

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held in
the BRAEHOLM, 31E MONTROSE STREET, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 18 AUGUST 2015**

Present: (Chair)
Councillor Aileen Morton

Attending: Charlie Cairns – Lower Clyde Green Space
Johanna Urquhart – Principal, Lomond School
Stuart McCracken – Argyll and Bute Council
Stewart Campbell – Chairman of Friends of Duchess Wood
Alastair Macbeth – Secretary of Friends of Duchess Wood
Eileen Kay – Argyll and Bute Council
Morevain Martin – Argyll Voluntary Action

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Iain Wilkinson – Luss Estates

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 19 May 2015 was approved. as a true record, subject to the following amendment:

7. Development of the Wood

The Chair agreed upon a further response on behalf of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee to Luss Estates that the Committee were happy to move forward in regards Community Ownership.

Action: The Chair would instigate further contact with Luss Estates on this issue.

Matters Arising

The issue of the recent Cross Country run undertaken by the MOD was raised and the Amenity Performance Manager confirmed that he had emailed the MOD in regards seeking prior permission, but, as yet, he had not received a reply.

It was highlighted that the Fairy Tale Wood Committee were seeking Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) status which would enable them to change their structure.

3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORTS

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

The forthcoming Community Woodlands Association (CWA) event scheduled for 1 September was highlighted and the programme of events and booking form were tabled.

Other issues within the Wood were pointed out and these included:-

Thanks to the Amenity Services team for disposing of the remains of a dead deer;

Culvert cleaning;

The effectiveness of anti-graffiti paint which had been utilised on garage doors;

Recent damage to the bridge in the south east corner.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the report; and
2. the information provided on the forthcoming CWA event on 1 September 2015.

4. FUNDING UPDATE / DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOOD

The Committee gave consideration to a report which updated on the meeting held on 10 June 2015 in regards the Funding and future Development of the Wood.

Discussion followed around the possibility of adapting the Management Plan to match the criteria of the WIAT application and the implications of any change to the Management of the Wood. Further issues raised included expanding on Stakeholder Engagement and the dates for the next Management Plan (if this would be a 4 or 5 year duration).

The Committee were advised that the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) had recently been exploring the potential for timber sales to supplement any future grant funding in terms of taking forward the Wood's Management Plan. A further meeting is expected to be held in October. It was recognised that discussion with Luss Estates may be required regarding this proposal.

Any tree felling/timber extraction could have an impact on path maintenance and it was highlighted that costs of repairs would need to be factored into a decision; and timetabling of work undertaken should reflect these considerations.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. That Stewart Campbell would complete a draft Management Plan and circulate to the Duchess Wood Committee; and
2. That the Duchess Wood Committee would receive an update on the meeting scheduled for October between the FODW and the log merchant; and
3. That Charlie Cairns would endeavour to source the 2 arboriculture safety surveys undertaken a number of years ago to inform the meeting in October; and
4. That the Sub-Group would arrange a further meeting to give further discussion to the WIAT application; and
5. That Stewart Campbell would make further contact with Diane Oliver, CWA for advice on the completion of the WIAT application.

(Reference: Report by the Lower Clyde Green Space Manager, dated August 2015, submitted).

5. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY

Eileen Kay provided a verbal update on the Outdoor Learning Activities and outlined to the Committee that this would be a 1 page document which would be disseminated to all local schools with a covering email. This would focus on Web-based resources and would be updated each term, providing information on different opportunities. Information would also include links to various Awards, with relevant information for both primary and secondary schools.

Discussion followed and it was highlighted that Fiona Hughes was back Alastair Macbeth provided an update on outdoor learning undertaken at Rhu Primary School; the pupils had produced a booklet which outlined the fun activities which could be undertaken as part of outdoor learning.

Copies of the booklet are available from Rhu Primary school.

The possibility of a photo shoot and the provision of information on the Forest School was raised with the intention to include this on the next FODW Newsletter. In addition, the Principal of Lomond School was asked if there would be a notification on display in the Duchess Wood alerting users to the Outdoor School.

FODW highlighted their many links with the local Community and also national groups/bodies.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the update from Eileen Kay.
2. That Eileen Kay would provide a short summary on the Outdoor Learning Activities to Stewart Campbell for inclusion in the Management Plan.
3. Johanna Urquhart would liaise with Stewart Campbell regarding awareness raising about the Forest School.

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Amenity Performance Manager. He highlighted that the tree works on the boundary between Duchess Wood and the West Highland Railway had, as yet, still to be completed. He would liaise with the Argyll and Bute Council Procurement team to ascertain the hold up to the progression of this work.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the report.
2. That Stewart Campbell would liaise with Stuart McCracken to determine the requirements for the material to infill the culverts in Duchess Wood.
3. Stuart McCracken will look to get planings provided for the car park surface.

(Reference: Report by the Amenity Performance Manager dated August 2015, submitted).

7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

The Chair opened the meeting for Any Other Business and the following issues were raised:-

MOD Volunteers:

Morevain Martin advised the Committee that the MOD had 23/25 young Naval personnel available to work on local community projects on Tuesday, 13 October.

Decision:

The Committee agreed:

1. That Morevain Martin would liaise with Stewart Campbell and Charlie Cairns to determine the specific area(s) of work that the MOD volunteers would be tasked with and also clarify with the MOD if they could provide any picks and shovels for the volunteers to use.
2. That an update come to the next Duchess Wood meeting in November on the work undertaken by the MOD volunteers and to give further discussion on how to take this forward on a seasonal basis.

Terms of Reference and Membership:

The Committee agreed to table these issue for discussion at the November meeting.

Dog Issues/Training:

Charlie Cairns advised that SNH had published a new document – ***Taking the Lead*** – regarding this issue and advised that this was available on the SNH website.

The Committee agreed to further discussion on this issue at the February 2016 meeting.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 17 November 2015 at 10.00a.m. with a provisional booking to be made for Braeholm.

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