



The Friends of Duchess Wood

Report to Duchess Wood LNR Committee

18th August 2015

1. **The Annual General Meeting of FODW** will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 28th October in the Sports Centre of Lomond School. Papers for the formal part of the session will be sent to members in advance. That part of the AGM will be followed by a talk by Pete Minting, Scottish Project Officer of the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust. Refreshments. Everyone welcome.

2. **New information maps** have been installed at each entry point to Duchess Wood to assist the increasing number of visitors to the Wood. Internet references to DW appear to have attracted people from further afield, to join local residents. One (The Woodland Trust) describes DW as “A model nature reserve & community woodland within Helensburgh's green belt.”

The maps are based on the design by Babcock for the new Information Boards, but were paid for separately by FODW from a donation made to the Group last year. The posts were erected by Community Payback, and the smart wooden frames for the maps were made as a gift by Sandy Abel.

The photo, right, shows FODW Chairman, Stewart Campbell, presenting Sandy with a Certificate of Appreciation for his work.



3. **Waymarker posts** with green arrows were installed earlier in the year to help guide visitors round the spring flower walk route, which was supported by the leaflet funded by SNH. New leaflet dispensers were provided by FODW and all copies of the leaflet have now been taken; a reprint will be organised for spring 2016. In addition waymarker posts with red arrows have now been provided round the main peripheral path to help guide visitors clockwise round the Wood from the car park, or anticlockwise from the Millig Street/Rhu Road Higher entrances. Printed versions of the maps will also be made available in the dispensers to help visitors.



4. **New culvert to the west of the Pony Field.** Arrangements are advanced to replace the ‘temporary’ wooden bridge over the stream to the west of the Pony Field. The photo, left, shows the bridge after the recent transit of heavy vehicles crossing the stream by alternative means during the work to repair the fence by the railway line. That disturbance beside the bridge is now being rectified, but the bridge itself is overdue for replacement. The photo, right, is the culvert-bridge constructed higher up the stream and is the style that FODW hopes will replace the lower wooden bridge.





Duchess Wood as part of the Green Network

5. Green network consultation. Argyll and Bute Council has been carrying out a consultation about a green network map for Helensburgh. The aim is to have green linkages between urban green spaces, both in and around the town. So Duchess Wood is a key green space, linked by tree-lined streets in Helensburgh and a countryside network of paths around the town.

The purposes are many, from better health through walking and cycling, to wildlife corridors. The work that the DWLNRC and FODW have done on paths, bridges and culverts ties in with the round-Helensburgh network of paths started by the Green Belt Group more than 15 years ago and expanded by the Helensburgh and District Access Trust. Indeed, both those organisations have helped Duchess Wood over the years.

6. Community Woodlands Association (CWA) event at Duchess Wood. The next CWA Argyll networking forum – ‘A Wood of Our Own’ – will be held on Tuesday 1st September in the Helensburgh Rugby Club. There will be a site visit to Duchess Wood as part of the programme. More information will follow in due course, but the speakers will include Stewart Campbell and Sandy Kerr on behalf of FODW.

7. FODW has been involved in a number of discussions since the last meeting about the development of the current Management Plan and the possibility of an application under the WIAT scheme. An update will be provided at the meeting.

8. Regular maintenance. FODW has continued with its regular maintenance work, clearing litter, cutting back unwanted growth, making repairs, etc.