

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the LOMOND SCHOOL, STAFFORD STREET, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 22 AUGUST 2017**

Present: Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)

Attending: Johanna Urquhart – Principal, Lomond School
Alastair Macbeth – Secretary, Friends of Duchess Wood
Stewart Campbell – Chair, Friends of Duchess ~Wood
Shona Barton – Area Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer, Argyll and Bute Council

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Morevain Martin
Stuart McCracken

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 22 February 2017 was approved as a true record subject to an amendment at the item relating to the Friends of Duchess Wood report which should read “to note and endorse the report”.

3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided an update and outlined the recent work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW).

Discussion followed with the issue of vandalism at the bridge being highlighted. Stewart Campbell advised that works to repair the bridge had now been completed. Robert Mackenzie had replaced the culvert which now provided a better crossing which is also suitable for vehicle use. The road scrapings from the Strathclyde Court refurbishment were used as fill for the bridge.

The proposed housing development by Persimmon Homes was also highlighted, with it being noted that there were some concerns over the provision of a wildlife corridor and in particular the depth of the corridor.

Stewart Campbell advised that this would be the last meeting which Alastair Macbeth would be in attendance as he was standing down as Secretary to the Friends of Duchess Wood. It was noted that Martin Grafton would be taking over as Secretary on 1st October 2017. Stewart also advised that David Lewyn would be taking over as interim Chair for a period of 3 months.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note and endorse the report, and
2. To note the changes to the Office Bearers for Friends of Duchess Wood.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, paid tribute to Alastair Macbeth and thanked him for his dedication to the Friends of Duchess Wood and the Local Nature Reserve Committee and wished him well for the future.

(Reference: Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) by Stewart Campbell, Chair FODW, dated February 2017).

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

(a) Branching Out

The Committee considered a report provided by Sara McLean of Branching Out. The report provided a summary of the project and highlighted the success of this particular initiative in the Duchess Wood. Branching Out also indicated that they would be keen to continue with the project.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note the success of the Branching Out initiative;
2. That there would be no objection in principle to hosting similar events in the wood along similar lines, and
3. That in the first instance contact should be made via the Area Governance Team of the Argyll and Bute Council.

(b) Dog Event - 2017

The Committee discussed the possible dog event scheduled to take place in September 2017.

It was noted that the dog trainer was confirmed for the event.

Decision:

The Committee agreed that the Area Committee Manager would make

contact with Morevain Martin to ascertain the date for the event.

The Area Committee Manager advised of a question received from Wendy Brownlie, Argyll and Bute Education Services.

“In response to increasing pre 5 hours one action in the Helensburgh and Lomond Catchment area could be to establish an outdoor nursery. For this to be an option toilets (probably composting) would need to be built along with a small kitchen. Is that something that would be considered?”

The Committee discussed the idea and expressed their views in relation to building anything in the wood, and highlighted the following:-

Portaloos and portable canvas areas are an option
Thought should be given to alternative venues in case of inclement weather
Staff training requirements
Respect for the Wood
Staff/pupil ratios

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. That they were not opposed to the idea in principle, and
2. That the Area Committee Manager would pass on details for Lomond School to Wendy Brownlie, to allow for information to be shared in relation to the running of an outdoor nursery.

5. DUTCHESS WOOD WIAT APPLICATION

Mhairi Gardner updated the Committee on the progress of the Woodlands In Around Town funding application. It was noted that the 1st stage application had been approved and the contract was now with Legal Services for approval. The management plan will then be submitted to the Forestry Commission. The sum of £1299.75 would be coming to the Council so support the preparation of the Management Plan.

In regard to the Management Agreement with Luss Estates, it was noted that the offer of a letter of comfort has been made if this is required by the Forestry Commission.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note the progress of the WIAT application; and
2. That the sub-group would continue to meet to progress the application.

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

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

The Technical Officer provided an update on the work which is planned and ongoing in the Wood.

Discussion took place on the repairs at the Victorian Bridge. It was noted that the bridge had now been made safe and that the metal gate would be moved to the other side of the bridge to prevent unauthorised vehicle access. Work had also been undertaken to remove debris from the burn.

The Committee agreed:-

1. to note the report;
2. that Stuart McCracken would be asked to provide further information on the work at Strathclyde Court Garages, and
3. that a site meeting would be arranged with Stuart McCracken, Friends of Duchess Wood and the Strathclyde Court residents.

(Reference: Report by Amenity Performance Manager dated 22nd August 2017, tabled).

7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

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

Community Orienteering

Johanna Urquhart advised that Lomond School hoped to run their community orienteering project in the Spring and asked if the Committee were happy for this to continue. Stewart Campbell asked if information on the orienteering can be provided to the Friends for permanent display in the Wood.

Decision

The Committee agreed to endorse the use of the wood for the community orienteering project.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee meeting was agreed for Tuesday, 21 November 2017 in the Seabank Room, Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre.