

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held in
the BRAEHOLM, 31E MONTROSE STREET, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 19 AUGUST 2014**

Present: Councillor Aileen Morton (Chair)

Stewart Campbell, Chairman of Friends of Duchess Woods
Alistair Macbeth, Secretary of Friends of Duchess Woods
Charlie Cairns, Lower Clyde Green Space
Stuart McCracken, Argyll and Bute Council
Eileen Kay, Argyll and Bute Council
Morevain Martin, AVA
Gemma Peace, Lomond School

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Gemma Peace from Lomond School. The Committee confirmed that they were happy for Mrs Peace to remain for the duration of the meeting.

Mr Campbell advised that Mr Macbeth would be a little late due to another commitment.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:-

Audrey Martin

**2. MINUTE OF DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE -
20/05/2014**

The Minute of the previous meeting which was held on 20 May 2014, was approved as a true record.

3. EVENTS

(a) EVENTS PROCEDURES

In the absence of a report, discussion surrounding a single point of contact was had, with the possibility of a central email address being set-up, rather than identifying a particular person. Stuart McCracken agreed to explore this possibility, with confirmation to be provided to the group by the Area Governance Assistant.

Charlie Cairns advised of the timescales currently operated in terms of submitting packs. He identified that flexibility is required as the requests are not currently meeting policies. The Chair advised that the expectation was the Committee would review the policy and procedures after one year, which would be May 2015, with amendments made at this time.

The Committee agreed that the point was to encourage the use of the woods by everyone.

Alistair Macbeth joined the meeting at 10.15am.

(b) THEMED TRAIL RUNNING EVENT - SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2014

The Chair spoke of the request from Tri-Events to host a run through the wood on 25th October. She advised that this would adopt the same style as last year, which had proven to be a success. Mr McCracken confirmed that a pack had been sent to the organiser but had not yet been returned.

The Committee agreed that the stewarding arrangements at the previous event had worked well and the “clear up” after the event was also good.

Mr Macbeth enquired whether it would be possible to charge a fee for the event or whether it would be a donation as per the previous event. The Chair advised that the difficulty in charging a fee was that the Council’s fee structures and related policies would need to be applied.

It was agreed that Lynsey Innis would email the organiser advising that permission had been granted by the Committee to host the event and that the pack should be returned as soon as possible. It was further agreed that the email should suggest that, following the run, the organiser should contact the Friends of Duchess Wood regarding the arrangements for any donations towards the upkeep of the woods.

(c) HELENSBURGH AMATEUR ATHLETIC CLUB

The Chair advised that she had recently received notification from the Helensburgh Amateur Athletic Club (HAAC) indicating that they would like to use the wood to host the RAAA Cross Country Relays on the afternoon of Saturday 18th October 2014. HAAC indicated that they expected no more than 100 runners.

Mr Macbeth advised that the group are extremely well organised and that at the events in 2010 and 2011 they ensured that there were marshals at different points and had put up tape to direct the runners. He also advised that the clear up process was well managed.

Mr McCracken advised that he had recently issued an events pack and was awaiting its return. He advised that the pack would provide further details in terms of the routes to be taken within the wood.

Ms Martin advised that she believed there to be an entry fee for the race. She suggested that Lynsey Innis issue a similar email as (outlined above to Tri-events) to the organisers, however she suggested that we may want to ask for clarity regarding any entry fee.

Having noted all of the above, the Committee agreed on the course of action outlined. The Chair requested that an update be provided to the next meeting of the group.

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY

The Chair welcomed Eileen Kay, Community Learning and Development Worker. Ms Kay updated the group in terms of the ideas she had to encourage use of the wood and in particular family learning. Mr Macbeth stressed that the Friends of Duchess Wood would like to work in partnership. Both Mr Macbeth and Ms Kay agreed that partnership working around the 4 capacities for Curriculum for Excellence was the way forward.

Further discussion was had in relation to updating the education pack with clearer co-ordination arrangements to be put in place. Mr Cairns suggested that the pack could be created in such a way that outlying schools with transport issues could use the updated pack from their own location.

Ms Kay advised that she was happy to become the initial contact for schools as she was conscious of the need for a mutual respect for education and the needs of the wood.

The Chair suggested that Ms Kay could take ahead small scale projects and provide regular updates to Lynsey Innis, who in turn can issue these to the Committee.

It was agreed that a sub-group would be set up to predominantly deal with the updating of the education pack. Eileen Kay, Charlie Cairns and Gemma Peace agreed to sit on the sub-group with members of the Friends of Duchess Wood.

Lynsey Innis agreed to arrange a diary request for the meeting of the sub-group within the next 6 or 7 weeks.

It was also agreed that an exploratory meeting between Ms Kay and the Friends of Duchess Wood would take place within the next month.

5. FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD REPORT

The Committee considered a report which outlined the work undertaken by Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW), such as monthly work parties, repairs and litter control. Members were advised of the recent (annual) meetings between FODW and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service which went well.

Mr Campbell updated the Committee with regard to the planning issue and advised that the Council have now confirmed that planning permission is required. He further advised that he planned to lodge a formal application within the next month.

Mr Campbell spoke of works which are required to the road slightly north of the car park and also of the pot holes in the car park. Mr McCracken advised that he would assess the culvert area and provide feedback. Mr McCracken further advised that he would seek to obtain road plainings in order to fix the pot holes in the car park.

The Committee noted the report.

6. DUCHESS WOOD GREEN GYM

Mr Cairns advised the Committee of email correspondence he had with the Forestry Commission and the Conservation Trust. He advised that he had been encouraged to make a new bid for the green gym. He outlined the programme in terms of applying to the Seedcorn Fund and timescales involved with a proposed start date in October 2014.

Discussion in terms of advertising, with referrals being identified as the most likely route to securing numbers was had.

Ms Martin suggested that once funding and start dates had been established, she could place an advert in the jobs section of the Helensburgh Advertiser outlining a volunteer opportunity. She advised that this would be free and would be a good way of advertising.

The Committee noted the update; and agreed to the Green Gym being taken forward and noted that an early review of the programme may take place at the end of November.

Eileen Kay left the meeting at 11.20am.

7. LIAISON WITH EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

Mr Cairns provided the Committee with a verbal update in regard to the liaison with the Employability Team. He advised that both he and Mr Campbell were meeting with Danny Harking on Thursday 21st August 2014. Possible works were identified as:-

replacement of the rickety bridge at the culvert; repairs to the picnic benches and ditches.

Mr Cairns advised that this is a diminishing resource, as the team have started doing a lot of work with local housing associations and spoke of the funding issue.

The Chair suggested that it may be appropriate for Mr McCracken to attend the meeting to establish both what works can be done and the funding issues.

The Committee noted the update.

8. ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

The Committee considered a report by the Councils Service Development Officer providing an up-to-date position in regard to the routine maintenance of Duchess Woods. Mr McCracken advised of his intention

to discuss with FODW the felling of old trees which he hoped to replace with Scots Pines – a survey of the eastern boundary should take place late September. An update was given in terms of the Japanese Knotweed with it being identified that further work requires to be undertaken in particular areas such as Duchess Drive. Mr McCracken advised that these works would commence in the coming weeks, weather dependent.

The Committee noted the update.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- Gemma Peace of Lomond School provided an update in regard to the forthcoming training for Forest Schools. She outlined the next steps and also spoke of the areas which could be utilised within the wood for this purpose.

The Committee advised that they were generally happy with discussions thus far and agreed that a formal written proposal should be submitted to the next meeting of the group.

The Chair advised that she would contact both Luss Estates and the Council's Legal Services Department to advise the matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

- Mr Campbell advised that the FODW were hosting a visit by Merkinch Nature Reserve today, Tuesday 19th August 2014.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve will be held on Tuesday 18th November 2014 at 10.00am within Braeholm, 31E Montrose Street, Helensburgh.

