

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the SEABANK ROOM, HELENSBURGH & LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE
on TUESDAY, 22 MAY 2018**

Present: Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)

Attending: Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager, Argyll & Bute Council
Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Jean Senior, Argyll TSI
Stewart Campbell, Chair of FODW
David Lewin, FODW
Sara McLean, Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust

1. APOLOGIES

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

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Stuart McCracken, Amenity Performance Manager, Argyll & Bute Council
Ailsa Cunningham, Technical Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Johann Urquart, Principal of Lomond School
Sean McCay, Land Agent, Luss Estates
Morevain Martin, Third Sector Interface

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 20th February 2018 was approved as a correct record.

Arising from item 7 (c) Grass Cutting – Pony Field, it was noted that there was no response as yet from Mr McCay. It was noted that Stewart Campbell would chase this up directly.

3. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided an update from Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW).

Stewart Campbell spoke to the report advising that it had been a quiet Winter due to laying snow but despite this some maintenance work had been completed and the Community Payback Team had undertaken the refurbishment of park benches, for which FODW recorded their thanks to Colin Ray.

In addition, Stewart spoke about bridge and decking repairs, bat detection with the Explorer Scouts on 25th June 2018, semi guided walks that were being planned and the desire to record footfall into the woods.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Ref: Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) by Martin Grafton, Secretary - FODW, dated 8th May 2018).

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

(a) Branching Out Argyll

Following an invitation to attend and discuss the Branching Out Argyll Project at the meeting on 20th February 2018, the Committee were informed about the project by Sara McLean of Argyll and the Isle Coast and Countryside Trust. Sara spoke about the partners and funders, what the aims of project were, the types of activities undertaken, the positive impacts on the mental health of the participants and how the costs of delivering the project compared with clinical treatment for mental health issues.

Decision

The Committee thanked Sara for her informative presentation and it was agreed that an invitation would be extended by FODW to the group in respect of their bat detection session on 25th June 2018.

5. 'TOP DOGS DAY OUT' UPDATE

The Committee considered a report from the Dogs Trust following the "Top Dogs Day Out" event held on 25th March 2018 and received feedback from the Chair who had attended a post event meeting.

The Chair commented that the event was well run and attended but that the marketing of the event could have been improved to have made the day even more successful.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that this item be included on the agenda for the meeting on 21st August 2018 to allow for discussions on planning and marketing the 2019 event.

(Ref: Dogs Trust Community Event Summary, undated)

6. DUCHESS WOOD WIAT APPLICATION

Mhairi Gardner updated the Committee on the progress of the Woodlands In Around Town funding application which had been approved on 2nd May 2018 and responded to questions from the Committee about timescale and implications that the sale of timber may have on the funding.

Decision

The Committee noted the success of the application and requested that Mhairi seek to establish a timescale for release of the funding from the Forestry Commission and also raise the matter of timber sales and any impact that might have on the award.

7. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee discussed the terms of report by the Amenity Performance Manager in his absence, noting the remaining budget for maintenance.

Decision

It was agreed to record the concerns of FODW regarding Japanese Knotweed encroaching on the car park and ask that this be treated by the Amenity Performance Manager and also to invite the Amenity Performance Manager and contractors to discuss works at Strathclyde Court with FODW prior to any decisions being made.

(Ref: Report by Amenity Performance Manager dated 22nd May 2018, submitted)

8. THE FUTURE OF DUCHESS WOOD POST MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

The Chair spoke about the need to enter into discussions about the options for Management Agreement which would expire in August 2020 as soon as possible.

Decision

It was agreed to establish a Short Term Working Group to progress options and report back to this Committee and that this should consist of the Chair, a representative of FODW and officers from Legal Services, Amenity Services and Economic Development. The Area Committee Manager was invited to contact these services, inviting them to nominate an officer to work with the Group and to circulate suggested dates for the first meeting.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Jean Senior asked FODW if it would be possible to organise a painted stone hunt in Duchess Woods. With exception on Mondays it was agreed that this could take place and that Stewart would advertise this if Jean provided him with a poster.

Stewart asked about feedback from Education on the “Lost Words” book. It was agreed that the Area Committee Manager would raise this with Wendy Brownlie and Louise Connor, having noted that Ann Paterson was not aware of this.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 21st August 2018, at 10am, in the Lomond School, Helensburgh.