

**Report from the Friends of Duchess Wood
to the
Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee**
meeting on 13th May 2013

The Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) have continued to be active since the last meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC) held on 25.1.13. Some aspects are listed below.

1. Besides regular litter clearance, FODW has mounted its monthly work parties to carry out heavier work such as bracken, bramble and rhododendron control, and bit-by-bit sycamore sapling felling. FODW has continued to clear culverts, but is appreciative of work on culverts carried out by the Employability Team. FODW is pleased that the professional report on drainage and culverts which it commissioned in 2009 has been so useful and that most of its 37 recommendations have been carried out. However, storm damage at one point requires rectification.



2. FODW has continued to liaise with other organisations which assist with the Wood. The annual meeting with the local Police was held in April (see photo). Inspector Claire Miller and Constable Gus Daniel toured the Wood with FODW members. Problem areas were pointed out and issues such as under-age drinking and quad bikes were discussed. Occasional Police patrols in the summer were agreed. The FODW advisory note to members about action to take in the case of problems was approved by the Police and revised contact 'phone numbers were exchanged.

3. FODW keeps up its search for lesser external grants to supplement major funding which to date has been the task of A&BC or its agent, Lower Clyde Greenspace. FODW has contacted a local firm about possible funding for a 20 ft. storage facility and an information and map notice board for the Pony Feld. These would require planning permission and informal discussions have been held with A&BC. A revised quotation for upgrading the all-abilities path has been received and FODW is concerned to progress with that. Applications are being considered for grants from Action Earth and the A&BC Third Sector scheme.

4. FODW has co-operated with the Helensburgh Cricket and Rugby Club to complete an all-abilities route from the DW car park, around the lower part of DW and the Rugby pitches, and back to the DW car park.

5. Regarding dog fouling, our campaign of posters has improved matters and our latest action has been an experiment to highlight offending deposits by spray-painting them with pink, biodegradable paint. We will monitor effects.

6. We have welcomed Richard Horrell onto the FODW committee and Bill Hassall will take over as Treasurer in June 2013. This change does not affect FODW's supplementary grant-seeking activities which continue to be headed by David Lewin.

7. FODW provided a newsletter for its members in March and has carried out more general publicity through the local press.

8. FODW has worked with Councillor Aileen Morton and Lower Clyde Greenspace in the next steps for the Funding and Implementation Report.

9. We note that the number of local nature reserves set up by local authorities continues to increase. We have just received information that the Scottish total is now 66.

10. The Friends of Duchess Wood organised an Easter treasure hunt for children in the Wood. A series of written clues were hidden all the way round the Wood, each clue leading to the next and a bag of 'treasure'. At the end there was a chocolate prize for any child who completed the course and returned with evidence of finding all the treasure spots.



And the tree-climbing bunnies? These images of rabbits around the Wood had to be counted by each participant and reported at the end.

The event was organised by Rachel Bailey and other members of the Friends of Duchess Wood. Rachel said, 'This was a great success and the weather was fine. We had a steady stream of participants who thoroughly enjoyed the outing. It helps children to enjoy the woodland and to see it as a fun place to visit. Duchess Wood is one of the town's great assets.'



11. Actions planned for the summer include a guided flower walk, a rook count, a bat survey, consideration of the issue of bumble bees (which are thought to be in decline) and a repeat performance by the Walking Theatre.