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MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held in the LOMOND SCHOOL, STAFFORD STREET, HELENSBURGH on WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017

Present:

(Chair)
Councillor Aileen Morton

Attending:

Charlie Cairns – Lower Clyde Green Space
Johanna Urquhart – Principal, Lomond School
Alastair Macbeth – Secretary, Friends of Duchess Wood
David Lewin – Trustee, Friends of Duchess Wood
Iain Wilkinson, Luss Estates
Shona Barton – Area Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Stuart McCracken, Amenity Performance Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer, Argyll and Bute Council

APOLOGIES

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

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Stewart Campbell
Morevain Martin
Sara McLean

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 22 November 2016 was approved as a true record.

FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORTS

It was highlighted that FODW were engaged in discussion with Alison Rutherford, a botanist specialist who had advocated the use of Scottish wild flower seeds for planting.

The Chair advised that she had spoken with the Provost highlighting that FODW were planning to mark the 10th anniversary of their inaugural meeting. The Provost had agreed in principle to provide support; however, formal approval of funding from the Provost Fund would need to come from the new Provost after the Local Elections in May.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note the report; and
2. That an on-site meeting would be arranged between Argyll and Bute Council engineers, representative from Luss Estates and maintenance representative from Lomond School to determine the short-term safety issues regarding the bridge; and
3. That a report which outlined the long-term remedial action for the bridge would come to the May meeting of the Duchess Wood Committee.
4. That Theresa McLetchie would forward on an application for the Provost Fund to Stewart Campbell.

(Reference: Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) by Stewart Campbell, Chair FODW, dated February 2017).

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

(a) Branching Out Proposal

The Chair advised the Committee that the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) had been approached by Sara MacLean, organiser of 'Branching Out' enquiring on the feasibility of running various activities in the Wood.

Branching Out were sponsored by the Forestry Commission and it was highlighted that similar activities were being undertaken in other parts of Argyll and Bute.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To support the application in principle; and
2. That the Chair would write to Sara McLean highlighting that FODW were opposed to any fires/open camp fire cooking within Duchess Wood.

(b) Dog Event - 2017

The Committee discussed the possibility of holding another Dog event in Duchess Wood.

Decision:

The Committee agreed:-

1. To re-run the Dog Event in September 2017; and
2. That the sub-group would schedule a planning meeting to formalise timings and other issues.

5. LOWER CLYDE GREENSPACE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on The working relationship between Argyll and Bute Council and Lower Clyde Greenspace in respect to Duchess Wood.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, dated 22 February 2017, submitted).

WIAT FUNDING APPLICATION - UPDATE

Charlie Cairns updated the Committee on the progress of the Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) application. He advised that the draft was at the first stage and would be given further consideration at the WIAT sub-group meeting on 13 March. After the draft had been agreed, it would be forwarded to the Forestry Commission by the end of March 2017.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note the progress of the WIAT application; and
2. That the sub-group would meet to formalise the WIAT application on 13 March with Mhairi Gardiner in attendance; and
3. That the WIAT application would be submitted to the Forestry Commission by the end of March 2017; and
4. That Iain Wilkinson, Luss Estates would provide a letter of comfort to accompany the WIAT application to the Forestry Commission..

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Amenity Performance Manager.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(Reference :Report by Amenity Performance Manager dated 22 February 2017, tabled).

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

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

Community Pay Back and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT).

David Lewin enquired if there had been any changes to the existing arrangement with the Community Pay Back Team and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust

(ACT).

The Chair agreed to take these issues away and would provide an update to FODW.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee meeting was agreed for Tuesday, 16 May 2017 in the Seabank Room, Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre.

The Area Committee Manager drew attention to the Governance issue regarding the appointment of the Chair of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee. She confirmed that this would not be agreed until the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee scheduled to be held in June 2017.

Decision:

The Committee agreed:-

1. To proceed with the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee meeting on 16 May 2017; and
2. That another member of the Committee would chair the meeting.