



Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

Customer Services
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13 February 2018

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE** will be held in **LOMOND SCHOOL, HELENSBURGH** on **TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2018** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services

BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

2. MINUTE (Pages 3 - 8)

The Minute of the previous Duchess Wood Committee meeting held on 21 November 2017.

3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT (Pages 9 - 10)

Report by Friends of Duchess Wood

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

(a) Dog Event - 2017

(b) Branching Out Argyll (Pages 11 - 14)

Request from Sara McLean, Branching Out

5. DUCHESS WOOD WIAT APPLICATION

Verbal update by Mhairi Gardner

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Report by Amenity Performance Manager

7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- (a) Repairs to the bridge above the Duchess Wood car park
- (b) Persimmon Development - wild life corridor
- (c) Grass cutting Pony Field
- (d) Replacement of Management Agreement with Luss Estates

8. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2018

DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)
Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager (Clerk)

Contact: Danielle Finlay, Senior Committee Assistant - 01436657646

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE
on TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2017**

Present:

(Chair)
Councillor Lorna Douglas

Attending:

Alastair Macbeth, Secretary, Friends of Duchess Wood
David Lewin, Chair, Friends of Duchess Wood
Morevain Martin, Third Sector Interface
Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Stuart McCracken, Amenity Performance Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Shona Barton – Area Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Martin Grafton

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 22 August 2017 was approved as a true record subject to amendments at Item 3.

3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORTS

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

Discussion followed with Alastair Macbeth and David Lewin highlighting the appreciation of the FODW for the Civic Reception provided by the Provost to celebrate 10 years of the Group. It was noted that the AGM for the FODW would be held on 17th January 2018 and all were welcome to attend. David also provided the Committee with an update on the work carried out by the Community Payback teams in the Wood and welcomed the contact being re-established with the local supervisor in Helensburgh.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note and endorse the report

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

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

(a) Dog Event 2018

The Committee noted that plans were in place for the dog event which would be held on 25 March 2018, and that a meeting of the dog event working group would be held directly following the Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted that the working group were progressing plans for the dog event.

(b) Request for Canicross Training

The Committee considered a request from a local provider to offer a free Canicross Training taster session in the Wood. Discussion followed, with the following issues being highlighted:-

The possibility of these classes being run frequently through the week
Concern over possible disruption to other users of the Wood
The suitability of the Wood for this type of activity given the narrow paths
The guidelines from Scottish National Heritage on the use of Local Nature Reserves

Decision

Having given careful consideration to the request, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Duchess Wood is not an appropriate setting for a class of this nature and is not compatible with the size of the Wood, or with the established rules and arrangements that are in place; and
- (2) that the Area Committee Manager should write to the applicant advising of the decision.

5. WIAT FUNDING APPLICATION - UPDATE

Mhairi Gardner updated the Committee on the progress of the Woodlands In Around Town funding application. It was noted that following the 1st stage application approval, the legal contract had been sent back to the Forestry Commission with amendments made by the Council's Legal Services Department. A decision on the proposed amendments was still awaited, following which the Management Plan would be submitted to the Forestry Commission. It was noted that the Management Plan was already in place and ready to be submitted.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the progress of the WIAT application.

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

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

The following was noted:-

General maintenance of knotweed, litter bins etc. was up to date

Work would be carried out on Rhu Road Higher over the Winter

A plan of work has been agreed with the residents for work on the Strathclyde Court trees and this will be carried out in early 2018

Work has been carried out on the Victorian Bridge area, with a temporary cover now in place to stop traffic from going over the edge

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the update.

(Reference: Verbal report by Amenity Performance Manager dated 22 February 2017, tabled).

7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

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

Discussion took place around the works that have been carried out on the bridge, with it being highlighted that although remedial work had made the bridge safe there was a possibility of further deterioration. The Amenity Performance Manager advised that further works would likely be required in future, and he was currently trying to establish where responsibility for these repairs would fall. Concern was also raised that the bridge could be listed and this may prove to be a further obstacle.

As part of the discussion, the Committee raised the issue of the current Management Agreement, whether this should be a lease agreement and looking forward to the renewal of the agreement with Luss Estates.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) To note the current situation surrounding the bridge;
- (2) That Councillor Douglas would confirm the status of the bridge in terms of any listing;
- (3) That the Chair and the Amenity Performance Manager would liaise to arrange a meeting with Luss Estates to discuss the Management Agreement and future arrangements.

(b) Persimmon Development

Alastair Macbeth provided the Committee with an update on the proposed Persimmon Development at the former Ardencaple garden centre. He noted that FODW had submitted 2 objections in relation to the wildlife corridor and the vagueness of the design for the whindust path.

Decision

The Committee noted the progress made and that there would be a Planning Hearing on the application on 19 December 2017 in the Victoria Halls, Helensburgh.

(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.

Decision

The Committee noted the update.

(d) Byelaws for dog walkers

The Committee discussed the issue of commercial dog walkers and the suggestion of putting in place a byelaw to regulate the number of dogs which and individual could be in control of at any one time.

Decision

The Committee agreed to investigate the possibility of a byelaw for this purpose and agreed that this would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee meeting was still to be confirmed.

Decision

The Area Committee Manager agreed to liaise with the Headteacher of Lomond School to ascertain availability for a meeting in February 2018 and also to arrange a date for May 2018, which would be circulated to members.

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The Friends of Duchess Wood

Friends of Duchess Wood report to Duchess Wood LNR Committee 9th February 2018

1. It has been fairly quiet over the winter period.
2. Community liaison and representation. FODW continued its normal role of engagement with and representation of the local community. FODW has also liaised with local press, community councils and other local organisations. FODW spoke at the Community Council's session in December which heard from a number of local environmental groups.
3. Persimmon Homes planning application. FODW joined with the Helensburgh Green Belt Group in making representation to the Council Planning Group about countryside issues associated with the Persimmon Homes planning application. Disappointingly the council appeared to dismiss our concerns.
4. Grants. Together with A&B Council, FODW is preparing a bid for a major "Woodlands in and around Towns" grant. At the time of writing the application is with the Council and Forestry Commission legal teams. In addition FODW has applied to the A&BC Supporting Communities Fund 2018-2019 for a grant to help return the section of path from the car park to the pony field to an all-abilities surface.
5. FODW Annual General Meeting. The FODW AGM for the year 2016-17 was held on Wednesday 17th January 2018 in the Helensburgh Parish Church Halls. Around twenty five members attended and the meeting was followed by a talk entitled "A Foresters View of Duchess Wood" by David Robertson who commented positively on the management plan commitments and made suggestions for day-to-day improvements.
6. Basic maintenance. Since the last DWLNRC meeting FODW has continued to carry out maintenance such as cutting back rhododendron, litter clearance, grass control, paths clearance, ditch and culvert clearance, fence repairs and other basic tasks.
7. Looking to the rest of this year (and bearing in mind that if the WIAT grant proceeds that will have a major impact) FODW intends to carry out a number of bat monitoring exercises, will look to carrying out further insect and flower surveys, and will continue to monitor the development of the pond life. We also hope to make more of the fallen wood available for artisan work. We will also monitor and replace where tree planting has failed.
8. We also hope to establish closer working relations with the other environmental groups in the town, and with other sources of expertise such as the National Park Authority.

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Hi Shona and Danielle,

The Community Mental Health Team are gathering referrals for a second Branching Out programme and we would very much like to use Duchess Woods again if that's possible? We are planning to start in March - exact dates to be determined but I will keep you informed.

Please could you let me know if this would be okay? We would be operating in the same way as before.

Meanwhile here is our latest newsletter.

Best wishes,

Sara



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Branching Out Argyll Newsletter January 2018

Project Update

Now halfway through our 3 year project with

- 10 Branching Out programmes complete
- 129 individuals have been initially referred
- 73 participants graduated and achieved their John Muir Discovery awards (33 women, 40 men)
- 1 Moving On pilot programme complete (Cowal & Bute)
- 2 Moving On programmes underway (Cowal & Bute; Helensburgh)
- In total 7 new partnerships have been developed with the third sector across Argyll.
- 5 fully kitted-out Teams set up in all 4 localities of Argyll & Bute
- 3 NHS staff attended Branching Out Assistant Leader training
- 1 Short film
- 3 newsletters
- 2 annual Leaders CPD events held



Participant feedback

- *It's helped me to reconnect with people. I feel safe.*
- *Enjoyed the sessions once I got going (despite rain!)*
- *A Big Thank You to Diane – Camilla – Mairi. My mental health and general wellbeing is fantastically higher than I've ever known myself to be – you guys are The Best 😊*
- *The whole thing was a success!*
- *Can we have another course please only this time make it longer*
- *Bambi, Ella, Lorna and Interloch deserve a medal. It has been 100% the best time of my life*
- *I made it to the last day without falling on my arse and laughing at myself along with everyone else.*

Spotlight on Outcomes Monitoring

An important part of knowing whether we are successful in what we do, and maintaining funding, is evaluation of our project. This involves the formal surveys – The Edinburgh Warwick Scale, our Participant Questionnaires both at the start and the end of a programme, and the attendance register. Based on these a detailed report is produced for each Branching Out programme and Moving On project and all the information is used in funders reports and applications for future funding.

As well as the inevitable form-filling, some of the most valuable and interesting facts come from informal feedback and conversations, photographs, case studies and involving participants with the design and delivery of the activities from programme planning to thinking about what's next.

All the participants have been really patient and supportive whilst we have been developing our monitoring. Many thanks to everyone and please keep up the good work. We'd really love to hear all the anecdotal evidence and stories from your activities so if you can continue to send these in in addition to the formal monitoring, that would be great.

Branching Out – Moving On

New Routes in Oban.

Dunollie Castle have embarked upon a new community engagement pilot programme providing supported volunteering to create a new birch stand and hazel coppice, with a view to providing further workshops over the year. Branching Out graduates are enabled to join other volunteer groups once a week for activities and lunch.

Helensburgh Community Mental Health Hub

A new project to create a hub run by and for the Helensburgh Community. Branching Out graduates have joined the steering group to plan how to run the 1930s bungalow and garden gifted to the community, and they have started work on raised beds in the garden to grow food for the Hub café.

Blarbuie Woodland Community Garden, Lochgilphead.

Branching Out graduates will take part in the construction of a new polytunnel for the community garden. This will be a new build and participants will be involved from first stages to setting out the poly tunnel for a variety of future uses.

Moving On Collaboratively

Teams in all areas are asking graduates for their favourite recipes, art, poetry and prose to publish booklets celebrating Branching Out Argyll and to use as a future resource. This is being developed into a Moving On project.

NEWSFLASH!

We are recruiting for new Branching Out Leaders and programme volunteers.

Leader training - including a refresher day for current Leaders - will take place on 16th, 17th, 18th March 2018. Venue to be confirmed.

Do you know anyone who is available and with experience of leading outdoor activities with vulnerable adults?

If so please put them in touch branchingout@act-now.org.uk for an application form.



Twiggig Out Bute and Cowal project at KCFC, Tighnabruaich.

Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust [ACT]

www.act-now.org.uk 1 Kilmory Industrial Estate, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RR

Email: branchingout@act-now.org.uk Tel [ACT]: 01546 602755 Sara Mob: 07788 289537

With thanks to all our partners and funders.



Branching Out
Positive Mental Health Through Nature

