

**Proposal for Duchess Woods Steering Committee  
Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017**

**Request for agreement to use Duchess Woods as a Branching Out venue.**

Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) delivers Branching Out across the localities in Argyll and Bute under agreement with NHS Highland and Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), also working in partnership with NHS Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT), and in each area forms new partnerships with community woodland groups, community transport providers and other third sector organisations as required.

Branching Out is funded on a rolling basis until March 2019. Funders are The Transforming Self Management Fund (The Alliance), the Integrated Care Fund, Forestry Commission Scotland, Argyll & Bute Council 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Fund, locality Health and Wellbeing Funds. The funding for Helensburgh and Lomond plans to deliver 3, 12-week programmes this year and the same again next year. Each programme budget includes all costs to run the programme and also a contribution / donation of £600 to the venue provider.

One 12-week programme is designed to take up to 12 participants, referred via the CMHT, once a week into their local woodland to undertake activities designed to improve mental health and physical wellbeing. Activities include green woodworking, shelter building, camp-fire cooking, conservation, walks, mindfulness, environmental art and crafts, sculptures, wildlife ID and surveys, foraging, bushcraft, archery, music and much more. The day runs from 10am until 3pm and always includes a meal cooked from scratch on the campfire and Kelly kettle use. Participants are also put forward to achieve their John Muir Discovery Awards.

Branching Out is an award winning FCS project and has been running for a few years in the central belt and operates under Forestry Commission policy and protocol, which cover all the activities.

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/health-strategy/branching-out>

It is staffed by fully trained Branching Out Leaders and support from the CMHTs – usually Occupational Therapists and / or CPNs and support workers.

Duchess Woods would provide an ideal central location in Helensburgh for our first programme, which we hope will start in April 2017. We will also be developing “Moving On” programmes for participants who have graduated the programmes. During the latter stages of the 12-week programmes and the moving on programmes, participants get more involved with the aims and aspirations of the woodlands and get involved with strategic projects that might be organised to improve the diversity and / or infrastructure of the woodlands which benefit the venue, adds value and increases community participation.

Contact details for Branching Out Argyll

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