

Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee

Funding Update/Development of the Wood

Management Plan and associated documents

A report to the previous meeting of this Committee summarised the role of the Management Plan and other supporting documents. The Management Plan is the main guiding document for woodland management within Duchess Wood.

The main work elements highlighted within the Management Plan have been dependent on securing external funding which, until recently, has not been readily available. However the launch this year of the latest round of Forestry Commission WIAT funding presents an appropriate funding opportunity. It was therefore agreed at the last meeting that Charlie, Stewart, David and Stuart should meet to discuss a possible WIAT application for forestry and access works in Duchess Wood.

This meeting took place on 10th June 2015. Stuart was unable to attend, and Alastair also attended from the FODW.

Summary of WIAT meeting

The following actions were agreed at the meeting;

- It was agreed to work jointly to develop a WIAT bid for Duchess Wood, based on the work programme specified in the Management Plan.
- FODW had already met with the Forestry Commission, looking at Duchess Wood and also Castle Wood
- It is likely that, in order to get WIAT funding, a Management Plan would have to be submitted based on a new FC template. CC would seek clarification on this. However worst case scenario would be to mainly cut and paste from the existing Management Plan to the FC template. This altered MP would be for the purposes of WIAT application only and would not replace the approved LNR Management Plan.
- It may be possible to get input from the Community Woodland Association in the development of this new plan, and an initial grant towards this could be available. SC would contact Diane Oliver in this regard.
- FC would inform FODW of the current Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspectorate Division registration details for Duchess Wood. The SGRPID details dictate who is eligible to apply for grants, although there is a process for changing/editing this if necessary.
- CC would provide a history of forestry grants in Duchess Wood, by end of July.
- Everyone would contribute ideas for works appropriate for inclusion in a WIAT bid by the end of July.
- CC would seek clarification on the process required to obtain stone for the proposed new culvert at the end of the pony field.
- It was recognised that other issues, such as possible community stewardship of the woodland, could influence a WIAT bid. CC would seek clarification on this.

Progress since WIAT meeting

- Regarding the format of the Management Plan, the best information CC has to date is that the FC are very keen that their standard template is used. Several potential applications from other sites in central Scotland are extracting elements of the existing management plans to fit into the template.
- At the time of writing, CC still awaits further guidance from the Forestry Commission on the effects any possible future change of management structure/ownership may have on a WIAT application.
- FC have confirmed to FODW that the SGRPID registration currently sits with Argyll and Bute Council
- CC has provided the following grant history to FODW

1996 – An FC funded programme to define a circular path and to fell significant amounts of mature sycamore and trees identified as being dangerous. I have been unable to find the documents for this, as it was nearly 20 years ago. However, from memory it involved a total cost of around £20,000. Costs were relatively low because the contractor agreed to offset some costs against the value of the extracted timber (there being a market for sycamore at that time). The funding was split (roughly) as follows; £8,000 Forestry Commission, £8,000 Lower Clyde Greenspace, £4,000 Argyll and Bute Council. *(Please don't assume these figures are very accurate, but I think they will be reasonably close. It was the same year we upgraded the path running west from the Hill House, and I recall the total funding package was about £40K for both schemes)*

2007 – Woodland and access improvements from the last WIAT bid. Total cost was £72,100. Funding package was FC WIAT £64,500, Lower Clyde Greenspace £7,600

There have also been numerous smaller spends over the years. For example I know that Lower Clyde Greenspace funded two arboriculture safety surveys, each costing in the region of £1200. And also some tree safety works arising from these surveys which I estimate to have cost LCG in the region of £6,500. These actions attracted no external funding.

- CC and FODW currently exchanging thoughts on the outcomes that could be included in a new WIAT application

Charlie Cairns

August 2015