

DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE

11 November 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, 18 NOVEMBER 2014** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MINUTE OF DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - 19/8/2014** (Pages 1 - 6)
3. **EVENTS**
 - (a) **Update on recent events**
 - (b) **Enchanted Forest Proposal**
Update on a proposal to be outlined by Robert Bell, West Highland Photography.
4. **ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY** (Pages 7 - 8)
5. **FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT** (Pages 9 - 10)
6. **LOMOND SCHOOL PROPOSAL FOR A FOREST SCHOOL SITE** (Pages 11 - 16)
7. **DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOOD**
 - (a) **Duchess Wood Green Gym**
Report by Charlie Cairns, Area Manager - Lower Clyde Greenspace
(Pages 17 - 18)
8. **ROUTINE MAINTENANCE**

(a) Update from Amenity Services

(b) Health and Safety issues

(c) Additional bin request

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10. MEETING DATES - 2015 (Pages 19 - 20)

Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)

Contact: Theresa McLetchie - Tel: 01436 657621

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held in
the BRAEHOLM, 31E MONTROSE STREET, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 19 AUGUST 2014**

Present: Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)

Stewart Campbell, Chairman of Friends of Duchess Woods
Alistair Macbeth, Secretary of Friends of Duchess Woods
Charlie Cairns, Lower Clyde Green Space
Stuart McCracken, Argyll and Bute Council
Eileen Kay, Argyll and Bute Council
Morevain Martin, AVA
Gemma Peace, Lomond School

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Gemma Peace from Lomond School. The Committee confirmed that they were happy for Mrs Peace to remain for the duration of the meeting.

Mr Campbell advised that Mr Macbeth would be a little late due to another commitment.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Audrey Martin

**2. MINUTE OF DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE -
20/05/2014**

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 20 May 2014, was approved as a true record.

3. EVENTS

(a) EVENTS PROCEDURES

In the absence of a report, discussion surrounding a single point of contact was had, with the possibility of a central email address being set-up, rather than identifying a particular person. Stuart McCracken agreed to explore this possibility, with confirmation to be provided to the group by the Area Governance Assistant.

Charlie Cairns advised of the timescales currently operated in terms of submitting packs. He identified that flexibility is required as the requests are not currently meeting policies. The Chair advised that the expectation was the Committee would review the policy and procedures after one year, which would be May 2015, with amendments made at this time.

The Committee agreed that the point was to encourage the use of the woods by everyone.

Alistair Macbeth joined the meeting at 10.15am.

(b) THEMED TRAIL RUNNING EVENT - SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2014

The Chair spoke of the request from Tri-Events to host a run through the wood on 25th October. She advised that this would adopt the same style as last year, which had proven to be a success. Mr McCracken confirmed that a pack had been sent to the organiser but had not yet been returned.

The Committee agreed that the stewarding arrangements at the previous event had worked well and the “clear up” after the event was also good.

Mr Macbeth enquired whether it would be possible to charge a fee for the event or whether it would be a donation as per the previous event. The Chair advised that the difficulty in charging a fee was that the Council’s fee structures and related policies would need to be applied.

It was agreed that Lynsey Innis would email the organiser advising that permission had been granted by the Committee to host the event and that the pack should be returned as soon as possible. It was further agreed that the email should suggest that, following the run, the organiser should contact the Friends of Duchess Wood regarding the arrangements for any donations towards the upkeep of the woods.

(c) HELENSBURGH AMATEUR ATHLETIC CLUB

The Chair advised that she had recently received notification from the Helensburgh Amateur Athletic Club (HAAC) indicating that they would like to use the wood to host the RAAA Cross Country Relays on the afternoon of Saturday 18th October 2014. HAAC indicated that they expected no more than 100 runners.

Mr Macbeth advised that the group are extremely well organised and that at the events in 2010 and 2011 they ensured that there were marshals at different points and had put up tape to direct the runners. He also advised that the clear up process was well managed.

Mr McCracken advised that he had recently issued an events pack and was awaiting its return. He advised that the pack would provide further details in terms of the routes to be taken within the wood.

Ms Martin advised that she believed there to be an entry fee for the race. She suggested that Lynsey Innis issue a similar email as (outlined above to Tri-events) to the organisers, however she suggested that we may want to ask for clarity regarding any entry fee.

Having noted all of the above, the Committee agreed on the course of action outlined. The Chair requested that an update be provided to the next meeting of the group.

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY

The Chair welcomed Eileen Kay, Community Learning and Development Worker. Ms Kay updated the group in terms of the ideas she had to encourage use of the wood and in particular family learning. Mr Macbeth stressed that the Friends of Duchess Wood would like to work in partnership. Both Mr Macbeth and Ms Kay agreed that partnership working around the 4 capacities for Curriculum for Excellence was the way forward.

Further discussion was had in relation to updating the education pack with clearer co-ordination arrangements to be put in place. Mr Cairns suggested that the pack could be created in such a way that outlying schools with transport issues could use the updated pack from their own location.

Ms Kay advised that she was happy to become the initial contact for schools as she was conscious of the need for a mutual respect for education and the needs of the wood.

The Chair suggested that Ms Kay could take ahead small scale projects and provide regular updates to Lynsey Innis, who in turn can issue these to the Committee.

It was agreed that a sub-group would be set up to predominantly deal with the updating of the education pack. Eileen Kay, Charlie Cairns and Gemma Peace agreed to sit on the sub-group with members of the Friends of Duchess Wood.

Lynsey Innis agreed to arrange a diary request for the meeting of the sub-group within the next 6 or 7 weeks.

It was also agreed that an exploratory meeting between Ms Kay and the Friends of Duchess Wood would take place within the next month.

5. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

The Committee considered a report which outlined the work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW), such as monthly work parties, repairs and litter control. Members were advised of the recent (annual) meetings between FODW and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service which went well.

Mr Campbell updated the Committee with regard to the planning issue and advised that the Council have now confirmed that planning permission is required. He further advised that he planned to lodge a formal application within the next month.

Mr Campbell spoke of works which are required to the road slightly north of the car park and also of the pot holes in the car park. Mr McCracken advised that he would assess the culvert area and provide feedback. Mr McCracken further advised that he would seek to obtain road plainings in order to fix the pot holes in the car park.

The Committee noted the report.

6. DUCHESS WOOD GREEN GYM

Mr Cairns advised the Committee of email correspondence he had with the Forestry Commission and the Conservation Trust. He advised that he had been encouraged to make a new bid for the green gym. He outlined the programme in terms of applying to the Seedcorn Fund and timescales involved with a proposed start date in October 2014.

Discussion in terms of advertising, with referrals being identified as the most likely route to securing numbers was had.

Ms Martin suggested that once funding and start dates had been established, she could place an advert in the jobs section of the Helensburgh Advertiser outlining a volunteer opportunity. She advised that this would be free and would be a good way of advertising.

The Committee noted the update; and agreed to the Green Gym being taken forward and noted that an early review of the programme may take place at the end of November.

Eileen Kay left the meeting at 11.20am.

7. LIAISON WITH EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

Mr Cairns provided the Committee with a verbal update in regard to the liaison with the Employability Team. He advised that both he and Mr Campbell were meeting with Danny Harking on Thursday 21st August 2014. Possible works were identified as:-

replacement of the rickety bridge at the culvert; repairs to the picnic benches and ditches.

Mr Cairns advised that this is a diminishing resource, as the team have started doing a lot of work with local housing associations and spoke of the funding issue.

The Chair suggested that it may be appropriate for Mr McCracken to attend the meeting to establish both what works can be done and the funding issues.

The Committee noted the update.

8. ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

The Committee considered a report by the Councils Service Development Officer providing an up-to-date position in regard to the routine maintenance of Duchess Woods. Mr McCracken advised of his intention

to discuss with FODW the felling of old trees which he hoped to replace with Scots Pines – a survey of the eastern boundary should take place late September. An update was given in terms of the Japanese Knotweed with it being identified that further work requires to be undertaken in particular areas such as Duchess Drive. Mr McCracken advised that these works would commence in the coming weeks, weather dependent.

The Committee noted the update.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- Gemma Peace of Lomond School provided an update in regard to the forthcoming training for Forest Schools. She outlined the next steps and also spoke of the areas which could be utilised within the wood for this purpose.

The Committee advised that they were generally happy with discussions thus far and agreed that a formal written proposal should be submitted to the next meeting of the group.

The Chair advised that she would contact both Luss Estates and the Council's Legal Services Department to advise the matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

- Mr Campbell advised that the FODW were hosting a visit by Merkinch Nature Reserve today, Tuesday 19th August 2014.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve will be held on Tuesday 18th November 2014 at 10.00am within Braeholm, 31E Montrose Street, Helensburgh.

Sub Group of Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve

Objectives of the sub group	<p>To update or rewrite the Duchess Wood Teachers' Resource Pack.</p> <p>Discussion took place around what was the best way to move this forward and the following action points were identified and allocated to a member of the group present.</p> <p>It is hoped that the vision or ideas for the resource document would be altered to meet current changes in the curriculum which have been brought in as a result of the Curriculum for Excellence.</p> <p>Charlie Cairns had e-mailed his apologies but had indicated that he still intended to look into the production of a generic education pack for local greenspaces, and would hope that there may be some cross benefit in this for Duchess Wood. And, also, he wanted to find out if the sub group thought this would be something of interest to them.</p>
	<p>Alastair to contact David Robertson (who was involved in the initial resource document) from the Forestry Commission to find out if there is a member from their organisation who would be able to sit on and give advice on the updating/development of the resource document.</p>
	<p>Eileen to e-mail all schools in the Helensburgh and Lomond area to invite a representative from the school to take part in the sub group. Eileen will also e-mail the link on the Duchess Wood website so that anyone who may be interested can access the teacher resources document before the meeting.</p>
	<p>Gemma will contact Fiona Hughes of Rhu Primary who was involved in the development of the initial resource document.</p>
	<p>Eileen will check the electronic copy of the document to make sure that it is the same as the paper copy Alastair brought to the meeting</p>
	<p>Veronique will look at the video which supports the resource document and feedback to the group her thoughts.</p> <p>It was also highlighted to Lomond School by Alastair that bird boxes which were scattered around Duchess Wood may need a bit of attention and it was suggested that the boxes had been supplied by Lomond School. VC will check with the National Park Ranger if this was the case.</p>
	<p>Eileen to e-mail Gemma and Veronique the photos which Alastair had forwarded to her regarding the work the Friends of Duchess Wood had been involved with some schools.</p>
Update Friends of Duchess Wood	<p>Stewart informed the group that there were a set of new way markers for the flower walk and that the friends were in the process of producing new information boards. He hoped that the way markers would be able to dovetail into the education resource document.</p> <p>Stewart also impressed how much value that the Friends placed on the school work that was carried out in Duchess Wood.</p>

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Meeting of the Duchess Wood LNR Committee 18th November 2014

Report from the Friends of Duchess Wood

NOTE : Copies of the FODW October newsletter will be made available at the DWLNRC meeting.

1. The AGM of the Friends of Duchess Wood will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 26th November in the Lomond School sports centre. All are welcome. In addition to the formal AGM business, there will be a joint talk by Councillor Aileen Morton and Melissa Simpson, the Hermitage Park Development Officer.
2. The Dumbartonshire cross-country running event was held on 18th October and was a success.
3. FODW has cut back rhododendron and other invasive species and has carried out controlled burning after discussions with the fire service.
4. Arrangements for the new information boards from Babcock at the Pony Field are well advanced. Small maps at the entry points to the Wood are also planned.
5. Regular monthly work parties have continued and a wide range of tasks completed.
6. Litter clearance has been a constant process, but we are pleased to report that the extent of litter left lying in the Wood has reduced and people are being more conscientious about using the litter bins provided. However, a second bin at the garages entrance would be much appreciated.

Lomond School Proposal for a Forest School site, Duchess Wood, Helensburgh**Forest School**

The aim of Forest School is to work with a range of individuals in the outdoors over a period of time, introducing responsible risk-taking and fostering achievement in all participants.

Children are supported in their learning through a holistic approach which encourages the exploration of the outdoor environment and an appreciation for nature. Forest school leaders use learning and teaching strategies which develop confidence, emotional resilience, independence, language and communication skills and increase levels of physical activity and mental well-being.

The key features of Forest School include:

- the use of a woodland area
- regular and frequent time outdoors
- an ideal tool for delivering the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, encapsulated in the four capacities: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors
- opportunities to meet experiences and outcomes across all areas of the curriculum
- the freedom to explore sense of self and place using multiple senses
- a high adult to pupil ratio
- qualified Forest School Leaders (Level 3 Open Award)

The use of a woodland-learning environment is complimentary, not separate to traditional classroom and playground learning and is highly child-centred. It can make a significant contribution to a pupil's environmental awareness and respect for their surroundings, including an increased knowledge of local flora and fauna.

Role of the Forest School Leader

Sessions are run by a Forest School Leader who is responsible for compiling the ecological impact assessments and risk assessments of the Forest School site and activities. Responsibility is taken to ensure that child protection and health and safety procedures are adhered to and every leader is First Aid qualified. Currently, three members of Lomond School staff are undergoing Forest School training and this is fully assessed by an accredited Forest School Instructor.

Forest School Programme

Forest School is not an actual place but a specific ethos. It is a way of working with learners in an outdoor natural space for an extended period of time and a philosophy built around a programme of engaging activities.

Prior to starting a Forest School programme, the Forest School leaders will:

- Explain what Forest School is and discuss what sort of activities the participants will be doing with the learners, staff, parents and those responsible for the site
- Complete an Environmental Impact Assessment to ensure that the site will not be irreparably damaged by the running of sessions

- Compile a site risk assessment to ensure the site is safe to visit
- Under the supervision of the qualified leader, groups of approximately 10 – 15 pupils will visit the site on a regular basis throughout the year, except in extreme conditions. The leader will risk assess the planned activities for each session

Lomond School propose to use the site on a daily basis between 8.30am and 3.30pm. Nursery sessions will take place in the mornings with access available for the Primary Department in the afternoons. Activities may also extend to after school sessions.

A programme of Forest School activities will typically include:

- games, such as hide and seek
- building small, temporary shelters using tarpaulins or fallen materials
- woodland art
- tying knots
- nature activities
- using Kelly Kettles (self-contained, portable devices for boiling water using twigs or other small, combustible materials)
- wood carving projects
- tool use (bow saws, loppers, billhooks and knives)

Fire lighting and cooking may be gradually introduced in time alongside strict safety policies and procedures, and all traces of any fires are removed. Fires are always small, manageable and appropriately sited.

The use of a fire circle (a circle of logs with a central fire pit) forms an integral part of Forest School sessions as a place to sit and cook. A soil assessment is carried out before the construction of the circle and training guidelines followed when preparing and maintaining the site. All rubbish and food debris will be removed at the end of each session and the area surrounding the circle returned to its natural state. Any natural materials used during sessions are gathered from the forest floor. Non-native species, such as sycamore, are generally used for any carving activities. The Lomond School Games Hall provides a base within close proximity of the woods for storing equipment and this will be taken to and removed from the site before and after every session.

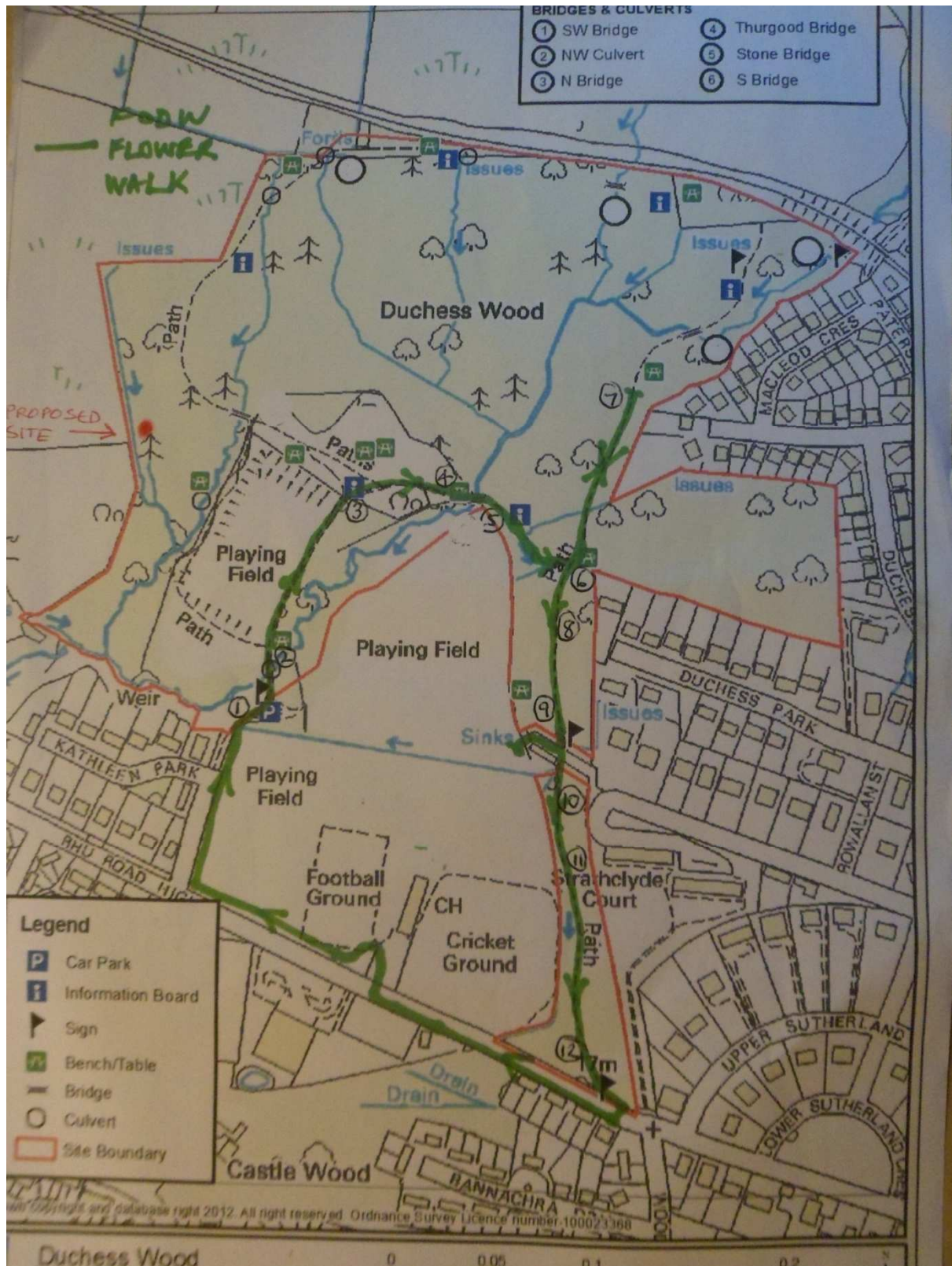
As part of its strategic planning, Lomond School is fully committed to extending outdoor learning opportunities for its pupils. A Forest School site within Duchess Wood would further build on Lomond School's links with the community and enable pupils to be part of the promotion of the woods as an area for nature conservation, recreation and education. Furthermore, this initiative allows young people to actively engage with safeguarding the woodland environment, support surveys and take part in closely monitoring their impact as well as those of others. The school fully recognises the expectations of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and the implications within the context of a Local Nature Reserve.

Lomond School would make available site assessments to the Friends of Duchess Woods and welcome visits from members and or other interested parties to their Forest School sessions. Any alteration to the use of the site beyond any agreement made would be fully discussed with the Friends of Duchess Wood prior to implementation as the initial programme naturally evolves. Any costs associated with the setting up and maintenance of the Forest School site would be met by Lomond School. The school holds Public Liability insurance, as well as Personal Accident insurance for all of its pupils and staff.

Duchess Wood Proposed Forest School Site: western boundary



LOCATION OF PROPOSED FOREST SCHOOL SITE



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Charlie Cairns – Lower Clyde Greenspace**Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve briefing note**Green Gym

Application submitted in October to Forestry Commission Community Seedcorn Fund for a 2 phase Green Gym project. The idea behind the 2 phase approach is to meet previously expressed FC concerns relating to poor attendance figures, and gives us the option of terminating the programme early.

FC staff are currently assessing the application, but await feedback from senior staff. This has caused the timescale to slip, which, after consultation with TCV, we feel can be managed in the first phase by doubling up sessions, either 2 per day or 2 per week.

It is hoped that attendees will be a mix of GP referrals and self referrals. NHS contact Samantha Campbell will provide contact details for GP's in Helensburgh. We have also built in the outcome of training up to 4 local people as Green Gym Leaders, enabling future Green Gyms to be less reliant on buying in a service. This is intended to help us create a more sustainable model for Green Gym days in Duchess Wood and other areas in Helensburgh.

Main physical works indicated are tree and shrub planting on the windward edge of the woodland (subject to consultation with the LNR committee), path raking and drainage clearance, coppicing of hazel and other species to improved structural diversity and hand felling in selected areas to create small coupes. This programme is flexible and subject to change, should the LNR Committee wish it.

Liaison with Employability Team

Site meeting with Danny Harkin, FODW, LCG and A&BC has taken place, and tasks agreed for Danny's team to undertake should they be at a sudden loose end. Danny was unable to commit to installing a culvert west of the Pony Field but has no issues with the Community Payback team undertaking bridge work here.

Education Pack

Unable to attend first meeting, but will attend second meeting on 12/11/14. Have researched some useful existing resources which could be referenced as part of any emerging pack.

Outdoor Nursery

Have contacted Johanna Urquhart and identified myself as her primary point of contact on this issue, and given advice on her proposed paper to LNR Committee. Have also given feedback to Gordon Dalgleish at A&BC who had been approached regarding certain legal issues possibly affecting the Council.

Funding Streams

Audrey Martin has asked me to take on a role of researching possible funding streams for the LNR, which I will do.

PROPOSED DATES FOR 2015

DUCHESS WOODS

MEETING DATES - 2015

Tuesday 17th February, 2015

Tuesday 19th May , 2015

Tuesday 18th August, 2015

Tuesday 17th November, 2015

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