



Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

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6 November 2018

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE** will be held in the **SEABANK ROOM, HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE, 38 EAST CLYDE STREET, HELENSBURGH** on **TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2018** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE HELD ON TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST 2018** (Pages 3 - 6)
3. **ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE - TO FOLLOW**
Update by Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer
4. **FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT** (Pages 7 - 8)
Report by Friends of Duchess Wood
5. **DUCHESS WOOD WIAT FUNDING**
Verbal Update by Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer
6. **SUB-COMMITTEE - OPTIONS UPDATE**
Verbal Update by Lorna Douglas, Chair of Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee and Stewart Campbell, Chair of Friends of Duchess Wood.
7. **DOG FOULING**
Verbal Update by Lorna Douglas, Chair of Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee
8. **DOG EVENT**

Verbal Update by Lorna Douglas, Chair of Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)

Contact: Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer (Clerk); Tel: 01546 604331

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the LOMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST 2018**

Present: Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)

Attending: Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Johann Urquhart, Principal Teacher of Lomond School
Sean McCay, Land Agent, Luss Estates
Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Martin Grafton, Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW)
Morag Young, Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW)
Jean Senior, Argyll TSI

1. APOLOGIES

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

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Wendy Brownlie, Education Manager
Lorna Pearce, Senior Development Officer
Morevain Martin, Argyll TSI
Sara MacLeod, Branching Out
Stewart Campbell, Friends of Duchess Wood
Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 22nd May 2018 was approved as a correct record.

Arising from item 5 "Top Dogs Day Out Update" it was noted that a separate meeting had been arranged to take forward arrangements for the planning and marketing of the 2019 event and that the item had not therefore been included on the agenda.

Arising from item 7 "Any Other Competent Business" the Area Governance Officer advised that Louise Connor, Head of Education, had responded to the previous offer from Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) regarding opportunities to work with local schools in relation to the crowdfunding effort to provide a copy the book "The Lost Words" to all schools in Scotland. Louise had offered to forward information in an email from FODW to individual Head Teachers for their consideration.

3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided an update from Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW).

Martin Grafton spoke to the report advising that the maintenance teams have been back in action after a very quiet winter.

Decision

The Committee endorsed the contents of the report and agreed that David Lewin, FODW would liaise with Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer, regarding the immediate issue of the diseased trees and that boundary issues would be an item for discussion at a future meeting in light of concerns that a survey may be required to assess the extent of the problem.

(Ref: Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) by Martin Grafton, Secretary - FODW, dated 21st August 2018).

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

Johann Urquhart, Principal Teacher of Lomond School, updated the Group on the Community Orienteering Event planned for 2nd September 2018 which would be open to the whole community to attend between the hours of 10am-1pm. She confirmed this has been advertised in schools and an advert would also be placed in the local paper.

5. DUCHESS WOOD WIAT APPLICATION (Pages 5 - 8)

Mhairi Gardner, Development Officer took the Group through a report which updates members on the status of the initial application to the Forestry Commission (FC), for a Woods in and around town (WIAT) grant relating to the production of an urban woodland management plan.

She advised an application was submitted to the Forestry Commission on 31st May 2017 in request of retrospective funding towards the time and resources required to develop a management plan for the Local Nature Reserve. She advised the application was approved on 6th July 2017 and further to contract agreement, the plan preparation grant of £1,299.75 had now been received.

Decision

The Group noted the contents of the report, thanked everyone involved in the bid, and agreed that the plan be included on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss what other funding options may be available.

(Ref: Report by Development Officer dated 21st August 2018, submitted).

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

There was no officer present from Roads and Amenity Services. In their absence the Chair commented that she was unaware of any recent maintenance works conducted although had concerns about more erosion and the number and depth of potholes which she would raise directly with Roads and Amenity Services.

The Group agreed that to facilitate future attendance of an officer they would move this item to the start of the agenda, with the option to depart the meeting after the update had been provided. They also commented that where no officer was able to attend in future a written update would be much appreciated.

7. THE FUTURE OF DUCHESS WOOD POST MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

The Chair spoke about the need to enter into discussions about the options for the management of the Wood after the current Management Agreement expires in August 2020. She suggested this be progressed as soon as possible as this could take a significant period of time to move through the various committees of the Council before a decision can be made.

The Council outlined 4 options for progressing the matter which were:

1. To renew the Management Arrangement per the current arrangement;
2. To have a new Management Arrangement with a third party taking responsibility for maintenance etc;
3. To decline to renew the Management Arrangement, the consequence being that the land would revert to the owner to maintain; and
4. Alternative ownership arrangements, such as a community buyout be taken forward.

Decision

It was agreed that the previously established Short Term Working Group would meet at Lomond School on 18th September at 10am to explore the options outlined and report back to the DWLNRC at their next meeting.

8. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Martin Grafton updated the Group on an email David had received from the Helensburgh Advertiser regarding the issue of professional dog walkers in the Wood. The Chair agreed to look at the potential for a code of conduct to be put in place and that she would report back on this to the Committee at a future meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 13th November 2018, at 10am, in the Seabank Room, Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre.

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Friends of Duchess Wood



Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) report to Duchess Wood LNR Committee 21st October 2018

1. Maintenance has continued over the summer months, including repairs to fencing in the north and east of the Wood. Additionally, as discussed previously, fencing has been installed around the lower pond and a path / fencing put in to aid access to the upper pond. It is intended to plant willow saplings next to the fencing probably in December, with the help of Branching Out, and it is also hoped to install a willow wigwam and an arbour.
2. The Venture Scouts visited the wood, collect brash and burned it, cooking food in the embers, in early October. This was a rescheduled event from the summer which was cancelled due to the very dry conditions. Dunbartonshire Athletics Club held a successful cross-country relay event on 21st October.
3. 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, (in relation to the professional dog walkers issue discussed at the last meeting) and other local organisations.
4. Grants. The bid for a “Woodlands in and around Towns” (WIAT) grant which was submitted earlier along with our woodland management plan has passed the first stage of approval by the Forestry Commission, and the preparatory grant has been paid to the Council. We are now assisting the Council in preparing an operational plan for the next stage of the grant application.
5. FODW met with the Project Manager for Community Links Scotland before the last meeting to discuss how the organisation might be able to support action in the Wood. They have particular experience in supporting studies and funding applications for the transfer of assets to local communities. No further discussions have taken place since the last meeting.
6. However following discussions with David Rennie of the Social Enterprise department of A&BC, a more detailed discussion between FODW and David Rennie took place by video link on 26 October. This was very helpful and a number of ways forward in relation to some potential grant streams will be actioned.
7. Branching Out continues to meet in the Wood and participants have agreed in principle to assist with some woodland management tasks later in the year.
8. Boundary issues. We continue to have concerns over large trees within 5m of the boundaries of the Wood, and have carried out a survey of the numbers involved. We will report back on this work at the meeting.
9. Professional dog walkers. Following the last meeting the concerns of FODW were highlighted in the local press. The Chairman wrote to the Helensburgh Advertiser to correct some inaccuracies.

10. We were unable to strim and clear the pony field of grass by the end of the summer and this will have to be revisited in the spring.

11. FODW hosted a visit by the new Forestry Commission officer for this area to the Wood on 4 October and the visit was followed by a meeting in the Civic Centre to discuss the WIAT application and woodland management.

12. FODW has participated in the two DWLNRC sub-committee meetings in September and October to discuss the options for the management of the Wood after the current Management Agreement expires. This discussion also links in to the parallel initiatives of pursuing the WIAT grant, and/or delivering the Management Plan through cost-neutral action. We have also recently met with the felling contractor who assisted in the earlier pilot thinning in the Wood and have arranged to talk to other contractors.

13. The Chairman has written to David Moore, Council Planning Officer, having noted that Persimmon Homes appeared to be disposing of site "mulching" waste in the wood. David Moore has been in touch with Persimmon Homes and further meetings are scheduled for the near future.

14. FODW Annual General Meeting. The FODW AGM for the year 2017-18 was held on Wednesday 17th October 2018. 28 members attended and some non-members. Following the decision of Stewart Campbell to stand down, a new chairman (Matt Offord) was elected and he will take up the post in December. Stewart will continue on the committee to lead on Citizen Science and survey initiatives.

Martin Grafton, Secretary, 21st October 2018