

The Friends of Duchess Wood

Friends of Duchess Wood report to Duchess Wood LNR Committee 9th February 2018

1. It has been fairly quiet over the winter period.
2. Community liaison and representation. FODW continued its normal role of engagement with and representation of the local community. FODW has also liaised with local press, community councils and other local organisations. FODW spoke at the Community Council's session in December which heard from a number of local environmental groups.
3. Persimmon Homes planning application. FODW joined with the Helensburgh Green Belt Group in making representation to the Council Planning Group about countryside issues associated with the Persimmon Homes planning application. Disappointingly the council appeared to dismiss our concerns.
4. Grants. Together with A&B Council, FODW is preparing a bid for a major "Woodlands in and around Towns" grant. At the time of writing the application is with the Council and Forestry Commission legal teams. In addition FODW has applied to the A&BC Supporting Communities Fund 2018-2019 for a grant to help return the section of path from the car park to the pony field to an all-abilities surface.
5. FODW Annual General Meeting. The FODW AGM for the year 2016-17 was held on Wednesday 17th January 2018 in the Helensburgh Parish Church Halls. Around twenty five members attended and the meeting was followed by a talk entitled "A Foresters View of Duchess Wood" by David Robertson who commented positively on the management plan commitments and made suggestions for day-to-day improvements.
6. Basic maintenance. Since the last DWLNRC meeting FODW has continued to carry out maintenance such as cutting back rhododendron, litter clearance, grass control, paths clearance, ditch and culvert clearance, fence repairs and other basic tasks.
7. Looking to the rest of this year (and bearing in mind that if the WIAT grant proceeds that will have a major impact) FODW intends to carry out a number of bat monitoring exercises, will look to carrying out further insect and flower surveys, and will continue to monitor the development of the pond life. We also hope to make more of the fallen wood available for artisan work. We will also monitor and replace where tree planting has failed.
8. We also hope to establish closer working relations with the other environmental groups in the town, and with other sources of expertise such as the National Park Authority.