

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the LOMOND SCHOOL, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2018**

Present: Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)

Attending: Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager, Argyll & Bute Council
Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Morevain Martin, Third Sector Interface
Sean McCay, Land Agent, Luss Estates
Stewart Campbell, Chair of FODW
Martin Grafton, Secretary of FODW
Johann Urquhart, Principal of Lomond School

1. APOLOGIES

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

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Wendy Brownlie, Education Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Lorna Pearce, Senior Development Officer, Argyll & Bute Council

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 21st November 2017 was approved as a true record subject to the addition of apologies from Johann Urquhart.

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).

Stewart Campbell advised the Friends of Duchess Woods have applied to the Supporting Communities Fund for a grant. He also advised that they have a good working relationship with the Community Payback team who have been refurbishing benches.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Ref: Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) by Stewart Campbell, Chair FODW, dated 20th February 2018).

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

(a) Dog Event - 2017

The Committee noted that the Dog Event has been confirmed for 25th March between 1-4pm. The Chair confirmed that the Mod Sergeant from the Dog Unit has agreed to send a member of staff and search dog to the event to meet and greet people.

Discussion took place around the poster and advertising for the dog event.

Decision

The Group:-

1. Noted that the working group were progressing plans for the dog event;
2. Agreed that the Area Committee Manager contact Joanne Cochrane Canicross organiser and ask if she would be interested in attending the Dog Event;
3. Agreed that the Chair would update the Dog Event poster with the amendments; and
4. Agreed that Ms Cunningham, Technical Officer would ask the Dog Wardens to deliver the posters around the town.

(b) Branching Out Argyll

The Area Committee Manager took the Group through a request from Sara McLean of Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust who used Duchess Woods last year for a 10-12 week project, called Branching Out. They would like to run a similar project this year and asked for the Group's support.

Decision

The Committee agreed for this project to go ahead and asked the Area Committee Manager to invite Sara McLean to the next meeting to discuss the project. The Group also noted the newsletter which was attached to the pack.

5. DUCHESS WOOD WIAT APPLICATION

Mhairi Gardner updated the Committee on the progress of the Woodlands In Around Town funding application. It was noted that the Council's Legal Department are still waiting on feedback from the Forestry Commission who are waiting on a letter from the Scottish Government.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the progress of the WIAT application and asked for more clarity around the Scottish Government input.

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Technical Officer for Amenity Services advised that Stuart McCracken, Amenity Performance Manager is currently absent so therefore had no update for this item. She agreed to liaise with Mr McCracken when he is back in the office and provide a full update to the next meeting.

7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

(a) Repairs to the bridge above the Duchess Wood car park

The Technical Officer advised that the Legal Services Team are in contact with Luss Estates regarding the current agreement for the structural maintenance of the bridge as the stone works need replaced. She confirmed that there were discussions ongoing in relation to responsibility for the structural repair of the bridge. Mr McCay agreed to speak to his colleagues in Luss Estates to find out the current situation.

(b) Persimmon Development - wild life corridor

The report from FODW referenced the decision Persimmon Homes not to increase the size of the Wild Life Corridor.

(c) Grass cutting Pony Field

David Lewin advised that FODW were struggling to maintain the pony field due to the difficulties with dog fouling in that area causing issues with getting the grass cut. It was noted that FODW would ensure that a suitable area of the field was made available for the dog event in March 2018. Mr McCay agreed to look into types of grass cutting equipment and feedback to FODW.

Decision

The Committee noted the update.

(d) Replacement of Management Agreement with Luss Estates

The Chair advised she has not been able to meet with Mr McCracken, Amenity Performance Manager yet. It was agreed that the Chair would forward all email correspondence to Ms Cunningham, Technical Officer and she would take this forward.

Discussion took place around the current and previous management agreement and it was agreed that a meeting be set up between the Council and Luss Estates to discuss this.

“The Lost Words”

Stewart Campbell gave an update to the Group on the “Lost Words” book which was published last October and has received a couple of awards so

far. He explained it is an illustrated guide to 20 lost words out of the Children's Dictionary. He advised of an initiative currently being undertaken via a Crowdfunding appeal, which would see a copy of the book issued to every school in Scotland. He asked if anyone in the Education Department is aware of this. The Chair agreed to look into this.

Walk Leader Training

Morevain Martin advised the Group that she is now qualified through Paths for All to take small health groups out walking.

8. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2018

The Group agreed the future dates as follows:-

- Tuesday 22nd May at 10am in the Helensburgh & Lomond Civic Centre
- Tuesday 21st August at 10am in Lomond School, Helensburgh
- Tuesday 13th November at 10am in the Helensburgh & Lomond Civic Centre