

DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE

13 May 2014

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE** will be held in the **BRAEHOLM, 31E MONTROSE STREET, HELENSBURGH** on **TUESDAY, 20 MAY 2014** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MINUTE OF DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - 18/02/2014** (Pages 1 - 6)
3. **EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE** (Pages 7 - 8)
4. **EVENTS POLICY UPDATE** (Pages 9 - 12)
5. **WOODLAND DEVELOPMENT**
 - (a) **Green Gym Update** (Pages 13 - 16)
 - (b) **Liaison with Employability Team**
 - (c) **Notice Board/Way Marking Update**
6. **ROUTINE MAINTENANCE** (Pages 17 - 18)
7. **FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT** (Pages 19 - 20)
8. **OUTSTANDING ISSUES RAISED**
 - (a) **Dog Control**
Paper by Friends of Duchess Wood (Pages 21 - 22)
 - (b) **Fly-posting**

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve will take place at 10.00am on Tuesday 19th August 2014 within the Braeholm, 31E Montrose Street, Helensburgh.

Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)

Contact: Lynsey Innis, Area Governance Assistant; Tel: 01546 604338

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held in
the BRAEHOLM, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2014**

Present: Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)

Stewart Campbell, Chairman of Friends of Duchess Woods
Alastair Macbeth, Secretary of Friends of Duchess Woods
Charlie Cairns, Lower Clyde Green Space
Gary Collins, Tri-Events, Helensburgh

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Stuart McCracken
Morevain Martin
Morag Bain
Iain Wilkinson
Simon Mills
David Chandler

**2. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL
NATURE RESERVE - 08/11/2013**

The minute of the previous meeting which was held on 8 November 2013,
was approved as a true record subject to the following amendments:-

Item 4

Wording to be amended to read "He advised that his initial reservations
about Pollock Park had been removed by his visit."

Item 5(b)

Wording to be amended to read "Discussion ensued surrounding the
culvert and the all-abilities path with it being agreed that the maintenance,
to keep in line with Health and Safety standards, of both should be paid
for by the Council."

Item 9

Wording to be amended to read ", as the estimate had recently been
renewed."

The Chair advised that Gary Collins of Tri-Events was in attendance, and as
such agreed that a discussion would take place after agenda item 2 (Minute).

3. TRI-EVENTS

Gary Collins provided the Committee with a verbal update on the previous

“Zombie Run” event which was held in October within Duchess Wood. He advised that there had been a lot of marketing done in regards to the event, which saw 80% of participants from out of town. He advised that they had received 171 sign ups, however with the wet weather on the day there were only a small number who did not turn up. He advised that all feedback received from stakeholders and landowners had been positive.

Discussion ensued with Alastair Macbeth, Secretary of Friends of Duchess Wood praising Mr Collins and his team for the efficient clear up following the event, and for ensuring that adequate stewarding had been in place to ensure runners slowed down at the Thurgood Bridge, as there had been concern over the potential for damage on said Bridge.

Further discussion in relation to future plans for such events and the possibilities of hosting them within Duchess Wood was had. Mr Collins advised the group that the Tri-Events group were making a donation of £100 to the Friends of Duchess Wood. Mr Collins spoke of other local organisations, such as Helensburgh Round Table and the Rotary Club of Helensburgh who both offered funding to local groups.

The Chair thanked Mr Collins for his informative update.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair advised that the Terms of Reference required to be updated. Following discussion it was agreed that the following amendments would be made to the document:-

The word purpose would become purposes with the addition of the letter “s” in the first sub-heading and subsequent bullet points there under.

Membership and administration would remain the same, although it was noted that Committee Member, Simon Mills, Head Teacher of Lomond School, who had submitted his apologies, was now resigning from the Committee as he was moving on. He had advised the Chair that it was unlikely that the new Head Teacher would have capacity to attend the Committee at this point in time. It was agreed that the Council’s Governance and Law Department would write to Helensburgh Cricket and Rugby Club to formally invite them to become a member of the Committee as a neighbouring property. It was also agreed that the Chair would make contact with Simon Mills and in turn the new Head Teacher at Lomond School to check the position in terms of remaining on the distribution list for receiving minutes etc. David Chandler, QIO, is not expected to return to work – a suitable replacement from the central Education team is expected to be in place by the next meeting of the Committee.

It was further agreed that a sentence be added at the end of the last sentence under Committee Working Arrangements, which should read as follows:-

“Where necessary Working Groups/Sub Committees can be set up to deal with specific items.”

It was noted that in terms of “Communications with the media” and

“Actions” that the reporting system of the Friends of Duchess Woods to each meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee, already in place, was agreeable to the Committee.

In terms of Appendix 1 – Routine Maintenance it was agreed that this should be reviewed in February 2015.

5. STRAMASH UPDATE

The Chair confirmed that the Stramash Board had advised that it would not be possible to open an outdoor nursery in Helensburgh for August 2014 She further advised that Stramash are continuing to explore possibilities for making this happen by August 2015.

6. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOODS REPORT

The Committee considered a report which outlined the work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW), such as routine actions since the last meeting of the Committee. It highlighted the damage which had been caused by the storms and the actions taken to rectify matters by the Council’s Amenity Services. It outlined the financial aspects of the group and also the agreement with Babcock regarding producing two information boards for FODW, and the plans which were in place for the next 6 months.

The Committee noted the report and expressed their appreciation of the work done by the Council’s Amenity Services to minimise the storm damage. The Chair agreed to write to the Service to thank them for their assistance in this matter.

7. WOOD DEVELOPMENT

(a) NOTICEBOARDS/WAY MARKINGS DEVELOPMENT

Stewart Campbell, Chair of the Friends of Duchess Wood provided members with an update in regards to the notice boards. He distributed the design of the notice boards which had been sent to Babcock and advised that the frame would be made from timber with the feet being in a metal sleeve to protect against deterioration of the wood in the ground. He further advised of the information which would be contained within the notice boards, and agreed that he would send a copy of the information to Lynsey Innis, Area Governance Assistant to disseminate round the core members of the Committee.

Mr Campbell spoke of the way markings which he hoped would be in place primarily around the red route. He advised that the Friends of Duchess Wood had applied to the John Muir Fund for funding for a Flower Walk Leaflet.

(b) GREEN GYM UPDATE

Charlie Cairns provided the Committee with an update in regards to

the green gym. He advised that there had been poor attendance in the two days which had ran so far. He spoke of the need to show attendance for the extended green gym which is proposed for the next financial year. Discussion took place regarding a further publicity drive, with Mr Cairns agreeing to speak with David Graham, as he believed there to be sufficient funding to run a quarter page advert in the Helensburgh Advertiser and also Morevain Martin with regard to the Health and Wellbeing initiative to explore further routes of recruitment for the venture.

(c) LIAISON WITH EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

Mr Cairns provided the Committee with a verbal update in regards to the liaison with the Employability Team, he advised that the preference was for one main point of contact. Mr Cairns confirmed that he was happy to act as this point of contact. Discussion ensued in relation to the menu of options that the Employability Team could work through within the wood. Stewart Campbell confirmed that he would update the menu and send it on to Mr Cairns, who in turn would send it on to the Employability Team. It was further agreed that a meeting would be co-ordinated on site to discuss the items on the menu. The FODW potentially have funding from a donor that would allow culverting to be undertaken – a quote from the Employability Team will be sought in relation to this.

8. JOHN MUIR WAY EVENTS

The Chair advised the Committee of the proposed events being held within the Helensburgh area. Stewart Campbell advised that Friends of Duchess Wood had secured the 3rd Sector Grant approval for half of the grant, and were awaiting confirmation from both UZ Arts and Scottish Natural Heritage for the remaining funding. He outlined the plans in place to host “Bug Life” within the woods with dates being agreed with the Walking Theatre Company. It was agreed that Mr Campbell would send notice to the Head Teachers of all local Primary Schools to notify of the event scheduled for 28th April 2014, with a view to a selection of children being invited along from each school.

9. EVENTS POLICY

The Committee were provided with an update in terms of the Events Pack, which had now been updated by the Council. Mr Cairns advised the Committee that he was working towards an Events Policy which would allow flexibility.

Discussion in relation to the current policy was had, with minor “tweaks” being agreed by the Committee:

Subject heading 1 – the removal of “without need for approval”

Subject heading 4 – Small events (less than 40 people)

Medium events (40 – 150 people)

Large events (more than 150 people)

Subject heading 6 – to be renamed “Finances”

Mr Cairns agreed to devise a statement in terms of Subject heading 2, which would see a more over-arching approach to the events which are

not encouraged, with a view to any events which could have a detrimental effect on the woods such as motorised events being discouraged without being too restrictive.

Before leaving the meeting at 12.00pm, Mr Campbell advised that he would forward other suggested changes to Mr Cairns by email. Mr Cairns confirmed that he would alter the current Events Policy and send to all members of the Committee for approval.

10. ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

The Committee considered a report by the Council's Service Development Officer, which had been tabled on the day. Discussion regarding the suggestion of planting trees was had, with Mr Cairns advising that there was funding within the Green Gym budget for this purpose. It was noted that this would need to take place within the next four weeks in terms of the planting season. Mr Cairns agreed to take this matter forward with Stuart McCracken.

In terms of the Japanese Knotweed, Mr Macbeth advised that he had been pleased with the way that Luss Estates were dealing with the problem in other areas. He showed a photograph of signage used by Luss Estates with a view to dealing with the issues in Duchess Wood in a similar way. Mr Macbeth confirmed that he would forward the photograph to Stuart McCracken to begin discussions in this regard.

11. EDUCATION UPDATE

It was agreed by the Committee that this had been covered under agenda item 3 (Terms of Reference).

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 20th May 2014 at 10.00am within Braeholm, 31 East Montrose Street, Helensburgh.

DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE
20th May 2014

Partnership Working – Education Representative

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the benefit of considering appointing a Member to the Committee who can represent the education service and progress educational projects for young people within and around the woods. Eileen Kay, Argyll and Bute Council's Community Learning and Development Worker, has shown an interest in taking up such a role.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee note the content of this report and agree that Eileen Kay become the representative on the Committee from Education.

3. BACKGROUND

Eileen Kay is the local Youth Service Worker with responsibility for the primary sector, and the main focus of her work is the upper end of Primary schools P4-P7. She covers 11 Primary schools including Parklands School.

Her work includes supporting transition between primary and secondary school; improving health and wellbeing; developing literacy and numeracy; promoting and recognising achievement; community based family learning and promoting citizenship.

There are clear educational benefits to be gained from involving young people in and encouraging them to make use of the opportunities which the woods present to them. Areas worthy of exploration for potential partnership working include:

Outdoor Learning:

- Environmental Project
- Physical Activities - potential partnership working with Active Schools
- Outdoor Literacy Project

Family Learning:

- Wild Days Out - A family adventure of quests, challenges, storytelling and creativity in the secret areas of Duchess Woods

- Camp craft
- Family out-door cooking

Generations Working Together:

- Using already established activities such as Bug Life and the Guided Flower Walk, the aims of the project would be to involve young people from local primary schools to encourage the sharing of experiences and skills between generations
- Establish an outdoor Intergenerational Choir

Accreditation for young which could be associated with some of the projects:

- John Muir Award
- Dynamic Youth Awards
- Argyll Voluntary Action - Young Volunteer Award (non-accredited)

4. CONCLUSION

The appointment of a representative from Education will complement the activities already promoted by the Friends of Duchess Wood and encourage structured development of activities for young people in and around the woods. This has the potential to increase the wider community use of the wood, and to develop the health and well being of children and their families.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy	None
5.2 Financial	None
5.3 Legal	None
5.4 HR	None
5.5 Equalities	None
5.6 Risk	None
5.7 Customer Service	None

For further information, please contact Eileen Kay, Community Learning and Development Worker (01436 658743).

Duchess Wood LNR Events Policy

The following paper outlines the suitability, or otherwise, of the use of Duchess Woods LNR for organised events

As a Local Nature Reserve, and a site holding a Core Path, Duchess Wood is subject to the terms and conditions relating to access to the countryside as laid out in the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003. As a support to this legislation, a Code of Conduct for people accessing the countryside was produced and it is an overarching principle of the management of Duchess Wood that users will adhere to the terms and principles of the Code of Conduct, which can be viewed at <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>. Of particular relevance is para 3.60, relating to events.

Contents

1. 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
8. Appropriate point of contact

1. Events and/or activities 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?

Proposals for events within Duchess Wood will be viewed within the context of the woodland being a Local Nature Reserve, and a place where the public can exercise responsible access to their environment. In this respect further guidance on responsible access can be gained from the Scottish Natural Heritage website, but generally events involving any means of motorised transport will not be suitable. Similarly, any events involving large scale use by one user group (for example, runners, walkers, horseriders, cyclists) will be assessed in terms of their impact on the wider woodland using community.

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
- 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 immediate area
- The ability of the organisers to effectively plan, manage and control the event and adhere to best practice standards

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 40 people)** – at least 6 weeks
- **Medium events (40 to 150 people)** – at least 2 months
- **Large events (more than 150 people)** – 6 months at least, more if possible due to the complex nature of the event

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. Finances

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. Bond monies would be paid to Argyll and Bute Council and held in a balance account code dedicated to Duchess Wood. In the event of bond monies being retained due to damage being caused, this balance account code would be available to Argyll and Bute Council but ring-fenced for maintenance of Duchess Wood.

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. In the events of small donations being offered, these should go towards the Friends Of Duchess Wood and again be for making good of any limited damage/unsightliness that may have resulted from the activity.

It is suggested that the financial arrangements discussed above remain in place for 1 year, when they will become subject to review.

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 before their event is approved:

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

Completed risk 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 or point of contact who is responsible for co-ordinating the event.

8. Appropriate Point of Contact

An appropriate person within Argyll and Bute Council should be identified for this purpose. In the event of the initial enquiry being made to any other partners represented on the LNR Management Committee, they should be directed to the appropriate person at the earliest opportunity. This person would then be expected to liaise with the LNR Committee, or some working group derived from it.

DRAFT

Report to Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee

Green Gym 2013/14

Background

Funding for a Green Gym in Duchess Wood was obtained from the Forestry Commission, via their Community Seedcorn Fund, in December 2013. The funding was for the delivery of a Green Gym programme by the end of March 2014. It had been agreed by the Committee before hand that any Green Gym programme would be delivered by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV).

Given the short time available in which to apply for funding, and the relative roles and natures of the various groups on the LNR Management Committee, it was decided that the most appropriate organisation to apply for the funding would be TCV themselves. This would simplify any issues of outlay of funds vs claim of grant, and as a registered charity TCV were a very appropriate organisation for the Community Seedcorn Fund.

The timescale for delivery was very tight, bringing a series of challenges. Also, the time of year was not considered optimum for public involvement. As a result of these issues planning for the programme was a challenge and it seemed likely that attendance may be a challenge. However, it was considered to be a good precursor for a longer programme in 2014/15, which the Forestry Commission had expressed an interest in funding.

Detail (Excerpt from the Monitoring Form submitted to FC by TCV)

After an initial delay in the confirmation of funding the project commenced on the 10th of February after a very short period of publicity and the 8th programmed session was completed on the 31st of March 2014. Given the late award notification and direction given to complete the project before April 2014, the initial stages of the project suffered as a result of inadequate publicity run in and extremely poor weather. In the end a total, 12 registered volunteers engaged with the project with the majority engaging towards the latter half of the project.

8 Green Gym days were run with the majority of the work being undertaken around the 2 identified coupes which were cleared of smaller trees through the use of both chainsaw and hand tools. The resulting felled wood was either constructed into habitat piles or was made accessible for the management group who have identified on use for woodland sculpture projects and educational charcoal making sessions.

It was decided, by the Friends of Duchess Woods, to concentrate on woodland management preparation works and not to carry out native tree and shrub planting (as identified in the original application) however a large quantity of tree stakes and shelters have been purchased through this grant award in order to allow the group to carry this work out later in 2014. This work will either be completed by the Friends group themselves or as part of a future TCV/Lower Clyde Greenspace supported Green Gym group (subject to follow on FCS Seedcorn funding being agreed).

The project generated early publicity through the local newspaper with both an initial call for volunteers and a follow up article further to the launch event on the 10th of February. With the project just completed it is the intention of project partners to supply the local newspaper with a follow up article outlining the project's achievement and a further call to the local community to support the ongoing work of the Friends of Duchess Woods (and hopefully a continuation Duchess Woods Green Gym).

From the publicity generated through local press and widespread community leafleting (such as at local GP surgeries and health centre - see attached poster), the woodland has been promoted as a community asset which contributes to healthier lifestyles and a venue for socialisation.

All activities undertaken during this project were approved through the management plan for Duchess Woods LNR as relates to clearance and removal of non-native species and all volunteers who took part were engaged in a range of woodland management tasks and gained valuable skills and experience which will be of ongoing benefit to Friends of Duchess Woods moving forward.

A breakdown of participants by age is given below;

	Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female
0 to 4 years	-	-	16 to 25 years	4	2	Total	8	4
5 to 11 years	-	-	26 to 60 years	2	2			
12 to 15 years	-	-	+ 60 years	2	0			

Costs

	Expenditure
Staff costs	-
Project Management/Supervision	-
Volunteer costs	-
Operational/Activity costs	£2400.00
Office, overhead costs	-
Capital items	
Publicity costs	£150.00

	Expenditure
Other costs (please detail) Tree stakes, shelters and a selection of hand tools	£1040
Total Expenditure	£3590
Amount of FCS (CSF) contribution	£3590

If there were additional contributions “in kind” please note details below:

Support by Lower Clyde Greenspace and FODW (site visits) - £360

Publicity (Lower Clyde Greenspace) - £60

Next Steps

The Forestry Commission have been positive about giving funding towards an extended Green Gym programme in 2014/15, although at this stage they have been unable to indicate what funding they have available for this year, nor invite bids to be made.

Assuming that funding will be available, it would be apt to have minuted approval from the Duchess Wood LNR Committee that they would like to see the Green Gym programme continue.

Charlie Cairns
May 2014

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ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL**DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE****DEVELOPMENT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES****COMMITTEE
20 MAY 2014**

Duchess Wood Routine Maintenance

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the up-to-date position in regards to the routine maintenance of Duchess Woods.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members note this report.

3. DETAIL

- 1) Litter Bins. After the problems over the winter months these have now been resolved and the litter bin service is back to normal and they are being collected as per schedule.
- 2) Winter General Works. The trees at adjacent to the end of Duchess Park have been inspected over the last couple of week and the works have been put on hold until next winter. There will be further checks carried out over summer months to see if there are any signs of die back at this location that may require this works to be carried out earlier. Over the latter part of this summer a full tree inspection will be carried out along the eastern boundary of the wood to identify works for winter 2014/2015.
- 3) Knotweed. The two main areas that have been treated over the last few years are showing marked reduction in size/vigour of the plants and the areas are reducing in size. Rhu Road High area the plants are not managing to grow much higher than a meter in height and in some cases they are only 30cm high. Duchess Wood car park this area is not growing as densely as it once did and there is also a reduction in the size of the plants. Area next to Strathclyde Court on inspection no Knotweed was found there, this area will continue to be checked over coming months and if no weed appears then this area will be taken off the list of Knotweed contaminated areas. Rear of Duchess Park this area has been treated the least therefore there is more work to be

carried out here over coming season/s. Treatment for May has been carried out on all three areas where Knotweed has been found this year.

For further information, please contact Stuart McCracken, Senior Development Officer. Telephone: 01631 569184



Report from the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW)
to the
Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC)
meeting on 20th May 2014

1. Routine

FODW have continued to carry out routine actions since the last meeting of the DWLNRC, such as **monthly work parties, fencing repairs, and litter control.**

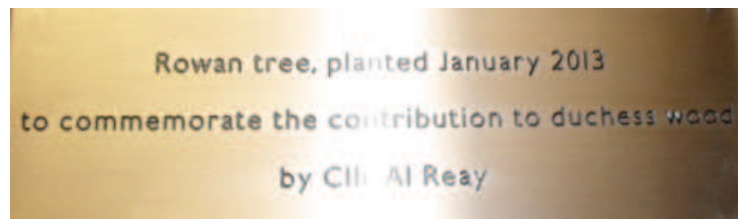
2. Clearance work by FODW

- (a) Continued cutting and clearing fallen trees/branches after winter storms.
- (b) Continued rhododendron control work.
- (c) Continued culvert clearing and one new culvert.



3. Additions to Wood

- (a) Memorial plaque to Cllr. Al Reay completed and will be erected beside the rowan tree planted by his widow.



- (b) 30 native trees planted.
- (c) Waymarking posts for flower walk and main paths received ready for siting.



4. Steps to Thurgood Bridge

Work on the steps to Thurgood Bridge (both sides of stream) has progressed, thanks to the Community Payback Team.

This has been a bigger job than it appears because the original construction was based on soil which retained damp and rotted the retaining boards of wood.

Rectification has required excavating the original materials and replacing them with loose stones through which the water will drain, followed by a top dressing of whin dust, compacted.

New retaining boards have been inserted, with a protective slat at the top of each which can be replaced easily if worn.

5. Events



Easter scavenger hunt

This repeated the successful formula used last year. We can provide details at the DWLNRC meeting if requested. See photo left.

John Muir celebration by the Walking Theatre

On April 27th the Walking Theatre, funded by A&BC and FODW, provided their third performance in the Wood. See photo right and Helensburgh Advertiser for a report.



Future events

At the time of preparing this report, there are three future events planned. They are :

4 May. Rook count in the Scots pine wood rookery at the south-eastern part of the Wood will start at 14.00. Meet at the Strathclyde Court garages.

24 May. Launch of the self-guided flower walk based on Alison Rutherford's walk last year (lower Wood). Meet Duchess Wood car park, 11.00. This will be followed by a guided visit by Plantlife Scotland (upper Wood).

28th May. Visit by Buglife (The Invertebrate Conservation Trust). Start time : 14.00. Meet at the Duchess Wood car park.

6. Grants

- (a) ***Argyll & Bute Third Sector grant.*** FODW have spent the awarded sum which included a matched amount from our own funds. This included prepared wood for repairs, wood preservative, materials and stationery.
- (b) ***CSV Action Earth Grant.*** A grant for £500 will be applied for once a final decision has been taken.
- (c) ***Babcock.*** A letter has been sent to the A&BC planners questioning the need for a costly planning application for the two information boards which Babcock have agreed to supply. No response yet.
- (d) ***Woodland Trust.*** The trees arrived and have been planted by FODW.



Friends of Duchess Wood

Registered Scottish Charity No. SC039527

4th May 2014

Discussion paper by the Friends of Duchess Wood for the meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee to be held on 20th May, 2014.

DOG CONTROL

A few (but thankfully only a few) instances of failure of dog control have arisen in Duchess Wood. This note is to ask the DWLNRC to confirm or refute the understanding of FODW on the matter. To do so, we quote the law and it would be greatly appreciated if it is possible for the A&BC legal department to comment on our understanding before the DWLNRC meeting on 20th May to assist discussion.

It is our understanding that the basic concept is that dog owners carry responsibility for the behaviour of their dog(s) and that when owners get other people to walk their dog(s) then both the owner and the walker (whether a commercial dog-walker or a volunteer) are responsible for control of the dog(s).

Examples of problems are :

- when a dog shows aggression to a person or to another dog – or causes concern
- when a dog chases wildlife or livestock
- when a dog behaves in any way that disturbs the recreation of any other woodland user
- when a dog runs into traffic on a street or onto the railway line
- when a dog runs onto a sports pitch when a game is in progress
- when the dog walker fails to pick up faeces if the dog defecates in a public place.

It seems to us that the situation is clearly laid out in :

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code, sections 3.53 to 3.56. The foundation message is "In exercising access rights, you must keep your dog(s) under proper control" and the examples above are mostly based on the examples given in the code.

The Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003. According to section 9(d) of the Act, anyone who fails to keep a dog under proper control can be excluded from access rights.

The question then arises : What should the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee or the Friends of Duchess Wood do? We suggest the following.

1. At no point take on responsibility for the behaviour of dogs.
2. Include in the new FODW notice boards a reminder of dog owners' responsibility.

3. Occasionally include a small piece in the FODW newsletter about keeping dogs under proper control.
4. Without taking responsibility for the dogs, try to repair or close gaps in fencing that has been erected by the DWLNRC / A&BC / FODW.
5. If a really serious incident occurs, inform the police.

An example of number 4 has been the wooden fence which, very sensibly, was constructed many years ago at the end of the Scots Pine route where it comes down to Rhu Road Higher. This was to prevent children or dogs running into the road. The FODW has repaired this fence several times. However, fencing erected by others should be left to those others to maintain.

If A&BC could comment on the legal situation and if the matter could be discussed at the DWLNRC meeting, that would be appreciated.