

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE
on TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2017**

Present:

(Chair)
Councillor Lorna Douglas

Attending:

Alastair Macbeth, Secretary, Friends of Duchess Wood
David Lewin, Chair, Friends of Duchess Wood
Morevain Martin, Third Sector Interface
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
Shona Barton – Area Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Martin Grafton

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 22 August 2017 was approved as a true record subject to amendments at Item 3.

3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORTS

The Committee considered a report which provided an update and outlined the recent work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW).

Discussion followed with Alastair Macbeth and David Lewin highlighting the appreciation of the FODW for the Civic Reception provided by the Provost to celebrate 10 years of the Group. It was noted that the AGM for the FODW would be held on 17th January 2018 and all were welcome to attend. David also provided the Committee with an update on the work carried out by the Community Payback teams in the Wood and welcomed the contact being re-established with the local supervisor in Helensburgh.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note and endorse the report

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

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

(a) Dog Event 2018

The Committee noted that plans were in place for the dog event which would be held on 25 March 2018, and that a meeting of the dog event working group would be held directly following the Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted that the working group were progressing plans for the dog event.

(b) Request for Canicross Training

The Committee considered a request from a local provider to offer a free Canicross Training taster session in the Wood. Discussion followed, with the following issues being highlighted:-

The possibility of these classes being run frequently through the week
Concern over possible disruption to other users of the Wood
The suitability of the Wood for this type of activity given the narrow paths
The guidelines from Scottish National Heritage on the use of Local Nature Reserves

Decision

Having given careful consideration to the request, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Duchess Wood is not an appropriate setting for a class of this nature and is not compatible with the size of the Wood, or with the established rules and arrangements that are in place; and
- (2) that the Area Committee Manager should write to the applicant advising of the decision.

5. WIAT FUNDING APPLICATION - UPDATE

Mhairi Gardner updated the Committee on the progress of the Woodlands In Around Town funding application. It was noted that following the 1st stage application approval, the legal contract had been sent back to the Forestry Commission with amendments made by the Council's Legal Services Department. A decision on the proposed amendments was still awaited, following which the Management Plan would be submitted to the Forestry Commission. It was noted that the Management Plan was already in place and ready to be submitted.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the progress of the WIAT application.

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

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

The following was noted:-

General maintenance of knotweed, litter bins etc. was up to date

Work would be carried out on Rhu Road Higher over the Winter

A plan of work has been agreed with the residents for work on the Strathclyde Court trees and this will be carried out in early 2018

Work has been carried out on the Victorian Bridge area, with a temporary cover now in place to stop traffic from going over the edge

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the update.

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

7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

(a) Repairs to the bridge above the Duchess Wood car park

Discussion took place around the works that have been carried out on the bridge, with it being highlighted that although remedial work had made the bridge safe there was a possibility of further deterioration. The Amenity Performance Manager advised that further works would likely be required in future, and he was currently trying to establish where responsibility for these repairs would fall. Concern was also raised that the bridge could be listed and this may prove to be a further obstacle.

As part of the discussion, the Committee raised the issue of the current Management Agreement, whether this should be a lease agreement and looking forward to the renewal of the agreement with Luss Estates.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) To note the current situation surrounding the bridge;
- (2) That Councillor Douglas would confirm the status of the bridge in terms of any listing;
- (3) That the Chair and the Amenity Performance Manager would liaise to arrange a meeting with Luss Estates to discuss the Management Agreement and future arrangements.

(b) Persimmon Development

Alastair Macbeth provided the Committee with an update on the proposed Persimmon Development at the former Ardencaple garden centre. He noted that FODW had submitted 2 objections in relation to the wildlife corridor and the vagueness of the design for the whindust path.

Decision

The Committee noted the progress made and that there would be a Planning Hearing on the application on 19 December 2017 in the Victoria Halls, Helensburgh.

(c) Grass Cutting – Pony Field

David Lewin advised that FODW were struggling to maintain the pony field due to the difficulties with dog fouling in that area causing issues with getting the grass cut. It was noted that FODW would ensure that a suitable area of the field was made available for the dog event in March 2018.

Decision

The Committee noted the update.

(d) Byelaws for dog walkers

The Committee discussed the issue of commercial dog walkers and the suggestion of putting in place a byelaw to regulate the number of dogs which and individual could be in control of at any one time.

Decision

The Committee agreed to investigate the possibility of a byelaw for this purpose and agreed that this would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee meeting was still to be confirmed.

Decision

The Area Committee Manager agreed to liaise with the Headteacher of Lomond School to ascertain availability for a meeting in February 2018 and also to arrange a date for May 2018, which would be circulated to members.