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MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held in the BRAEHOLM, 31E MONTROSE STREET, HELENSBURGH on TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2014

Present:

	(Chair)
	Councillor Aileen Morton
Alastair Macbeth	Secretary of Friends of Duchess Wood
David Lewin	Trustee, Friends of Duchess Wood
Charlie Cairns	Lower Clyde Green Space
Eileen Kay	Argyll and Bute Council
Johanna Urquhart	Principal, Lomond School
Robert Bell	West Highland Photography

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Robert Bell from West Highland Photography.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Stewart Campbell
Stuart McCracken
Morevain Martin
Elizabeth Pryor
Audrey Martin
Charlie McIvor
Iain Wilkinson

2. MINUTE OF DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - 19/8/2014

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 19 August 2014 was approved as a true record.

3. EVENTS

(a) UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS

Alastair Macbeth affirmed that the recent event held in the Wood by Helensburgh Amateur Athletic Club (HAAC) had been very successful and that the clear up process had been well managed..He also confirmed that the annual Zombie event had taken place without issue.

(b) ENCHANTED FOREST PROPOSAL

The Committee gave consideration to a proposal from Robert Bell, West Highland Photography in which he outlined plans to create an attraction in Duchess Wood which would be similar to the existing Enchanted Forest attraction in Pitlochry.

Further discussion followed in regards the commercial aspect of the

project and to whom the responsibility of both Health and Safety and Public Liability insurance would be incurred. Mr Bell clarified that responsibility of both Health and Safety and insurance would hopefully be delegated to a commercial organisation. He continued that marshals would be in place to supervise the operation and to ensure that no-one got lost or floundered in the Wood and a counting procedure would be instigated to ensure accountability. He confirmed that if the proposal was agreed, then he anticipated the event would run in October/November and continue for 9 days to include 2 weekends. Access would be during the hours of darkness to maximise the effect of the creative lighting. Mr Bell continued that ticket sales would be via internet booking with perhaps a local outlet in Helensburgh to enable people to purchase tickets. Mr Macbeth drew attention to the 4 entry points to the Duchess Wood and Mr Bell confirmed that marshals would be in place to collect tickets at these points. He addressed freedom of access issues and clarified that event access would only pertain during the hours of darkness when less people use the Wood. The Chair suggested that a portion of the Wood could be segmented for dog walker's usage if the project progressed. Charlie Cairns drew attention to the implication of financial risk and stressed the importance of the Committee over viewing budget figures before making a decision.

Decision

The Committee agreed to support the 'Fairy Tale Woods' project in principle and requested that Robert Bell attend the Duchess Woods Committee meeting on 17 February 2015 with an update. The Committee further agreed that Mr Bell would attend the Duchess Woods Committee meeting scheduled for 19 May 2015 to present a full Business Plan for the Committee's formal consideration.

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY

The group considered a report from Eileen Kay, Community Learning and Development which outlined the objectives of the Sub Group and highlighted relevant actions to be undertaken by group members.

Discussion followed and the Committee acknowledged the impact of transportation costs for local primary schools on their already straightened budgets. The Chair emphasised the need to promote Duchess Woods and encourage local schools to use the Woods.

Johanna Urquhart confirmed the need for schools to utilise their local environment and enquired on the possibility of the Wood being mapped for orienteering. Mr Macbeth confirmed that this exercise had already been undertaken by Lomond School.

David Lewin commented that perhaps the Fairy Tale Woods event could perhaps be a 'springboard' for local children to make more use of the Wood.

The Chair put forward the suggestion of a Schools representative on the sub-group but Ms Kay drew attention to the difficulty of teaching staff

being released during the school day to attend meetings.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. That the Sub-group would consider further options and bring these to the next Duchess Woods meeting scheduled for February 2015
2. That the Chair would make contact with Anne Milne, Head Teacher at Rhu to ask if representatives of Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC) could attend a Head Teachers Cluster meeting with a view to determine how best to promote Duchess Wood.

5. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

The Committee considered a report which outlined the work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW).

Alastair Macbeth tabled the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) Members Newsletter and enquired from the Committee their preference on the format in which they received (FODW) updates.

Decision

The Committee agreed

1. To note the report.
2. That both FODW reports would be included in future Agenda packs

6. LOMOND SCHOOL PROPOSAL FOR A FOREST SCHOOL SITE

The group gave consideration to a report from Lomond School which outlined their proposal for a Forest School site in Duchess Wood.

Johanna Urquhart spoke to the proposal and Mr Macbeth drew attention to the site of the proposed Forest School and stated that this was a different site to the original one. Charlie Cairns affirmed that if this was in fact the case, then the Committee may require to give this further discussion.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To support the Lomond School proposal for a Forest Schools site in Duchess Woods, in principle, subject to confirmation from Argyll and Bute Legal Department and Luss Estates.
2. That a visit to the proposed site would be undertaken by the Duchess Wood Committee early in Spring 2015.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOOD

(a) DUCHESS WOOD GREEN GYM

The group considered a report from Charlie Cairns, Area Manager - Lower Clyde Greenspace which provided an update to the group on various initiatives within Duchess Wood.

Green Gym

Charlie Cairns outlined dates for the Green Gym:

To commence	-	4 December 2014
Finish	-	12 March 2015

The leader would be Anna Hamilton.

Further discussion followed in regards what arrangements were in place to get referrals from the relevant medical professionals. Charlie Cairns confirmed that he was meeting with Sam Campbell, NHS Health Improvement Team to take this forward effectively and also to disseminate promotional material to local surgeries.

Employability Team

Charlie Cairns highlighted that time constraints with the Employability team meant they would be unable to undertake work at the bridge west of the Pony Field.

David Lewin drew attention to forthcoming work being undertaken in that area by the Community Pay Back Team and he enquired if funding could be provided to meet the cost of materials. Charlie Cairns advised that David should make contact with Stuart McCracken, Argyll and Bute Amenity Performance Manager for the local area in regards funding.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

8. ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

(a) UPDATE FROM AMENITY SERVICES

The Chair advised that apologies had been received from Stuart McCracken and outlined recent work which had been undertaken by the Amenity Services Team in the Duchess Wood.

This included:-

Japanese Knotweed had been sprayed again since the last meeting
Hire of a cherry picker for the removal of branches at the Garage location at Duchess Wood had been programmed.

The branches to be pruned back from above the asbestos roofs of the garages and lowered to ground level on site.

It had been confirmed that the afore-mentioned work would be carried out in the next 4 weeks.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the update.

(b) HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Alastair Macbeth informed the group of a forthcoming Health and Safety Training event scheduled for February 2015.

Decision

The Committee agreed that this would be forwarded to Tom Murphy, Streetscene Area Manager for information.

(c) ADDITIONAL BIN REQUEST

Alastair Macbeth drew attention to the need for an additional bin near to the garages entry point of the Wood.

Decision

The Committee agreed that Alastair Macbeth would formally email Stuart McCracken to review this request for an additional bin.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

David Lewin enquired if the Chair, Councillor Morton would kindly attend a photo shoot when the new information notice boards are situated in Duchess Woods. The Chair agreed to this request.

He continued that when the excavation work was being undertaken at the streams, then the area would be closed for access and the area would be marshalled.

Charlie Cairns drew attention to the number of issues which had been raised concerning dogs and suggested that the Committee should consider taking action such as running a training/awareness course for dog owners. The issue of commercial dog walkers was also highlighted and it was agreed to target this group too. David Lewin agreed to take this issue forward in the first instance, as one of his FODW colleagues was a dog trainer.

The Chair highlighted that it would be necessary to advise Network Rail of the changing usage in the Wood if the Lomond School Forest School site was formally agreed by the Committee.

Decision:

The Committee agreed that an item around the potential for taking a more pro-active approach to issues with dogs in the Wood come to a future meeting. David Lewin would be involved in taking this issue forward.

10. MEETING DATES - 2015

The group gave consideration to the proposed meeting dates for 2015.

The group agreed to the following meeting dates for 2015:-

17 February 2015 - Braeholm (venue)

19 May 2015 - Braeholm (venue)

18 August 2015 - Venue to be confirmed

17 November 2015 - Venue to be confirmed

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and providing informative updates and reports.

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