

Report from the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW)
to the
Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC)
meeting on 8th November 1013

1. **Routine.** FODW have continued to carry out routine actions since the last meeting of the DWLNRC, such as **monthly work parties, cutting back growth near paths and invasive species, fencing repairs and litter control.**
2. **Garage storing facility.** FODW is pleased to report that it has now secured a garage (on hire) beside Strathclyde Court in which to store equipment and, we hope, logs for sale.
3. **Tri-Events Zombies** (19 October). FODW undertook to monitor the Tri-Events “Zombies” night run which passed through Duchess Wood. Our overall assessment was that it was well organised. Regarding Duchess Wood, we had two prior concerns. **(i) Strain on the “Thurgood Bridge”** at the north-east corner of the Wood. The event organisers took that seriously. They erected generator-fed electric lights along the railings, ensured that no spiked shoes were worn and had a marshall on duty at each side of the bridge to slow runners and to warn them of steep steps. We were content with those arrangements. **(ii) After-event clear up.** This was done well. Much was carried out that night, but FODW had to remove two sign boards and some plastic tape the next morning.
4. **Walking Theatre** (20 October). This was a great success. The performance was an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Treasure Island”, created especially for children and funded by the NHS as part of Mental Health Week. More than 100 people participated and refreshments were provided by FODW in the Rugby Club at the end.
5. **Grant applications.** A grant of £320 was obtained from the Argyll & Bute Third Sector scheme, matched by £320 of FODW money. This is being spent on materials and attendance at a course. An approach to Babcock regarding support for an information board has been made but, despite follow-up, no feedback has yet been received. SNH grants are being investigated.
6. **Publicity.** Various with local press. The FODW newsletter to members was circulated in September. Alastair Macbeth (Secretary) gave a talk about Duchess Wood at a one-day conference concerning community involvement in woodlands, organised by the Forestry Commission and the Community Woodlands Association.
7. **The FODW Annual General Meeting** was held on 21st October in the Lomond School sports hall. There was a very good turn-out of members and others and the current committee members and office bearers were re-elected. The annual report and accounts were approved. The guest speaker was Fiona Baker who provided a fascinating illustrated talk on “The woods of Ardencaple Castle”, covering both history and archaeology. We were appreciative that Councillor Aileen Morton both attended and spoke.

