

**ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL**

**Helensburgh and Lomond Community  
Planning Group  
March 2014**

**CUSTOMER SERVICES**

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**Duchess Woods Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC)  
highlight/exception report to Community Planning Group**

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## **1. SUMMARY**

1.1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to update the Helensburgh and Lomond Community Planning Group regarding activity undertaken by the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC).

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the CPG :

- 2.1 Note that the DWLNRC is a contributing Partner of the CPG and that the Friends of Duchess Wood voluntary group undertakes a substantial amount of the actual day to day work in the wood.
- 2.2 Note the report provided below (If further detail is desired the full minutes of DWLNRC are published on the Council website).
- 2.3 Consider whether there are any specific tasks or issues which it wishes the Committee to undertake or review.

## **3. DETAIL**

3.1 The Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve (DWLNR) was created as under the original 15-year Management plan drawn up by Luss Estates, the landowners, and Dumbarton District Council, of which A&BC is the successor authority. A&BC discharge this responsibility through the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC). The Committee is working to a management plan covering the period between 2012 and 2016 which incorporates both maintenance and development of the Woodland, and is seeking to further strengthen the current partnership arrangements regarding the responsible usage of the Duchess Woods.

3.2 One strand of strengthening the partnership arrangements is the reporting now being undertaken to the CPG.

#### **4. IMPLICATIONS**

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| 4.1 | <b>Policy</b>                       | Reporting by the DWLNRC to the Community Planning Group assists in delivery, reporting and monitoring of aspects of the SOA and the Community Plan |
| 4.2 | <b>Financial</b>                    | None.  |
| 4.3 | <b>Personnel</b>                    | None.  |
| 4.4 | <b>Equalities Impact Assessment</b> | None.  |
| 4.5 | <b>Legal</b>                        | None.  |

For further information, please contact Stephen Doogan, Area Governance Officer  
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Theme	Issue and Actions	Comment
Education, skills and training	<p>The Committee had previously agreed that they would like to explore the idea of a pre-5 Outdoor Nursery being provided within Duchess Wood and hoped that Stramash would work in partnership with them to take this forward.</p> <p>In addition to work undertaken by Amenity Services, the Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) provide significant support in terms of ongoing maintenance and development of the Wood. The Friends make every effort to involve the community in this, and also seek to develop their skills through training.</p> <p>The events being run as part of the John Muir Events will include a Bug Life event suitable for children.</p>	<p>Unfortunately the Stramash Board have decided that it will not be feasible to open a nursery in Duchess Wood for August 2014. However, they still have a strong wish to expand into the Helensburgh area and will continue to explore possibilities for 2015.</p> <p>The group are in Discussion with the Employability team as to work which may be undertaken. There will be a menu of options which can be presented and these are currently being defined.</p> <p>FODW also run regular weekend work parties, these are advertised locally.</p> <p>All local primary schools will be contacted to ask if they would be interested in sending a group of children along to this event.</p>
Events and awareness raising	<p>A number of events have taken place in the last few months. While these have increased the use of the Wood, appropriate controls have needed to be in place.</p> <p>Gary Collins from the Tri- events group reported that the Zombie theme night, held in October was a real success despite inclement weather. Tri-events hope to run the event again this year.</p> <p>Following on from the decision of the DWLNRC to take part in the launch of the John Muir Way in Spring 2014. The Committee confirmed they would run events to tie in with the Events programme planned.</p> <p>There have been two green Gym Days held so far, which participants enjoyed</p>	<p>Over 80% of participants in this event came from outside the immediate area from the surrounding towns and settlements. The event organisers were praised for appropriate clean up and protection of the Thurgood bridge. The Tri-events group have made a donation to the Friends of Duchess Wood.</p> <p>The Friends of Duchess Wood are co-ordinating a number of events including the launch of a Flower Walk, with a John Muir-themed Walking Theatre Company play and a Bug life event.</p> <p>Unfortunately these have been poorly attended so far and there is a need to look at attendance if the green gym is to be extended this year. Further discussion will be had with healthcare providers to raise awareness.</p>
Maintenance and infrastructure	<p>The planting of Scots Pine trees has been raised as being a development opportunity.</p>	<p>Funding is available, but planting would need to take place within a month to ensure the optimum time for planting these trees.</p>

	Japanese Knotweed	Luss Estates were praised by a committee member for how they dealt with this issue elsewhere e.g. their use of signage, Images of this are being forwarded to council officers to consider how best to take this forward.
Other Issues	Events Policy  New noticeboards and way markers are being planned.	The policy has had some revisions made which will hopefully balance the need to protect the wood with the desire to use it as much as possible.  Babcocks are working with the Friends of Duchess Wood in the creation of the boards.