Nick Benge (Chairperson), Simon Gillam (Secretary), Bruce Angus, Claire Wallace, Bert Scott, Karen Edwards (Membership Secretary), Katherine Thomson, Sheena McRobie, Carol Smith, David Wallis, Judy Arrowsmith, Jayne MacGregor, Rhona Paterson, Roger Buchanan.

**Apologies:** - Lynn and Grahame Whitehead, Michael Roe, Gill Harris. Ian Rodger, Barbara Braham, Peter Scott, Marian Allen, Harry Taylor and Christine McPherson.

### **Annual General Meeting**

**Last AGM and matters arising:** No comments.

**Annual Accounts:** Our Annual Report and Accounts for 2023 are available on the website, link in email that gave AGM agenda. They had been approved by the Committee, subject to independent examination for which we thank Callum Towns and submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). The document includes a summary of our activities in 2023 and a financial review, which showed a deficit of £683 for the year but a healthy balance of £5596 carried forward at the end of the year.

**Election of Office Bearers:** Nick Benge formally resigned as Chairperson and nominated Bruce Angus as the new Chairperson. Seconded by Judy Arrowsmith and Sheena McRobie. Of the existing Committee members, Karen Edwards, Lynn Whitehead, Simon Gillam and Michael Roe had all agreed to stay on for a further year and this was seconded by Carol Smith. Barbara Braham had agreed to join the Committee, proposed by Claire Wallace and seconded by Sheena McRobie. The Committee intended to co-opt Nick back onto the Committee as an additional member while he remains in Edinburgh.

**Date and time of next AGM:** Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 7.30 pm at the Lodge.

### **Other business**

**Membership:** Karen Edwards reported that after deduction of members who had not renewed this year (21) we had a core membership of 236, up on last year's figure of 227. 30 new members had joined this year. To gain more members it was proposed that another gate day be held on 28th April and another leaflet drop to the remaining new houses on Cammo Meadows and the new properties at West Craigs in the summer. It was noted that the membership form box near the Lodge was empty, Nick/Simon will refill it.

**Treasurers update (read by Simon in Lynn's absence):** The only spend in early 2024 was £150 for bird boxes, and we had received a small amount in subscriptions and donations. Simon advised that he would be emailing out about 2024 subs in late March, and in response to a question from the floor he confirmed no change to the amount.

### **Environmental Update (Nick Benge)**

- The park is doing well
- A Kestrel, Barn and Tawny owls had been seen, the kingfishers were regulars at the Wetlands and frogspawn was also in evidence there.

- The drain in Vista Avenue had been rodded (70 metres), the blockage cleared and although the level of water in the canal has now dropped the outflow needs slowing down. Roger Buchanan who has kindly agreed to take over this duty from Nick will attend to this.
- The outlet from the Wetlands has also been rodded and cleared of debris – a grille has been ordered to prevent these blockages happening in the future.
- Ten volunteers have agreed to take over Nick's work in the Park when he leaves – Roger and Graham Kidd water related activities, Thornton and Matt, wildflowers and bird boxes. Barbara and Lynn, young trees, Simon and David, litter picking and general jobs, Andrew Anderson the bigger trees, Bruce and Claire, the many other general jobs that need doing, Simon the Pinetum.
- The few flowered leek also needs annual attention and although Nick had tried to keep on top of this it is another job that needs doing or it will spread. It is sometimes confused with wild garlic, snowdrops and bluebells so you need to familiarise yourself with it, but it needs digging out manually.
- Bees – we are still not certain what the intentions are of the man who has taken over from Rachel. In the interim Rhona has offered to keep an eye on them and will get an update from Rachel. Friends of Cammo own the bee suits and some of the equipment and Rachel owns the rest. Claire suggested contacting the beekeepers at Lauriston if we need assistance. Bruce will also speak to Rachel.
- The guards have been taken off the new trees/bushes (willow, aspen, holly and hazel) growing by the big house as they have established well.
- Guards have also been removed from the trees in the Pinetum.

**Website:** The new website is almost ready to go – we are waiting to slot some of the content from the old site such as the accounts. The Logo may change and a section for QR codes will go on it. When Michael, who will be running the new web site returns from holiday it should not take too long to get it up and running.

**New Signage/Entrance to the park:** Regarding the map boards paid for by Cala, we still do not know what progress is being made. Apparently, Paula Newton has now taken this over from Caroline. Although she has little knowledge of Cammo, she has a background in interpretation, so should be able to work well with the designer Heather Christie. Peter Scott is also involved. As well as the new entrance there are also to be improvements to the path and these things will all be done together. According to Sheena a new bin has also been installed at the path to Cammo Meadows.

**Cammo Management Group:** The last meeting was held on 11th January and the next is due on the 7th March. They are usually attended by Caroline, Friends of Cammo, Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society, Forest Kindergarten and John Lawson.

- Although there is a contract for toilet cleaning, they are not cleaned well and there is still no contract for the rest of the Lodge, although Forest Kindergarten are trying to manage the worst of it. Simon advised that the Lodge was a mess when he came to set up for the meeting tonight.
- We have not yet received an update regarding the work to consolidate the ruins.
- The Lodge office still needs clearing out by the Council, Simon mentioned that there was paperwork there which is relevant to us and which we would like to keep.
- FK noted that the bin in the North Car Park wasn't always emptied, they have also requested a recycling bin.
- Nick noted that the North Car Park is always a mess and that there should be someone to take care of it.
- The Forest Kindergarten Ecology report has had the go ahead from the Council.

## **Archaeology report from Christine McPherson EAFS, read by Simon**

Excavating the Glasshouse foundations at the north wall has been completed and now the work is that of recording. This consists of a written record, photographs and drawings. As we are training people how to record archaeological work properly this is quite a time consuming job.

A well near the south wall has been discovered, excavated and recorded and filled in again. We have had oral testimony which suggests there is at least one other well yet to be traced. Geophysical survey would be the most efficient way of pinning down its whereabouts so this is on our 'to do' list.

We have continued excavation of the 'potting shed' at the rear of the South wall near the entrance gate. It is much longer than we anticipated going well past the bee boles. It seems to have been built after the Gardener's Bothy as the wall lines do not abut each other. The 'Potting shed' is slightly wider than the Bothy. Although this building is shown on the 1895 map to be glass roofed there has been relatively little glass recovered from inside it.

Our next area of investigation stems from the 1805 map which shows a range of buildings to the east of the South (Vista) Avenue. We hope to put in small trial trenches to see if anything remains of these buildings.

We have a series of lectures during the winter months based in St Augustine Church on George IV Bridge. We put details on our website ([www.eafs.org.uk](http://www.eafs.org.uk)) and put posters in the Lodge and on the fence at the Cammo Road entrance. Please keep an eye out for them. Visitors are always welcome. (END)

Carol Smith asked if they knew about the well in North Field but Nick wasn't sure.

### **Any Other Business**

- We had an offer from Jane Geddes with Hugh Devlin to help us prune the trees in the orchard. The pruning was carried out in two sessions with Bruce and Simon. Permanent identification labels will be attached to the trees in due course.
- Woodchips continue to be laid over the muddy areas, Bruce and Claire have been doing this.
- We have been advised that the Leaf and Bean van will need to be moved as it is under a tree which may be dangerous. It has been suggested that they move to the grassy area on the other side of the Lodge. Leaf and Bean are also pursuing an outside electricity supply.
- Edinburgh University and NatWest Bank volunteers both did a great job moving wood chips, securing rocks in the new stream and clearing around the young trees. Bruce said that he is looking at more groups of volunteers.
- Sheena McRobie gave thanks to Nick for everything he has done in the Park and welcomed Bruce as the new chair which was echoed by all.
- Dates for the next Ordinary General Meetings – 5th June, 4th September and 4th December.

### **Meeting Closed**

**Friends of Cammo  
March 2024**