

**DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE**

7 August 2015

**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 AUGUST 2015** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

**BUSINESS**

**1. APOLOGIES**

**2. MINUTE**

The Minute of the previous Duchess Woods Committee meeting held on 19 May 2015.

**3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORTS**

Report by Friends of Duchess Wood. (Pages 1 - 2)

**4. FUNDING UPDATE / DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOOD**

Report by Charlie Cairns, Lower Clyde Green Space, Manager (Pages 3 - 4)

**5. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY**

**6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE AND FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Report by Amenity Performance Manager  
(Pages 5 - 6)

**7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for- Tuesday, 17 November 2015 – 10.00a.m. The venue is, as yet, to be decided.

Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)

Contact: Theresa McLetchie - Tel: 01436 657621





## The Friends of Duchess Wood

### Report to Duchess Wood LNR Committee 18th August 2015

1. **The Annual General Meeting of FODW** will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 28th October in the Sports Centre of Lomond School. Papers for the formal part of the session will be sent to members in advance. That part of the AGM will be followed by a talk by Pete Minting, Scottish Project Officer of the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust. Refreshments. Everyone welcome.

2. **New information maps** have been installed at each entry point to Duchess Wood to assist the increasing number of visitors to the Wood. Internet references to DW appear to have attracted people from further afield, to join local residents. One (The Woodland Trust) describes DW as “A model nature reserve & community woodland within Helensburgh's green belt.”

The maps are based on the design by Babcock for the new Information Boards, but were paid for separately by FODW from a donation made to the Group last year. The posts were erected by Community Payback, and the smart wooden frames for the maps were made as a gift by Sandy Abel.

The photo, right, shows FODW Chairman, Stewart Campbell, presenting Sandy with a Certificate of Appreciation for his work.



3. **Waymarker posts** with green arrows were installed earlier in the year to help guide visitors round the spring flower walk route, which was supported by the leaflet funded by SNH. New leaflet dispensers were provided by FODW and all copies of the leaflet have now been taken; a reprint will be organised for spring 2016. In addition waymarker posts with red arrows have now been provided round the main peripheral path to help guide visitors clockwise round the Wood from the car park, or anticlockwise from the Millig Street/Rhu Road Higher entrances. Printed versions of the maps will also be made available in the dispensers to help visitors.



4. **New culvert to the west of the Pony Field.** Arrangements are advanced to replace the ‘temporary’ wooden bridge over the stream to the west of the Pony Field. The photo, left, shows the bridge after the recent transit of heavy vehicles crossing the stream by alternative means during the work to repair the fence by the railway line. That disturbance beside the bridge is now being rectified, but the bridge itself is overdue for replacement. The photo, right, is the culvert-bridge constructed higher up the stream and is the style that FODW hopes will replace the lower wooden bridge.





*Duchess Wood as part of the Green Network*

**5. Green network consultation.** Argyll and Bute Council has been carrying out a consultation about a green network map for Helensburgh. The aim is to have green linkages between urban green spaces, both in and around the town. So Duchess Wood is a key green space, linked by tree-lined streets in Helensburgh and a countryside network of paths around the town.

The purposes are many, from better health through walking and cycling, to wildlife corridors. The work that the DWLNRC and FODW have done on paths, bridges and culverts ties in with the round-Helensburgh network of paths started by the Green Belt Group more than 15 years ago and expanded by the Helensburgh and District Access Trust. Indeed, both those organisations have helped Duchess Wood over the years.

**6. Community Woodlands Association (CWA) event at Duchess Wood.** The next CWA Argyll networking forum – ‘A Wood of Our Own’ – will be held on Tuesday 1st September in the Helensburgh Rugby Club. There will be a site visit to Duchess Wood as part of the programme. More information will follow in due course, but the speakers will include Stewart Campbell and Sandy Kerr on behalf of FODW.

**7. FODW has been involved in a number of discussions** since the last meeting about the development of the current Management Plan and the possibility of an application under the WIAT scheme. An update will be provided at the meeting.

**8. Regular maintenance.** FODW has continued with its regular maintenance work, clearing litter, cutting back unwanted growth, making repairs, etc.

## Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee

### Funding Update/Development of the Wood

#### Management Plan and associated documents

A report to the previous meeting of this Committee summarised the role of the Management Plan and other supporting documents. The Management Plan is the main guiding document for woodland management within Duchess Wood.

The main work elements highlighted within the Management Plan have been dependent on securing external funding which, until recently, has not been readily available. However the launch this year of the latest round of Forestry Commission WIAT funding presents an appropriate funding opportunity. It was therefore agreed at the last meeting that Charlie, Stewart, David and Stuart should meet to discuss a possible WIAT application for forestry and access works in Duchess Wood.

This meeting took place on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015. Stuart was unable to attend, and Alastair also attended from the FODW.

#### Summary of WIAT meeting

The following actions were agreed at the meeting;

- It was agreed to work jointly to develop a WIAT bid for Duchess Wood, based on the work programme specified in the Management Plan.
- FODW had already met with the Forestry Commission, looking at Duchess Wood and also Castle Wood
- It is likely that, in order to get WIAT funding, a Management Plan would have to be submitted based on a new FC template. CC would seek clarification on this. However worst case scenario would be to mainly cut and paste from the existing Management Plan to the FC template. This altered MP would be for the purposes of WIAT application only and would not replace the approved LNR Management Plan.
- It may be possible to get input from the Community Woodland Association in the development of this new plan, and an initial grant towards this could be available. SC would contact Diane Oliver in this regard.
- FC would inform FODW of the current Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspectorate Division registration details for Duchess Wood. The SGRPID details dictate who is eligible to apply for grants, although there is a process for changing/editing this if necessary.
- CC would provide a history of forestry grants in Duchess Wood, by end of July.
- Everyone would contribute ideas for works appropriate for inclusion in a WIAT bid by the end of July.
- CC would seek clarification on the process required to obtain stone for the proposed new culvert at the end of the pony field.
- It was recognised that other issues, such as possible community stewardship of the woodland, could influence a WIAT bid. CC would seek clarification on this.

## Progress since WIAT meeting

- Regarding the format of the Management Plan, the best information CC has to date is that the FC are very keen that their standard template is used. Several potential applications from other sites in central Scotland are extracting elements of the existing management plans to fit into the template.
- At the time of writing, CC still awaits further guidance from the Forestry Commission on the effects any possible future change of management structure/ownership may have on a WIAT application.
- FC have confirmed to FODW that the SGRPID registration currently sits with Argyll and Bute Council
- CC has provided the following grant history to FODW

1996 – An FC funded programme to define a circular path and to fell significant amounts of mature sycamore and trees identified as being dangerous. I have been unable to find the documents for this, as it was nearly 20 years ago. However, from memory it involved a total cost of around £20,000. Costs were relatively low because the contractor agreed to offset some costs against the value of the extracted timber (there being a market for sycamore at that time). The funding was split (roughly) as follows; £8,000 Forestry Commission, £8,000 Lower Clyde Greenspace, £4,000 Argyll and Bute Council. *(Please don't assume these figures are very accurate, but I think they will be reasonably close. It was the same year we upgraded the path running west from the Hill House, and I recall the total funding package was about £40K for both schemes)*

2007 – Woodland and access improvements from the last WIAT bid. Total cost was £72,100. Funding package was FC WIAT £64,500, Lower Clyde Greenspace £7,600

There have also been numerous smaller spends over the years. For example I know that Lower Clyde Greenspace funded two arboriculture safety surveys, each costing in the region of £1200. And also some tree safety works arising from these surveys which I estimate to have cost LCG in the region of £6,500. These actions attracted no external funding.

- CC and FODW currently exchanging thoughts on the outcomes that could be included in a new WIAT application

Charlie Cairns

August 2015

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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL****Duchess Wood Committee****DEVELOPMENT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES****18<sup>th</sup> August 2015**

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**Routine Maintenance & Budget Statement**

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**1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The two trees at West Highland Line, the works order has been issued and work should start there shortly.
- 1.2 Litter bins have been getting emptied as normal over the last three months. Knotweed, first treatment has been completed and over coming next two weeks the second treatment will be carried out.
- 1.3 Funds available for works within Duchess Wood stands at £11,526.40 however as a further tender is being drawn up for Strathclyde Court garage works this figure may reduce by a further £3,500 and there is a £1,000 set aside for new culvert.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Strathclyde Court Garages, works are still outstanding and tender is being drawn up so that these works can be carried out once laves are off the trees. By delaying these works it will make it much easier for contractors to carry out the works without the weight of the leaves on the braches thereby reducing risk of damaging the garages. There has been a quotation for this work last year of £3,500.00 this is a base line figure.

**3.0 DETAILS**

- 3.1 Litter Bins were emptied as normal over the summer period and will continue to be emptied over the next three months.
- 3.2 Tree works on the boundary between Duchess Wood and West Highland Railway has been put out to tender. There were two returns to the tender, West Coast Group at £4,108.00 plus vat and QTS at £978.00 plus vat. The QTS tender was awarded and this work should start shortly.
- 3.3 There are two trees at the side of 22 Duchess Park that require to be removed. This will be carried out early in winter months as there is no danger to property or residents of 22 Duchess Park.
- 3.4 To date no costs have been forth coming for new culvert and there is £1,000.00 set aside for these works.

3.5 Knotweed, second treatment will be carried out over the next two weeks. Areas included in the treatments are Car Park area, area off Rhu Road Higher, Duchess Park area and at the top of playing field close to Strathclyde Court garages.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 General maintenance has been completed on target and the works order for the trees at the West Highland Line has been issued. Works at Strathclyde Court should be completed in time for the next Duchess Wood committee meeting.

4.2 Budget for the wood is presently standing at £11,526.40 however there are two further charges outstanding. Once works at new culvert is completed and Strathclyde Garage tender come in funds may be as low as £7,026.60

### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – None

5.2 Financial – The works at West Highland Line has reduced funds available and Strathclyde Garages works will reduce it further once works have been completed.

5.3 Legal – None

5.4 HR – None

5.5 Equalities – None

5.6 Risk – There is still a Health and Safety issue with regards trees at Strathclyde Court Garages however this should be minimised if works are completed before the worst of the winter weather.

5.7 Customer Services –None

### **Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure**

**Policy Lead** Councillor Ellen Morton

10<sup>th</sup> May 2015

**For further information contact:** Stuart McCracken, Performance Manager, North Argyll  
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