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**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the SEABANK ROOM, HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE, 38 EAST CLYDE
STREET, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 23 AUGUST 2016**

Present:

Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)
Charlie Cairns – Lower Clyde Green Space
Stewart Campbell – Chair, Friends of Duchess Wood
David Lewin - Trustee, Friends of Duchess Wood
Stuart McCracken – Amenity Performance Manager
Ailsa Cunningham – Technical Officer
Wendy Brownlie – Education Officer
Johanna Urquhart – Principal, Lomond School

APOLOGIES

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

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Alastair Macbeth
Morevain Martin
Iain Wilkinson
Josie Slater

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 18 May 2016 was approved as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

The Chair reported that Eileen Kay had resigned from the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee and that Wendy Brownlie, Education Officer for Helensburgh and Lomond would endeavour to attend meetings, depending on her availability.

Charlie Cairns advised that there was no update and that during the school holidays there had been no activity

Decision:

The Committee noted the update.

FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORTS

The Committee considered a report which had been tabled at the meeting and provided an update on recent work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW). This work has included the placement of QR codes at the entrance to the Wood which link directly to the FODW website, and ongoing Rhododendron and Sycamore clearance.

Stewart Campbell, Chair of Friends of Duchess Wood advised the Committee of the recent death of Alastair Macbeth's wife. The Committee offered their condolences to Alastair at this sad news.

Discussion followed regarding the issue of 'wild camping' and the Committee agreed there was a need to monitor this in Duchess Wood.

Decision

The Committee noted the report.

Reference: Community Engagement Report and FODW Newsletter by Stewart Campbell, Chair Friends of Duchess Wood dated August 2016, submitted).

DRAFT FIVE-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN - OCTOBER 2016-SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee gave consideration to the draft 5-year Management Plan and Stewart Campbell advised that he had reviewed comments he had received and had made several amendments to the document. He tabled several maps for the Committee to consider.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended the hard work and effort undertaken by Stewart.

Decision

The Committee agreed :

1. The finalised Plan; and
2. That this would be submitted to the October meeting of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee for approval.

(Reference: Draft Management Plan by Stewart Campbell, Chair Friends of Duchess Wood, tabled).

WIAT FUNDING APPLICATION

The Committee considered an update on issues relating to the Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) application.

Charlie Cairns highlighted that briefs had been forwarded to 3 companies, but unfortunately there had not been any uptake received. He continued that, under the circumstances, he had instigated a draft application for submission and requested that the Committee endorse this approach to enable the sub-committee to proceed with a formal application.

Discussion continued in regards the potential to work with ACT to deliver some elements of the work, although it was pointed out that there was some uncertainty about their employability funding beyond October.

David Lewin reported on recent difficulties in trying to make contact with Lockwood Forest Services. He had eventually made contact and advised that while it was still planned to undertake the self-funding sycamore project, it was currently on hold. He would provide an update at the November meeting.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To endorse the draft application devised by Charlie Cairns; and
2. That the sub-committee would proceed with a formal application for WIAT funding; and
3. That David Lewin would provide an update regarding the self-funding sycamore project for the November meeting

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to reports from the Amenity Performance Manager which provided information on the maintenance regime for the wood and also an update on the financial position.

Several concerns were raised which included:-

- The need to empty bins at Rhu Road Higher
- Planings to be used to fill pot holes with the car park

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the report, and
2. That the Amenity Performance Manager would review the issues highlighted at the meeting.

(Reference: Report by the Amenity Performance Manager dated 23 August 2016,

submitted).

POTENTIAL DOG TRAINING EVENT

The Committee gave consideration to the potential dog event and various suggestions were put forward.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To hold a small event on Sunday, 9 October in the Pony Field, Duchess Wood which would include contributions from the dog trainer, Environmental Wardens and Friends of Duchess Wood, with parking support potentially offered by Lomond School; and
2. That the Chair would instigate contact with the Dogs Trust to ascertain if they could provide support for the event; and
3. That a short Press release would be compiled to raise awareness for the event.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

The Chair opened the meeting for Any Other Business and the following issues were raised:-

Ailsa Cunningham advised of a forthcoming orienteering event being held by Lomond School on – Sunday, 11 September between 10.00a.m. and 2.00p.m.

She outlined an application which had been received for a birthday party for 12 children in the Duchess Wood. Ailsa drew attention to the proposed activities which included – rope works, tree climbing and fire lighting. She invited discussion from the Committee in relation to the application and the Committee confirmed, that in their view, the activities were very ambitious for the short duration of the proposed party.

Decision

The Committee agreed that a structure of the event should be requested, which would also provide detail of the safety measures in place and the staff ratio.

The Chair highlighted a recent meeting held in the Victoria Halls – Taking Action on Marine and Land-based litter. It had been agreed at the meeting to explore the creation of a local community group with the potential of accessing suitable funding.

She enquired if there was any update in regards the possibility of community ownership of the Wood. Stewart Campbell replied that the Friends of Duchess Wood were hoping to recruit a new committee member who had expertise in the law and could, hopefully, provide support and expertise on this issue.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that the date of the next meeting would be as follows:-

Tuesday, 22 November 2016 – 10.00a.m.
Lomond School 10 Stafford Street, Helensburgh

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and providing useful and informative updates.

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