



Minutes of Friends of Cammo General Meeting held in Cammo Lodge on 4th September 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Michael Roe, Lynn Whitehead (Treasurer), Karen Edwards (Membership Secretary), Graham Whitehead, Barbara Braham, Callum Towns, Rhona Paterson, Sheena McRobie, Judy Arrowsmith, Danielle Gray, Robbie Gray, Jayne MacGregor, Ian Rodger, Fiona Brigleman, John Finn, Roger Buchanan.

Apologies: Simon Gillam, Bruce Angus, Claire Wallace, Peter Scott, Marian Allen, John Jeffrey, Thornton White

Opening the meeting: Michael Roe, who took on the role of Chairperson for this meeting explained that he was stepping in for Simon who had had sustained an injury to his leg and was not able to attend. Michael explained the recent changes which had taken place amongst the committee members, with Nick Bengel having moved away and Bruce Angus planning to do so. Thornton White had stepped in as Nick's replacement, although due to family commitments he was not able to join us for that evening.

Membership Update – Karen Edwards, Membership Secretary

We currently have 267 members but of these 38 still have to pay their subscriptions for this year. Pleasingly we have had quite a flurry of new members in the last couple of months, including 10 from the recent Gate Days and there are another 7 due to be added. We currently have some funds (believed to be subscriptions) from 6 other people who have not yet sent in membership application forms and Karen asked the members present that if anyone mentioned they had tried to join but hadn't heard anything from us, then to tell them to get in touch with us.

An additional leaflet drop at the end of September is to be made to the people in the new developments at Cammo Meadows who moved in after our last mail drop and West Craigs.

Financial update – Lynn Whitehead, Treasurer

We have £5,288 in the bank made up as follows -

RESTRICTED FUNDS - £215

- £215 specifically for the production of INFORMATION PANELS.

GENERAL FUNDS - £5,073

General Funds are down £308 since the 31 December 2023 year end. The main items of income and expenditure so far this year have been as follows -

Regarding INCOME -

- annual subscriptions and donations have continued at a satisfactory rate.

On the EXPENDITURE side we have spent -

- £269 on plants and shrubs.

- £150 on bird boxes.

- £800 on garden equipment for use by work parties.

- £550 on completing the upgrade to our web site.

- £162 on QR codes placed around the park

- £687 on our annual insurance.

Overall, our finances continue to be in a satisfactory condition.

Environmental Update – Michael Roe

QR Codes – Michael explained what these were all about.

Consolidation Work – This has started in the walled garden with the south wall, good progress is being made although a lot of vegetation has been cleared away and the work is likely to take 3-4 months. There was concern that the snowdrops would have been disturbed because of the land being churned up. The consensus was that we will just have to wait until the end of the year and see but that most of the snowdrops are at the east side. We have asked the contracting team not to touch the willows in the walled garden.

Cutting the fields – We have agreed a three-year cutting cycle with the Council, continuing with just Home Field this year. This approach is to protect the wildlife in these fields, especially the voles which will hopefully attract more owls to nest in Cammo. It was generally agreed that the hay bales are a great success and Fiona asked if any of the bales were used as feed as the ragwort in them is poisonous to many animals - she was assured that they are not. Sheena also mentioned that the plastic wrapping around the bales when the farmer has finished should be removed to allow the bales to rot down. Thornton is going to stake the areas in the fields which we want to be left uncut.

Tree Felling – This has also commenced and is likely to take 2-3 weeks, although it has had to be paused due to nesting birds. The trees being removed are either diseased or in the way of consolidation works.

Stonemasonry Event – Date to be advised, following which members will be informed.

Sheena asked what was happening to the area behind the stables. It was not entirely clear whether this was the remit of Health and Safety or Archaeology.

Callum asked about the funding for the consolidation works and was advised that it was coming from the Home Farm money and that it was a significant spend.

South Car Park – This is to be closed for the duration of the consolidation works.

Wildlife – Cinnabar Moth caterpillars have been seen; the kestrels have nested but it was believed they did not produce any young. There have been no reports of any barn owls. In the wetland there have been frogs, toads, newts and dragonflies, mallards, moorhens, herons and kingfishers. It was mentioned that it may be worthwhile doing an item on Aquatic Plants for the next newsletter.

Although not planted by Friends of Cammo the orchids have also done very well this year.

Michael mentioned his work on the butterfly transect and reported that butterfly numbers have been poor this year because of the weather, however, Speckled Wood butterflies which are increasing in the Lothians are doing well and Holly Blue, Small Skipper, Commas and Peacocks have been seen. Volunteers for butterfly monitoring would be welcome.

Volunteers

Friends of Cammo Volunteers – Thanks to Roger Buchanan who has been painting the Lodge and removing the bullrushes in the Wetland to prevent them from taking over and drying the wetland out. Lynn asked about the water weed, but Roger advised that it should just die back.

School and Corporate volunteers – Lynn reported that we have been inundated by offers of help from corporate volunteers and we have plenty of tree work for them to assist with and there may be other work removing old fencing from around the Lodge. We also hosted two groups of pupils from the Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools. The pupils worked very hard digging and mulching and they were given the opportunity to go out species spotting which they enjoyed. Rhona Patterson showed them how beehives work and the feedback from the teachers on the overall experience was very good.

Fiona also mentioned having seen another youth group in the park working on resuscitation techniques, but nobody was aware of who they might be.

Leaf and Bean – Are relocating to the other side of the Lodge as their present location underneath a tree is considered unsafe. This new location will also enable them to have greater ease of access to the electricity supply.

Report on the Bees – Rhona Paterson: We have two good hives and honey has been taken off them. One swarm the new beekeeper caught is also doing well. The problems have traditionally been a lack of food in the

later summer months but with the new bee garden flourishing the bees seem to be doing well. The space they inhabit within the protection of the walled garden suits them. As the colder months come the bee activity will quieten down.

Bee Garden /Orchard - Lynn Whitehead: The new bee gardens are becoming very well established and are looking good. The orchard has been cleared and there is a good crop of apples. The plum trees have not done so well but they have been pruned this year so hopefully we will have a better crop next year.

Cammo Management Group: Report of meeting held on 22nd August– Barbara Braham

In attendance were Caroline (CEC), Simon, Barbara and Lynn (Friends of Cammo), Steph (Forest Kindergarten) and Christine (Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society).

The role of the Cammo Estate Advisory Committee was discussed as it was felt by the Council that it was no longer needed, however the Community Councillors think that it does have a role, and they are pursuing this. Forest Kindergarten only have one group now.

The Lodge Extension is now unlikely to go ahead as a lot of the money from the sale of Home Farm has been used up on the consolidation work.

Lodge cleaning is planned to happen 5 days a week. Lynn reported that it hadn't been done on the day of the meeting.

We are still waiting for the map boards to be updated. The work on the new entrance and paths is out for tender (from Cammo Meadows into the park).

EAFS

Open days – the next one is 29th September. There are 2 walks, reported as being at 12.30 and 2.30 (but actually at 10.30 and 1.30). The previous open day went well.

The dig at the North Wall in the Walled Garden is finished and it is hoped that if there are enough, the old tiles which were discovered can be used to edge the refurbished flower beds at the Lodge.

There is a suggestion by the EAFS that heritage roses could be planted in the Walled Garden.

Lectures are to be forthcoming.

Any Other Business

Sheena and Fiona both mentioned the state of the wooden bridge which is rotting in places.

Jayne asked if she could put up a QR code linking to the Orienteering event which takes place in Cammo every January – agreed.

A question was also asked if a QR code could be created with links to the history of the old Golf Course; Sheena said that Harry had a lot of information on that. Guided walks may also be added to QR Codes.

Lynn reported that the Lewis Leap Dog Show was a great success. It was well organised and there were no problems with the behaviour of the dogs. It was very family orientated with lots of children participating and it raised a significant amount of money.

A question was raised about the dropping off point for the Xmas trees next year as Leaf and Bean will be occupying the old dropping off point at the Lodge.

Sheena mentioned the volunteer rota for Sunday afternoons at the Lodge and whether there were enough volunteers?

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 4th December, 7.30pm in Cammo Lodge – Mince Pies and Mulled Wine will be offered.

Meeting Closed

**Friends of Cammo
September 2024**