

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the CLYDE MEETING ROOM, THE HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE, EAST
CLYDE STREET, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2016**

Present:

Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)
Charlie Cairns – Lower Clyde Green Space
Ruth Cairns – Community Learning and Development Youth Worker
Stewart Campbell – Chair, Friends of Duchess Wood
Alastair Macbeth – Secretary, Friends of Duchess Wood
David Lewin – Trustee, Friends of Duchess Wood
Morevain Martin – Third Sector Interface
Johanna Urquhart – Principal Lomond School
Josie Slater – Youth Representative, Lomond School

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Josie Slater, Youth representative from Lomond School.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Eileen Kay
Iain Wilkinson
Stuart McCracken

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 17 November 2015 was approved as a true record.

Matters Arising

Page 4; Item 7 Terms of Reference and Membership – Communication with the Media

Alastair Macbeth questioned the need for any articles to be submitted to the local press were still to be pre-approved by the Committee. The Chair clarified that notification to the Committee would suffice.

Alastair Macbeth tabled an amended list of contacts and confirmed that these had been forwarded to Theresa McLetchie. She stated that the list had been saved electronically and requested that she be advised of any further amendments/changes.

3. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS

Eileen Kay had submitted her apologies but had provided a short update in regards the 29 children from Rhu Primary P7 who had visited Duchess Wood as part of their John Muir Award and as a result, Eileen was supporting them to complete the Accredited Dynamic Youth Award.

Johann Urquhart highlighted the success of the recent Lomond School orienteering event in Duchess Wood. She advised that the proposed markers to be put in place would allow the course to be made available for use by other schools and community groups. If approved, the cost would be borne by Lomond School.

Discussion followed and it was pointed out that the Wood had specific quiet areas and that FODW were not keen for these quiet reserves to be utilised. The Committee commended the initiative and felt that this was a different way of using the Wood and opening it for use by other groups. It was noted that other events already take place in the Wood and orienteering events should be scheduled to avoid clashes; the HAAC cross country relay on 16th October was specifically mentioned.

Stewart Campbell enquired on the status of the enhanced island in the car park and the Stickman Walk. In addition, he requested further information on the footfall of participants from Lomond School participating in activities within the Wood. Johanna Urquhart confirmed that the Environment Committee at Lomond School were working on the enhanced island and the Stickman Walk and that she would request an update for the next meeting. Josie Slater would undertake a census and provide the detail of numbers for the May meeting.

The Committee enquired on the progress of the Forest School and Johanna Urquhart outlined the success of the school. The school was full and had a waiting list in place. Currently, the nursery had 1 Forest School session per week, with the Junior School having an afternoon session per week.

Stewart Campbell highlighted the forthcoming Buglife Event which was being held on 16 April as part of the John Muir week and requested that local schools be advised of this.

Decision:

The Committee agreed:-

1. To approve in principle the permanent orienteering course in Duchess Wood; and
2. That Lomond School would display a notice of the course in the Duchess Wood and advise other schools of the permanent course.
3. That Johanna Urquhart would provide information on both the enhanced island and Stickman Walk.
4. That a full update on the Forest School would be provided for the August meeting.

(Reference: Report by Caroline Beveridge, Head of Adventure and Service, Lomond School).

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY

Ruth Cairns, Community Learning & Development Youth worker provided a short resume of the work she was currently undertaking in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. This included working with the Youth Parliament and the local Youth Forum. The membership of the Youth Forum was currently 4 and she was hoping to build on this. She highlighted the proposed holiday activities for the Summer period, with a smaller range for Easter.

Discussion followed and the Committee enquired on the ways in which Ruth would target young people and the best way to engage with community groups. Stewart Campbell highlighted the Citizen Science initiative and suggested further discussion with Ruth to determine the most beneficial way for young people to become involved in Duchess Wood.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note the update
2. That Ruth Cairns contact details would be circulated with the Minute.

5. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

The Committee considered a report which outlined the work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) and the draft report that would be going to Helensburgh Community Council (HCC) for information.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report, the draft report for HCC and that the new membership leaflet would be circulated when completed.

6. DRAFT FIVE-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN - OCTOBER 2016-SEPTEMBER 2021

Stewart Campbell advised that progress on the draft 5-year Management Plan had been delayed and would now come to the May Committee meeting for approval.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the update.
2. That the finalised version of the draft 5-year Management Plan would come to the May Duchess Wood Committee meeting.

(Reference: Draft Management Plan by Stewart Campbell, Chair Friends of Duchess Wood dated 4 November 2015, submitted).

7. WIAT FUNDING APPLICATION

The Committee considered an update on issues relating to Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT).

Discussion followed in regards the financial mechanism of engaging a consultant to take forward the work of adapting the existing Management Plan to fit the template required by the Forestry Commission. The Chair agreed to speak to the Economic Development section on how best to progress this matter.

It was advised that the Wood Fuel Trial sub-group had recently met and was progressing effectively. However, due to inclement weather the felling programme had been delayed and it was proposed to defer the contract until the Autumn. However the consensus of feeling in the sub-group was to get the contract signed as soon as possible and proceed with a Summer 'felling trial'.

A communication pack was being compiled which would advise local residents and users of the Wood on the forthcoming tree felling. The removal of the timber was raised and the Committee was advised that further discussion was due to take place with Stuart McCracken in regards traffic management issues.

Alastair Macbeth questioned the implication of any damage sustained after the tree felling operation and asked for clarification that the same maintenance, currently in place, would be sustained. Furthermore, he requested that a clause be included to the effect that following the tree felling, the FODW would not be consequentially responsible for any damage sustained thereafter. The Chair pointed out that all trees which were marked for felling will be approved by Stuart McCracken on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To endorse the approach of hiring a consultant to fit the existing Management Plan into the template provided by the Forestry Commission, to support a further bid for WIAT funding for management of the LNR.
2. To remit to the sub-committee responsibility to apply for full WIAT funding on the completion of the Management Plan exercise.
3. To approve the trial woodland management exercise as proposed, in particular the concept of utilising a wood fuel contractor to carry out the work. FODW would contract this work, and any profit generated would be paid to FODW for further related activities in the LNR. The felling work has been delayed to Autumn 2016 but in the interim, FODW will pursue the fuel contractor to sign the draft contract.
4. To request that FODW develop a communication plan to keep the public and nearby residents updated of the need for the work, the timing of the work and the longer term woodland management that we hope will be funded through WIAT.
5. To approve the digging of 2 small ponds and accompanying paths to encourage amphibian populations to become established in the LNR. With funding from the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust and additional work and support provided by the Community Payback Team.

(Reference: Draft Management Plan by Stewart Campbell and David Lewin, Friends of Duchess Wood dated November 2015, submitted).

8. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Amenity Performance Manager.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the report.
2. That clarification would be confirmed on when the Financial update would be received.

(Reference: Report by the Amenity Performance Manager dated 2016, submitted).

9. DOG ISSUES AND TRAINING

The Committee gave discussion to various issues concerning dogs within the Wood which included commercial dog walkers, 'out of control' dogs and dog fouling. Johanna Urquhart commented that, to her knowledge, there had not been any cases of 'out of control' dogs near the Forest School. However, she would advise on this issue at the May meeting. The Committee requested information on the procedure and point of contact at Argyll and Bute Council in dealing with 'out of control' dogs.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. That the Chair would liaise with the Environmental Warden Team to determine the policy on this issue.
2. That Morevain Martin would make contact with the Dog Trainer in Cardross to investigate the possibility of providing training/an awareness-raising event in the Wood.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

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

Alastair Macbeth drew attention to a planning application proposal to build 95 houses on the original Dobbies Garden centre site. He highlighted possible implications to the Wood and advised that there would be a public consultation at the Ardencaple Houtel on 16 March between 1-7p.m. Stewart Campbell reported that there was now a lizard in residence in the Wood.

David Lewin enquired on the status of the Fairytale Wood project and was advised that this was 'on hold' as the organisation was applying for Charitable status.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Due to the Helensburgh and Lomond Community Planning Group meeting being held on the same date, the Committee agreed that the next Duchess Wood Committee meeting would be scheduled for – Wednesday, 18 May at 10.00a.m. in Lomond School.