

# Friends of Duchess Wood



Friends of  
Duchess Wood

## **Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) report to Duchess Wood LNR Committee 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018**

1. Maintenance has continued over the summer months, including repairs to fencing in the north and east of the Wood. Additionally, as discussed previously, fencing has been installed around the lower pond and a path / fencing put in to aid access to the upper pond. It is intended to plant willow saplings next to the fencing probably in December, with the help of Branching Out, and it is also hoped to install a willow wigwam and an arbour.
2. The Venture Scouts visited the wood, collect brash and burned it, cooking food in the embers, in early October. This was a rescheduled event from the summer which was cancelled due to the very dry conditions. Dunbartonshire Athletics Club held a successful cross-country relay event on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
3. 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, (in relation to the professional dog walkers issue discussed at the last meeting) and other local organisations.
4. Grants. The bid for a “Woodlands in and around Towns” (WIAT) grant which was submitted earlier along with our woodland management plan has passed the first stage of approval by the Forestry Commission, and the preparatory grant has been paid to the Council. We are now assisting the Council in preparing an operational plan for the next stage of the grant application.
5. FODW met with the Project Manager for Community Links Scotland before the last meeting to discuss how the organisation might be able to support action in the Wood. They have particular experience in supporting studies and funding applications for the transfer of assets to local communities. No further discussions have taken place since the last meeting.
6. However following discussions with David Rennie of the Social Enterprise department of A&BC, a more detailed discussion between FODW and David Rennie took place by video link on 26 October. This was very helpful and a number of ways forward in relation to some potential grant streams will be actioned.
7. Branching Out continues to meet in the Wood and participants have agreed in principle to assist with some woodland management tasks later in the year.
8. Boundary issues. We continue to have concerns over large trees within 5m of the boundaries of the Wood, and have carried out a survey of the numbers involved. We will report back on this work at the meeting.
9. Professional dog walkers. Following the last meeting the concerns of FODW were highlighted in the local press. The Chairman wrote to the Helensburgh Advertiser to correct some inaccuracies.

10. We were unable to strim and clear the pony field of grass by the end of the summer and this will have to be revisited in the spring.
11. FODW hosted a visit by the new Forestry Commission officer for this area to the Wood on 4 October and the visit was followed by a meeting in the Civic Centre to discuss the WIAT application and woodland management.
12. FODW has participated in the two DWLNRC sub-committee meetings in September and October to discuss the options for the management of the Wood after the current Management Agreement expires. This discussion also links in to the parallel initiatives of pursuing the WIAT grant, and/or delivering the Management Plan through cost-neutral action. We have also recently met with the felling contractor who assisted in the earlier pilot thinning in the Wood and have arranged to talk to other contractors.
13. The Chairman has written to David Moore, Council Planning Officer, having noted that Persimmon Homes appeared to be disposing of site "mulching" waste in the wood. David Moore has been in touch with Persimmon Homes and further meetings are scheduled for the near future.
14. FODW Annual General Meeting. The FODW AGM for the year 2017-18 was held on Wednesday 17th October 2018. 28 members attended and some non-members. Following the decision of Stewart Campbell to stand down, a new chairman (Matt Offord) was elected and he will take up the post in December. Stewart will continue on the committee to lead on Citizen Science and survey initiatives.

Martin Grafton, Secretary, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018