

DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2013

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE** will be held in the **BRAEHOLM, 31 E MONTROSE STREET, HELENSBURGH** on **FRIDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2013** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MINUTE**
The Minute of the previous Meeting held on 12 August 2013 (Pages 1 - 6)
3. **JOHN MUIR EVENT**
Catriona Scriven, Scottish Natural Heritage (Pages 7 - 14)
4. **OUTDOOR NURSERY PROPOSAL**
Niall Urquhart, Stramash
5. **MAINTENANCE UPDATE**
Report by Stuart McCracken, Argyll and Bute Council (Pages 15 - 16)
5. (a) **Update on general maintenance**
6. (b) **Maintenance Funding**
- (c) **Response from Network Rail regarding fencing**
Response from Evelyn Brown, Chief Executive, Network Rail (Pages 17 - 20)
6. **SUB-GROUP UPDATES**
7. (a) **Funding (To follow)**
- (b) **Education**
David Chandler, Argyll and Bute Council

7. **FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT**
Report from Friends of Duchess Woods (Pages 21 - 22)
8. **EVENTS**
8. (a) **Update on recent events**
- (b) **Events policy**
Report by Executive Director, Customer Services (Pages 23 - 28)
9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
10. **DATES OF MEETINGS 2014**
February 2014 – week commencing 17/02/2014
May 2014 – week commencing 19/05/2014
August 2014 – week commencing 18/08/2014
November 2014 – week commencing 17/11/2014

Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)

Contact: Lynsey Innis Telephone: 01456 604338

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held in
the BRAEHOLM, 31 E MONTROSE STREET, HELENSBURGH
on MONDAY, 12 AUGUST 2013**

Present:

	(Chair) Councillor Aileen Morton
Stuart McCracken	Argyll & Bute Council
Alison McKenzie	Argyll & Bute Council
Morevain Martin	Argyll Voluntary Action
Charlie Cairns	Lower Clyde Green Space
Stewart Campbell	Chair, Friends of Duchess Wood
Simon Mills	Head Teacher, Lomond School
Alistair Macbeth	Secretary, Friends of Duchess Wood
Niall Urquhart	STRAMASH

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Iain Wilkinson
Morag Bain

2. MINUTE

The minute of the previous meeting which was held on 13 May, 2013 was approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:-

Item 3. The Conservation Volunteers

The various types of models and benefits of the scheme were outlined a full day session led by the Conservation Volunteers would cost £265.00.

Matters Arising:

Maintenance update:

Aliastair Macbeth enquired on the status of the tree work adjacent to Strathclyde Court. Stuart McCracken replied that a contract had been awarded and the work would be undertaken over the next few months.

3. OUTDOOR NURSERY

The Committee heard a short video presentation from Niall Urquhart, Stramash, and Alison McKenzie, Argyll and Bute Council on the Outdoor Nursery in Oban.

Niall detailed the ethos and background to the Nursery and provided information on the various activities and projects which this encompassed. He assured the group that there was no intention to displace existing nurseries in the local area, but to explore the potential to offer another nursery model. He detailed the timetable for the Nursery as Registration would need to be completed in February, 2014, and then determine staffing numbers to enable setting up for operation by August, 2014. Alison McKenzie highlighted that the Argyll and Bute Planning Department would need to review the proposed 'change of usage' and gauge any increased traffic implications.

Discussion followed of the feasibility of instigating an Outdoor Nursery in Duchess Wood. Niall detailed his concerns on the following issues:-

- Children encountering dogs which were not on their leads. Alison McKenzie informed the group of an existing outdoor nursery within Pollok Park in Glasgow and thought that there was an enforcement order by Glasgow City Council to ensure that dogs were on leads within the park. However, she assured the group that the Care Inspectorate would deliberate and advise accordingly. The Committee were all supportive of potentially creating a dog-free or dog-managed area within the Wood.
- Access for parents and emergency services. Niall advised the group that a risk assessment would be undertaken to address this.
- Ratio of children to nursery staff. Simon Mills stated that perhaps the ratio of staff to children would need to be higher in view of being an outdoor facility.
- Open Space Protection Area and Green Belt area
- Proximity of weir within Duchess Wood

The group gave further discussion to the employment opportunities for local young people taking up employment at the Outdoor Nursery and the advantage of having an additional nursery facility within the area.

The Chair summarised that the potential Outdoor Nursery would present a good opportunity for the Helensburgh area and she hoped that the Committee would work together to endeavour to get the correct balance and perspective to address any issues which may arise. Alastair Macbeth advised on the forthcoming AGM meeting for the Friends of Duchess Wood which was scheduled for 21 October and the Committee felt that this may be an appropriate forum for discussion and collect local views on the Outdoor Nursery.

Decision

The group agreed:-

1. To take the proposal for an Outdoor Nursery forward for further consideration.
2. That Argyll and Bute Legal Department would determine any leasing implications.

3. That Niall Urquhart would liaise with the Stramash Board of Directors in regards the potential Outdoor Nursery in Helensburgh.
4. That Alison McKenzie would instigate contact with the Care Inspectorate.
5. That Niall Urquhart and Simon Mills would liaise to explore partnership opportunities between Stramash and Lomond School.
6. That the Chair would inform the Committee by email on the progression of these issues.

4. MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee was updated by Stuart McCracken, Argyll and Bute on the following:-

- Japanese Knotweed had been discovered in 5 areas of the Duchess Wood. Two areas had been treated and the remaining 3 by the end of the week. .
- Tree Work will be undertaken in the winter months, including work by a local contractor at Strathclyde Court.

The Committee gave further discussion to recent incidences of dogs managing to infiltrate fencing and stray onto the railway line. It was also highlighted about fencing in the car park which needed attention.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. That the Chair would raise the fencing issue with Network Rail to determine ownership and responsibility.
2. That Stuart McCracken would review the fencing in the Duchess Wood car park and report back to the next meeting.

5. EDUCATION UPDATE

There was no Education update.

Decision

The Committee agreed that Simon Mills would liaise with David Chandler to agree on a suitable date for the proposed event.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

Charlie Cairns updated that Committee that there was little progress to date Stewart Campbell suggested that other options could perhaps be reviewed and drafts be forwarded onto Charlie Cairns. He advised that, to date, there had been no response received from Babcock and there was a possibility that the Friends of Duchess Wood may utilise their own funds for the notice board.

7. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

A verbal update of recent activity in the Wood was provided. The table and bench in the Pony Field were repaired by the Friends of Duchess Wood working with the Employability team. The bat detector has now been used successfully and both pipistrel and soprano pipistrel bats identified as being in the Wood. The walking theatre may run again with Treasure Island possibly the play that would be performed.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. That Stuart McCracken would review the bridge at Duchess Wood to determine the remedial work needed and contact Finance to identify what funding may be available.

8. REQUESTS FOR EVENT ACCESS

The Committee discussed a draft paper providing detail and history of previous events held in Duchess Wood.

Discussion continued in regards deciding upon general policy, guidance and procedures to review future event applications.

In addition consideration was given to 3 event applications:-

- Tri Events Run
- Blairvadach Outdoor Centre
- Kids Triathlon – Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. That permission would be granted for the Tri Events run. This would be conditional upon the Company complying with any requirements of the Council, such as having Public Liability insurance. In addition, the Friends of Duchess Wood will monitor the impact this event has on Thurgood Bridge, as there are concerns this could be a bottleneck area. The Chair will invite the Company to attend a future meeting of the Committee to review how the event went.
2. That permission would be granted for the Kids Triathlon – Cystic Fibrosis Trust.
3. That the Chair would write to Blairvadach Outdoor Centre advising that permission would be granted for conservation projects, however, cycling is not something the Committee would want to encourage at this moment in time.
4. That a paper would be brought to the next meeting proposing policies and procedures for dealing with future event requests.

9. EQUIPMENT STORE AND NOTICE BOARD PROPOSALS

This item was dealt with at Items 6 and 7.

10. WINTER FESTIVAL

The Friends of Duchess Wood will consider whether they wish to take a stall at the Winter Festival.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that the date of next meeting would be:-

**Friday, 8 November – 10.00a.m.
Braeholm, 31 E Montrose Street, Helensburgh**

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and input and the meeting closed at 5.15p.m.



John Muir Festival and John Muir Way Events 2014

Purpose

This is an update for local authorities and key partners about the John Muir Festival and the related John Muir Way Events programme. The short note below describes the background to both initiatives. We would like to see lots of local communities and groups involved in events and activities along the length of the John Muir Way. We would welcome your feedback on ideas for potential events and activities for both initiatives. We will then be in a better position to work together on the details, including what sort of support might be required.

Introduction

One of the signature events in Homecoming Scotland 2014 is the **John Muir Festival**, which will run from 17 to 26 April. Highlights of the Festival will include the launch of the John Muir Trail on 21 April and the international opening of the Helix and Kelpies near Falkirk. The Festival will celebrate and explore the life and legacy of John Muir, a Scots born naturalist and founder of America's National Parks, taking place along the length of the John Muir Way. The development and delivery of the Festival will be coordinated and managed by UZ Arts who have been appointed by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Creative Scotland, Events Scotland and East Lothian Council <http://uzarts.com/john-muir-festival-2014>.

The specific locations and individual events which will form part of the John Muir Festival programme will be managed by UZ Arts who are also calling for expressions of

interest from community partners for activities to take place along the John Muir Way 17-26 April.

In addition to the Festival itself, SNH is keen to support a number of activities and encourage more people to get out and enjoy the John Muir Trail on their door step throughout the nine local authority areas. These events and activities will be known as “**John Muir Way Events**”, and will run from the 27 April to the 13th June. The events will be held on the week ends of 3/4 – 10/11- 17/18- 24/25 May .31 May 1 June-7/8- June with a day or so in the week where appropriate. These dates are selected so there is no overlap with the many other important events that are happening in 2014. The Queen’s Baton for the Commonwealth Games commences on the 14th June.

For more information see the following SNH link <http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/year-of-natural-scotland-2013/celebrate-john-muir/john-muir-way/>

John Muir Festival

The objectives of the John Muir Festival are to:

- celebrate the life and legacy of John Muir in an inspirational and creative way, with wide community involvement, mass participation and convergence on key locations along the Trail
- raise the international and national profile of Scotland as the birthplace of John Muir
- inspire and encourage people to connect with Scotland’s outdoors and to use the Trail to get active and to explore and experience nature
- be a high profile event within the Homecoming Scotland 2014 programme
- consolidate John Muir Day (21 April) as a strong, high profile date in the Scottish calendar

The key audiences for the Festival are people living in Scotland, with a focus on local communities across central Scotland, and people visiting Scotland from the rest of the UK and overseas - particularly the USA.

The Festival will run from 17 to 26 April and will include the official opening of the John Muir Way, the international opening of the Helix & Kelpies project in Falkirk, a number of themed events in East Lothian, recognising the birthplace of John Muir in Dunbar, and a number of other events at key locations along the Trail.

The successful contractor has been tasked with developing a creative and unifying theme for the Festival and then delivering it. **John Muir Way Events**

The John Muir Way Events programme will run from 27 April to 13 June. It aims to:

- build on the opening of the Way on 21 April 2014
- promote the Way and encourage people to start using it now and in the future, mainly through walking & cycling

- raise awareness of the natural heritage and history accessible to people on their door step
- encourage people to take a positive interest in the local countryside
- raise awareness of the economic potential with local businesses

The official opening of the Way is a one-off event that should attract tens of thousands of people along its length. This will be particularly useful in terms of raising the profile of the Way and awareness of it. The core idea behind John Muir Way Events is to have a whole series of events and activities that are designed to build long-term use and enjoyment of the route. We are particularly keen to use this to reach out to a wide range of groups and people that may not necessarily feel that the Way is for them. This could include people living in socially disadvantaged areas, health groups, volunteering groups, family groups, social care groups and so on.

We want to encourage and support events and activities that are already being planned by local authorities and a wide range of other organisations that could support widespread early use of the Way.. We're also keen to support new ideas that communities, groups and organisations would like to run which could feed into this overall effort. It is intended that the launch will be the start of encouraging and sustaining a wide range of local groups, such as health walks and volunteering groups, to come up with creative ways of using the route and passing on to others their experiences.

While John Muir Way Events will be a programme primarily targeted at local people, many of the events and activities should also appeal to visitors to the area. This would include early route users following the launch. Local people would include family and friends, school children, community groups, special interest groups, local business and landowners.

In developing and promoting the Way, we are already working with a wide range of partners including:

Central Scotland Green Network,

Cyclist Touring Club

Falkirk Community Trust

Forestry Commission Scotland

Historic Scotland

John Muir Trust

Local Authorities (Argyll & Bute Council, City of Edinburgh Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, East Lothian Council, Falkirk Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Stirling Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, West Lothian Council)

Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority

National Trust for Scotland

Ramblers Scotland

Scottish Canals

Sustrans

To help planning and to focus activity, we propose that events and activities should be organised mainly for weekends, though we would also welcome group activities that take place during each week. The weekend dates are April 27, May 3/4, May 10/11, May 17/18, May 24/25, May 31/June 1 and June 7/8.

Here are some suggestions for the sorts of activities which could be included as part of the John Muir Way Events programme:

- guided walks along sections of the route with special interest themes
- health walks
- visits organised for older people, black and ethnic minority groups and less abled groups
- leader-led walking, cycling, horse riding, canoeing and barge trips
- John Muir Award activities
- practical conservation tasks
- John Muir interpretation by actors
- historic re-enactments
- youth groups, school trips and field trips aimed at children
- children's arts & crafts, theatre and music activities

We welcome your involvement and participation. **Please respond to Catriona Scriven (contact details below) with your ideas for proposed events/activities and dates by the end of November 2013.** Please include as much detail as possible.

Funding support

We expect that in some cases there may be modest funding needs and, once we have feedback on the range of potential events and activities, we will consider how we can best support any unfunded costs for worthwhile events. We are keen to support wide promotion of the programme thus ensuring even better turnouts. We are looking for a good geographical spread of events across the whole route as well as from a broad range of interest groups. Once we have a better idea of the potential for these events and activities following your feedback, we can provide further information on what support might be available.

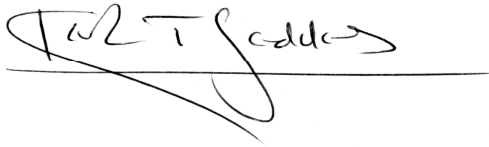
We'd like to hear from you.

Please give some thought about what you or your organisation can do to support both of these initiatives. Do send us your ideas and suggestions, so we can collate and support a number of excellent activities that will encourage community participation and engagement with this exciting new route.

If it would be useful, we could arrange a meeting to consider all the projects proposed and develop a programme together.

R. W. Davison

SNH Richard Davison Programme Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Geddes', is written over a horizontal line.

CSGN Keith Geddes chair of CSGN Partnership Board

For enquiries about the John Muir Festival, please contact: Marion Mulholland (SNH, Edinburgh) 0131 3162612 / 07881 673352 e marion.mulholland@snh.gov.uk

For enquiries about the John Muir Trail Events, please contact Catriona Scriven (SNH, Clydebank) 0141 951 0871/ 07795 427246 e Catriona.scriven@snh.gov.uk

John Muir Festival 17-26 April FAQs

Background

John Muir April 21, 1838 – December 24, 1914. John Muir, born in Dunbar East Lothian is renowned in the United States as the father of conservation. He was a Scottish-born American naturalist, author, and early advocate of preservation of wilderness in the United States. His letters, essays, and books telling of his adventures in nature have been read by and have influenced millions. The spiritual quality and enthusiasm toward nature expressed in his writings inspired readers, including presidents and congressmen, to take action to help preserve large nature areas. He is today referred to as the "Father of the National Parks". Muir's biographer, Steven J. Holmes, believes that Muir has become "one of the patron saints of twentieth-century American environmental activity," both political and recreational.

UZ Arts www.uzarts.com have been commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage www.snh.org.uk to produce a Festival celebrating the life and achievements of John Muir in an inspirational and creative way. Included in the Festival will be the international opening of the Helix & Kelpies project in Falkirk and the launch of the John Muir Way. Stretching from John Muir's birthplace in Dunbar to the waters of the Clyde at Helensburgh, this new Way will allow everyone to explore the nature and landscapes of Central Scotland and visit Scotland's first National Park at Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.. Event Scotland will support the festival as part of Homecoming 2014.

Artists/Events/Commissioning

The Festival will be curated by UZ Arts. UZ will be programming and commissioning events to

- a. launch the Festival and John Muir Way
- b. conclude the Festival
- c. focus on hotspots along the way

How do you get involved?

1. UZ will produce an inclusive programme of activity in relation to the commissioned artwork.

2. UZ invite individuals and organisations to propose events/projects to be included in the Festival. If UZ consider the event is suitable, they will endorse the event by letter of support and include in the Festival programme. These projects need to be self-funded and self-managed. Endorsed events will need to adhere to a timescale for fundraising and marketing.

Proposal forms are available from helen@uzarts.com . Proposals should be submitted ASAP cut off date for all proposals is end of October. Proposals will be assessed and notified by end of November – any organisations requiring an earlier decision in order to access external funding pls contact UZ. Deadline for endorsed events to be fully funded, managed and ready for inclusion in programme is 1ST FEB 2014. Proposals that can't meet this timescale will not be able to be included in the endorsed Festival events programme.

3. SNH Events: Catriona Scriven is inviting further events to take place 28th April - 13June

Money

UZ are not a funding organisation so will not be funding any events beyond the curated programme.

UZ welcome discussion from local authorities or organisations where additional resources or funds can be provided in order to enhance activity in their area.

Benefits to your area

Put your area literally on the APP.

Encourage people to go outdoors and experience nature

Increase visitors and extend their stay

Take part in a high profile Festival which is innovative, imaginative and inspiring and part of Homecoming 2014

Link communities and organisations along the route in shared interest

Where is it?

The Festival will have key events in Dunbar, Helensburgh and/or Balloch with further activity throughout the route.

Further details and a map of the trail can be found at:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/year-of-natural-scotland-2013/celebrate-john-muir/john-muir-trail/>**When is it?**

John Muir Festival : 17th to 26th April 2014

International opening of the Helix and the unveiling of The Kelpies in Falkirk: 17th -20th April 2014

Official opening of the

John Muir Way: 21st – 26th April 2014

Finale 26th April 2014

CONTACT: Helen@uzarts.com 07725226912 / 0141 5594910

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Duchess Wood Maintenance Budget

Summary

Following work by Councillor Al Reay several years ago, a one-off fund was created to allow for maintenance required on an exceptional basis.

Funds currently available for works within Duchess Wood comes to a total of £13,500. This is made up as follows:

£3,500 – funding returned from Lower Clyde Greenspace

£10,000 – from Council over the life of the agreement, to be absorbed within existing budgets

Past Works

Over the last few year a number of major costs have come up as a result of safety issue such as culvert construction and dangers tree removal. Costs for these items are as follows:

1. £1,000 for culvert worked carried out.
2. £2,125 removal of pruning/dangers trees at the following locations:
 - a. Rear 7 Duchess Drive
 - b. Rear 9 Duchess Drive
 - c. Rear 50 MacLead Drive
 - d. Rear 13 MacLead Crescent
 - e. At bridge top of Paterson Drive

Total previous spend on contractors: £3,125

There have also been a number of trees removed, the trees adjacent to local housing have been inspected, emptying litter bins, clearing fly tipping, and Knotweed treatment have been carried out by Council staff. These works have been absorbed within Grounds Maintenance budgets therefore no charges have been allocated to Duchess Wood.

It has been decided that none of these costs will be taken off the budget of Duchess Wood therefore a budget of £13,500 is available.

Future Works

In the future, any works carried out by contractor will be invoiced to the Duchess Wood Budget. Works carried out by Council staff will be absorbed by Grounds Maintenance budgets where there are low material costs involved; however, this may have to change in the future as budget cuts continue within the Council. Prior to any changes regarding Council charges the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee will be informed.

The overall budget of £13,500 is made of two parts:

1. The £10,000 from the Council was made available to ensure appropriate levels of maintenance in of the wood, particularly in relation to safety requirements. As maintenance costs are clearly going to become an issue in the future these funds will not go far if a major cost item comes up such as bridge repair/replacement.
2. With regards £3,500 of funds that came from Lower Clyde Greenspace, this was also expected to be used for general maintenance, and will supplement the Council budget.

There is currently an outstanding job to be carried out at the garages beside Strathclyde Court which will have to be carried out by a contractor. No cost is available at present but obviously this will have an impact on the identified budget available.

There is also a further issue that should be pointed out that may have financial implications. One of the adjoining properties to the wood has recently sent in letter from their insurers highlighting the potential nuisance by tree roots action. This may result in other works not considered as maintenance issues in the future and bring further cost and restraints to this small budget when it comes to works like this.

Conclusion

A clear recording system has been put in place for this fund so that both the Council and the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee can see what is available and what has been spent. In future, an annual printed report will be provided at the meeting closest to end of financial year (31st March). Further verbal updates can also be provided on a quarterly basis if required.

Stuart McCracken
Service Development Officer, Development and Infrastructure
25th October 2013

Dear Cllr Morton

Thank you for your emails regarding the railway fencing between Helensburgh Upper and Garelochhead.

Our Track Section Manager inspected the site this morning and I can confirm the following information from his report and photographs:

All fencing is risk assessed and factors taken into account include the line speed, number of trains per day and type of land it borders. At this location, the vast majority of fencing is in a satisfactory condition given the track category and adjacent land use which is forest. This fence would also be in acceptable condition if the adjacent land used was for livestock as there is Rylock fencing along this part of the route. Our Track Section Manager walked the entire fence line from the railway side and then from the Duchess Wood side to ensure nothing was missed.

He found only 1 defect where a panel of Rylock fencing appeared to have been trampled into the vegetation and as such, has left a 1.92m gap in the fencing. Our staff will rectify this next week when they are in the area.

I understand that you have concerns about the general condition of the fencing. In a number of areas, old timbers and sleepers have been used to strengthen fencing foundations on certain embankments giving the impression of incomplete and rotting fencing. However, this is not the case as post and wire (Rylock topped with a barb) is in place throughout.

Photos are attached to help understand the situation

Photo 1 – Damaged panel of Rylock at 3m 0015y (WHL). Staff will rectify next week.

Photo 2 – Typical condition of fencing throughout the area.

Photo 3 – From the public footpath within Duchess Wood fencing appears in bad condition (old timbers and sleepers have been used to strengthen fencing foundations embankments). Rylock in place throughout

Photo 4 – Behind the old timber supports, intact Rylock in place.

In summary, we will carry out repairs to the gap found in the fence next week but otherwise we are satisfied with the fence at this location.

I trust this information addresses your enquiry.

Regards

Evelyn Brown
Community Relations Manager, Scotland

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Report from the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW)
to the
Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC)
meeting on 8th November 1013

1. **Routine.** FODW have continued to carry out routine actions since the last meeting of the DWLNRC, such as **monthly work parties, cutting back growth near paths and invasive species, fencing repairs and litter control.**
2. **Garage storing facility.** FODW is pleased to report that it has now secured a garage (on hire) beside Strathclyde Court in which to store equipment and, we hope, logs for sale.
3. **Tri-Events Zombies** (19 October). FODW undertook to monitor the Tri-Events “Zombies” night run which passed through Duchess Wood. Our overall assessment was that it was well organised. Regarding Duchess Wood, we had two prior concerns. **(i) Strain on the “Thurgood Bridge”** at the north-east corner of the Wood. The event organisers took that seriously. They erected generator-fed electric lights along the railings, ensured that no spiked shoes were worn and had a marshall on duty at each side of the bridge to slow runners and to warn them of steep steps. We were content with those arrangements. **(ii) After-event clear up.** This was done well. Much was carried out that night, but FODW had to remove two sign boards and some plastic tape the next morning.
4. **Walking Theatre** (20 October). This was a great success. The performance was an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Treasure Island”, created especially for children and funded by the NHS as part of Mental Health Week. More than 100 people participated and refreshments were provided by FODW in the Rugby Club at the end.
5. **Grant applications.** A grant of £320 was obtained from the Argyll & Bute Third Sector scheme, matched by £320 of FODW money. This is being spent on materials and attendance at a course. An approach to Babcock regarding support for an information board has been made but, despite follow-up, no feedback has yet been received. SNH grants are being investigated.
6. **Publicity.** Various with local press. The FODW newsletter to members was circulated in September. Alastair Macbeth (Secretary) gave a talk about Duchess Wood at a one-day conference concerning community involvement in woodlands, organised by the Forestry Commission and the Community Woodlands Association.
7. **The FODW Annual General Meeting** was held on 21st October in the Lomond School sports hall. There was a very good turn-out of members and others and the current committee members and office bearers were re-elected. The annual report and accounts were approved. The guest speaker was Fiona Baker who provided a fascinating illustrated talk on “The woods of Ardencaple Castle”, covering both history and archaeology. We were appreciative that Councillor Aileen Morton both attended and spoke.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**CUSTOMER SERVICES****DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE
RESERVE**

DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE EVENTS POLICY

1. SUMMARY

The Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee made a request that a policy and procedure for holding future events be presented to their next meeting. In accordance with this request, a draft policy has been prepared in partnership between Lower Clyde Greenspace and Argyll and Bute Council's Development & Infrastructure Service. The draft policy is attached at Appendix 1 of this report .

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee initially discuss the draft Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Events Policy attached at Appendix 1 and if so minded, agree to its formal adoption.
- 2.2 In considering the draft Policy, the Committee are invited to consider the points which are raised within paragraphs 3.3-3.5 below.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 At the Meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee on 12 August 2013, a request was made to the effect that a paper would be brought to the next meeting proposing policies and procedures for dealing with future event requests.
- 3.2 A policy has been drafted for discussion by the Group. No such procedure has been prepared at this time as there are issues raised within the policy which the Committee should give consideration to. Once the Committee has an agreed way forward, a procedure to reflect this can be presented.
- 3.3 The draft policy lists events which could be accommodated within the woodland. From this list there may be a requirement for the event organiser, in certain circumstances, to obtain a public entertainment licence. Public entertainment licences are required for the following types of event regardless of whether or not there is an admittance fee:

Theatrical Performance
Concerts
Dances/discos
Fairgrounds
Circuses
Leisure Centres with audience accommodation
Ice rinks with audience accommodation
Boxing, wrestling, judo or similar presentations
Snooker or billiard halls
Amusement arcades
Video shows

- 3.4 In granting permission for an event to take place, the Committee should take account of the need for these specific event types to be licenced although unless the Committee decide there is merit in licensing the venue as an events venue, ultimately it would be the responsibility of the event organisers to ensure that they comply with any licensing requirements.
- 3.5 Public Entertainment licences can be granted for one off events which individual organisations could obtain themselves or as stated above, consideration could be given to licence the woodland as venue. If this was something that the Committee feel is worth pursuing, it should be noted that charitable organisations do not require to pay a fee for a public entertainment licence, although a free application can also be made by voluntary organisations that are fundraising for a charity.
- 3.6 The second point for consideration is in terms of fees and charges and how the Committee may wish to handle any donation and/or bond associated with the use of the venue for an event. Although the Committee is responsible for securing funding for the LNR, it would probably not be appropriate for them to be involved in the day to day financial operation and this may be best resolved by the Friends of Duchess Wood taking responsibility for any funds. However, the Committee may wish to recommend that any funds or donations are used in a similar manner to a bond in that these are used for maintenance and enhancements of the LNR.
- 3.7 The final point which the Committee should give cognisance to is the issue of how this events policy is implemented. There may be benefit in identifying a resource to act as contact point for enquiries and also someone to liaise directly with any events manager and to process any applications.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 As per the request of the Committee, officers from Lower Clyde Greenspace and the Council's Development and Infrastructure Service have prepared a draft policy for discussion and adoption either in its present form or with any amendments the Committee see fit to make following their discussion of the policy and the issues raised herein.

Executive Director of Customer Services
25 October 2013

For further information contact: Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer –
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Appendix 1

Duchess Wood LNR Events Policy

The following paper outlines the suitability, or otherwise, of the use of Duchess Woods LNR for organised events. The purpose of this paper is not to remove any access rights under the Land Reform Act or to restrict access to the general public. All users of the woodland should take account of the Access code.

Contents

1. Potential Events encouraged within Duchess Wood
2. Events not encouraged within Duchess Wood
3. Approval and assessment criteria
4. Approval timescales
5. Wet weather policy
6. Fees and other charges
7. Documentation to be provided

1. Events which can be accommodated within Duchess Wood LNR

Community Events – those events organised by charities, not for profit organisations, community or voluntary groups that directly benefit the residents and stakeholders

Commercial Events – those events that do not fall into the above category and have a commercial gain for the business. To be allowed, such events should be able to demonstrate some form of return for the community e.g. healthier lifestyles, young people connecting with the environment

Education Events – guided walks, classroom visits etc which directly lead to an enhanced understanding of the environment in general and Duchess Wood in particular.

Commercial dog walking – this already occurs commonly within the LNR, and practitioners are bound by existing laws, regulations and good practice relating to access to the countryside

Filming – there may be value in promoting the woods as a venue suitable for filming. Such use would require to be subject to standard assessment criteria.

Use of Woods for Regular Classes – for example fitness classes, tai chi etc. This should be encouraged as not requiring specific permission up to a set maximum number of participants (say 10). Any more than this set number of participants should be subject to standard assessment criteria set out below.

2. What events are not encouraged?

There are a number of events that we should not accept, these include but are not limited to:

Private Events – e.g. private parties, weddings or corporate events

Car Boot sales

Bonfires

Barbecues

Religious Events

Political Events

3. Approval criteria

The following criteria will be used to determine whether approval will be given to

a specific event when the Council is the organiser and/or the land/site owner:

- Security and public safety and ensuring the necessary insurance is in place.
- Effect on the fabric of the area and the damage limitation
- Effect of event on regular users of public spaces, stakeholders and local residents
- Timing of the event / frequency of the event
- Size of the location, numbers attending or estimated numbers
- Impact on transport infrastructure to support the event – e.g. parking, road closures
- Quality of the event to the area
- The creation of opportunities for local participation of people living within the borough
- The ability of the organisers to effectively plan, manage and control the event and adhere to best practice standards. This would include the production of a risk assessment plan and a health and safety plan for each event.

4. Application time scales

Where possible we will try to be flexible on the time scales used for applications

as we appreciate that some events may be as a result of cancellations or demand. However we ask that the following guidelines are adopted. During busy summer months, we cannot guarantee that applications for events outside

these timescales can be managed:

- **Small events (less than 50 people)** – at least 6 weeks
- **Medium events (50 to 500 people)** – at least 2 months
- **Large events (more than 500 people)** – 6 months at least, more if possible due to the complex nature of the event – This scale of event may not be deemed suitable to the Woodland particularly given the potential car parking requirements associated with this number of people using the woodland .

5. Wet weather policy

The Council reserves the right to cancel or close any event which, after consultation with the event organiser, is considered to carry unacceptable levels of risk or potential site damage due to inclement weather. The Council will not be liable for any losses sustained as a result of such a decision being made.

6. Fees and Charges

For any medium scale or large scale event, as defined above, a bond will be payable to cover the costs of any reinstatement to the woodland infrastructure as a result of the event. The bond will be returnable after the conclusion of the event and a site inspection, and subject to agreed damage costs estimated by the Council.

Small scale events will not be subject to a bond, but will still be held liable for any unreasonable damage incurred as a result of their event.

7. Information to be provided by event organiser

All event organisers, regardless of the size of the event, will be asked to provide

the following paperwork for their event to be approved:

Public liability Insurance Certificate- this covers the event, activity and the general public.

Completed risk assessment and health and safety assessment form – It is the event organiser's duty of care to carry out a risk assessment and reduce any risks before the event begins. The aim of the risk assessment is to consider any foreseeable risks of the event as a whole and then implement controls to ensure a safe event before it begins.

Event Manager - All events must have a designated Event Manager who is responsible for co-ordinating the event. Full contact details for the event manager shall be provided