

Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee changes to Terms of Reference and Governance

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to update the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Community Planning Group (ACPG) regarding the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC) and to outline its position in relation to the Area Community Planning Group.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Group Members:

- 2.1 Note the review of the Terms of Reference of the Committee under consideration but not yet finalised
- 2.2 Agree to acknowledge the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee as a strategic partner.
- 2.3 Consider proposing two nominees to sit on the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee to represent Public Health and Young Persons
- 2.4 Agree that minutes and highlight and exception reports from the Committee will be provided to the Area Community Planning Group.

3. DETAIL

3.1 Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve (DWLNR) was created in around 1995 as the result of a 15-year Management Agreement between Dumbarton District Council and Luss Estates, the landowners.

Local authority responsibility under the Agreement shortly thereafter passed to Argyll and Bute Council (A&BC). A&BC discharge this responsibility through the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC). The first of four Management Plans for the Wood was then commissioned. The LNR was formally opened by Magnus Magnusson in 1998. At that time there were only 25 LNRs in Scotland compared with 61 today.

After the LNR came into being, major grants were obtained by Lower Clyde Greenspace which paid for commissioned management plans and a range of improvements to the Wood on behalf of A&BC. The DWLNRC was originally organised on an informal basis by local volunteers until it was formally constituted as a Council sub-committee around 2007. At that point the volunteers formed the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW), to support the DWLNRC with day-to-day maintenance and enhancement work for the Wood and to act as a focal point for community involvement. FODW works closely with other local groups, and represents the local community on the DWLNRC

3.2 The Committee has a management plan covering between 2012 and 2016 which incorporates both maintenance and development of the Wood, and is seeking to further strengthen the current partnership arrangements regarding the responsible usage of the location. This plan was approved by the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee in October 2012. The Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee met on 22 October and determined that it was desirable that membership of the committee be expanded, and the terms of reference of the committee be reviewed. This review is currently underway.

3.3 As a partnership group, the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee is by definition part of the Community planning process and its participation in and reporting back to the Area Community planning group will enhance the Community planning process in the area.

3.4 Working collaboratively will be of benefit both to the ACPG and the Duchess Wood nature reserve committee in that each group will be aware of the activities of the other, which should facilitate the coordination of efforts and minimise the likelihood of duplication of work. Participation in the ACPG will also raise the profile of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve within the mind of the community and will provide a convenient route for partners to contact the committee. This will allow both parties to arrange events to promote the use and development of the wood and the surrounding locale

3.5 The Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee meets quarterly, however due to the nature of its remit, its development plans are typically long term. It is proposed that the minutes of each meeting be submitted to the Area Community planning group for noting. The Committee will provide an annual Highlight and Exception report to the ACPG and will in addition supply an exception report if there are any significant developments which warrant reporting.

3.6 It was suggested at the recent Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee meeting that its membership would be enhanced by having representation both from a "Public Health" and a "Young Persons" perspective, and the Area Community Planning Group are asked to consider appropriate nominations in this regard.

3.7 It is suggested that co-opted members will accept some additional time commitment in addition to attending the quarterly meetings of the Committee since there is likely to be an element of organising and facilitating activities in and around

the wood for the various groups. The precise level of this commitment will be a matter for the nominees to determine in consultation with the Committee.

4. IMPLICATIONS

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| 4.1 | Policy | Adoption of the proposal will assist in delivery and reporting of aspects of the SOA and the Community Plan |
| 4.2 | Financial | None, |
| 4.3 | Personnel | Some member time implications for co-opted members |
| 4.4 | Equalities Impact Assessment | None. |
| 4.5 | Legal | None |

For further information, please contact Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager
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Appendix 1

Draft Terms of Reference Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee 2012

Purpose

The Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee's primary purpose is as follows:

- To establish the purpose and management objectives for the LNR
- To prepare, monitor and review the Local Nature Reserve Management plan
- To oversee and co-ordinate the active management of the LNR
- To secure funding for the future management of the LNR
- To foster a partnership approach to the management of the LNR
- To realise the education opportunities/potential of the woodland working with the key Education stakeholders

Membership and administration

The Committee will be chaired by an elected member from Argyll and Bute Council. Argyll and Bute Council shall provide secretariat support for the meetings of the Committee and some administrative support.

The core membership of the Committee shall be as follows:

- Argyll and Bute Council – 4 representatives consisting of elected member (Chair), Development & Infrastructure officer, Education officer and admin support provided by Area Governance Assistant
- Lower Clyde Greenspace – 1 representative
- Luss Estates – 1 representative
- Friends of Duchess Wood - 2 representatives (normally Chair and Secretary)
- Lomond School – 1 representative (representing neighbours of the Wood)
- Health – 1 representative
- Youth – 1 representative

With the agreement of the Committee, membership may be extended to representatives of voluntary and community organisations covering different sections of the community. It is expected that there will normally be no more than one representative on behalf of an organisation or group of organisations representing a particular interest.

Circulation List

To ensure wide engagement with the community, the following organisations shall receive copies of the Minutes of DWLNRC and shall be invited to attending meetings as dictated by the Agenda:

- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Helensburgh and District Access Trust
- Helensburgh Police Office
- Paths for All Partnership Organisation
- Forestry Commission

- Helensburgh Community Council
- Helensburgh Cricket and Rugby Club
- Relevant Council officers – Environment Warden, Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator
- Argyll Voluntary Action

Frequency and location of meetings

The LNR Committee shall meet 4 times per year with the dates for the meeting being set in advance on an annual basis.

The meetings shall take place in locations as decided by the Committee, or in the absence of directions from the Committee, by the Chair.

Committee Working arrangements

An invitation to suggest items for the agenda will be sent out 3-4 weeks ahead of each meeting, The agenda will then be circulated a week prior to the meeting, along with any reports for consideration.

Minutes of each meeting shall be prepared by the administrative support as defined under Membership and administration above and, following consultation with the Chair, shall be circulated timeously to the members of the Committee. The draft minutes shall also be circulated to those detailed on the circulation list and placed on the Argyll & Bute Council website.

The Minutes shall be considered and approved, with amendments where necessary, at the subsequent LNR Meeting. If there are any amendments to be made the approved minutes shall be circulated to those detailed on the circulation list and placed on the Argyll & Bute Council website.

Decisions shall be taken by consensus, indicted by a show of hands if necessary.

Communication with the media

If any member of the Committee is in contact with the media in relation to Duchess Wood LNR, a copy of any printed material or a brief summary of any verbal update given should be noted with the Area Governance Assistant. If high profile, or likely to result in other members of the Committee being contacted, the Area Governance Assistant will pass details onto all Committee members. Otherwise, a brief report on all media coverage of the Wood will be provided at each Committee meeting.

Actions

All activity undertaken in the Wood by any member organisation of the Committee should be with the prior agreement of the Committee as a whole.

The exception to this is work undertaken by the Council to ensure the Wood is safe.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually.