

Customer Services
Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT
Tel: 01546 602127 Fax: 01546 604435
DX 599700 LOCHGILPHEAD
12 November 2019

A meeting of the _____ will be held in the _____
_____ on _____ at _____, which
you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services

- (a) Minute of the Previous Meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee Held on Tuesday, 20 August 2019 (Pages 3 - 6)
- (a) Duchess Woods Report - Response from Partners (Pages 7 - 12)

Update by Tom Murphy, Amenity Services

at LOCAL

Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)

Contact: Iona Campbell, Senior Committee Assistant; 01436 658801

The Committee heard from Ailsa Cunningham who advised that the Council is in

In regard to the Terms of Reference it was noted that the Council can act without decision from the Committee if the matter relates to safety.

The Committee noted that the priority should be to get access made available for the School. All were in agreement that the way forward is to ensure that the Committee is kept up to date with all information.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. That a request would be made on behalf of the Committee to the Council for a

this could entail and advised the Friends of Duchess Woods to make contact with them to discuss.

Decision

The Committee agreed to endorse the contents of the submitted report.

(Ref: Report by Friends of Duchess Woods Secretary, Martin Grafton)

6. UPDATE ON WIAT FUNDING

Mhairi Gardiner, Development Officer gave a brief verbal update on the position with the current applications. As noted previously an application has been submitted to assist with the costs of the remedial works required in the Wood. Mhairi advised that the Council has also submitted an application for Sustainable Management of Forest Funding and that this was an annual payment of £1119.90 covering the period from 2010 to 2024. It was noted that funding awards were retrospective.

Decision

The Committee noted the update and that updates would be provided to future meetings.

(Ref: Verbal Update from Economic Development Officer)

7. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Stewart Campbell advised of a request from Network Rail to put some of the tree cuttings from work around the West Highland Line across in the Duchess Wood. It was noted that the Council was happy with the proposed action.

Simon Stuart provide the Committee with a brief overview of the work carried out by the Royal Scottish Forestry Society. He advised of an ongoing project whereby they hoped to have a network of around 150 areas of wood across different areas to enable good practice to be shared around different types of woodland models. He noted that there were many different types of models with woodlands across the country. The Society would come to visit woods and have a discussion around the management arrangements and the type of woodland. It would be the intention to then revisit the woods after a period of 5 or 10 years to see how the management plans are working. The aim is to spread knowledge across Scotland.

It was agreed to invite Simon to a future meeting once the Wood has been reopened.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the DWLNRC would take place on 19th November 2019 at 10.30am within either the Lomond School or Helensburgh & Lomond Civic Centre.

Dear Pippa

It was agreed at the last Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Joint Committee in August that a sub group consisting of representatives of Luss Estates, Friends of Duchess Wood, Lomond School and myself, would meet to discuss the report by TD Trees as well as matters around the ongoing closure of the wood and the impact this is having with partners and the wider community.

The meeting took place at 10.30am on 25th September at the Lomond Arms Hotel. In attendance, apart from myself was, Stewart Campbell, Martin Grafton and David Lewin from FoDW, Keith Robertson – Estate Manager of Lomond School and Patrick Colquhoun – director of Luss Estates and Sean McCay Land Agent for Luss Estates.

Below are the main issues raised by Luss Estates and the FoDW. Lomond School have been unable to access the grounds for maintenance work all summer and are now unable to carry out full outdoor curricular activities (Luss Estates - points 7-8 below). Discussion around the possible opening of the woods in relation to the points recapped by Luss Estates (points 2-3) and FoDW (points 3-6) were discussed at length. Discussion focused around the fact that people in the community are still using the wood and that there is no signage indicating closure or risk/hazard.

There was also a lot of positive discussion in the report regarding the overall information we now have on the wood that will be valuable for future maintenance and management.

As Chair of the committee I ask that the severity of the risk/hazard be revisited in light of the points below so that the wood can be opened, and certain areas accessed asap.

Yours Sincerely



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Lorna Douglas

Chair of the DWCT

Luss Estates - point of view regarding closure of Duchess Wood

not a definitive statement of what is reasonably practicable in law ... the law requires that where reasonably practicable measures are available, in individual cases, they should be taken." The extensive NTSG guidance emphasises that *"the evaluation of what is reasonable should be based upon a balance between benefit and risk. This evaluation can be undertaken only in a local context, since trees provide many different types of benefit in a range of different circumstances"*. It continues *"Safety is but one of the many goals to which we aspire; the mistake that is often made is to focus on safety as if it is the only goal"*. It is striking that given the importance of the local context that neither the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee nor FODW were consulted during the preparation of the survey nor in the drafting of its conclusions, which ignores community knowledge and undermines the report's understanding of community concerns. As far as we can tell the Council's own occupational health and safety advisers were not consulted during the preparation or consideration of this report, and it would also be helpful to take their views into account.

4. The TD Trees report and therefore the recommendations are narrowly focused on hazard and appear to regard the wood as a "park". It is not a park, it is a natural woodland. The report recommends the removal of dead trees and deadwood, when it is well understood that the health of a woodland relies upon both standing and lying deadwood. Indeed one of the information boards in the wood produced as a result of the previous Forestry Commission grant over ten years ago emphasises the importance of deadwood in a living woodland. FODW is concerned that the recommendations in relation to some of the oldest trees in the wood will remove old and interesting trees from the wood when we should be ~~laying~~ ^{maintaining}

essential that the earlier WIAT application is revised and resubmitted so that the more extensive work foreseen in the DW Management Plan can be planned. When tree work is done it is essential that the contract is managed by someone with experience in this kind of work, that it takes into account the need to offset costs by managing felled timber for sale, and that arrangements are made to deal with the brash produced by tree management operations. We regard it as important that FODW are explicitly involved in the planning of any woodland management work.

9. In summary we believe that a more pragmatic approach should be taken to management of risk, taking in to account guidance provided by HSE and NTSG, and that a phased approach should be taken with those trees contributing the highest risk dealt with first so that access to the wood may be restored quickly.

10. In para 7 above we refer to a small number of trees and branches which needed to be dealt with before the wood is re-opened, and this is our suggested list, based on FODW experience. Most of these are in the TD Trees report, and most are trees which FODW has already raised concerns about, that is, from the common sense point of view of an informed visitor.

T4 – large beech with extensive damage, and crack in trunk – do not fell completely but manage to conserve as much as possible of the tree.

T5 – large beech - remove hanging failed branch and manage other deadwood, but do not fell completely.

T14 – dead sycamore, but do not fell completely – reduce to approx. 3m in height and remove lower branches.

T32, T33, T36 – goat willows – all need multi stemmed felling.

T55 another willow – fell, and close to it is another substantial dead tree close to path which could be trimmed of branches and reduced in height at the same time.

Unmarked rowan near bench at corner of ravine – fell.

T44 – can't see marker but presume this is the birch which has fallen over to about 30' (with another part tree lying beside).

T59 – goat willow needs felled.

T69, T73 – goat willows adjacent to garden of 22 Duchess Park – a variety of trees and branches have fallen into this garden in the last ten years, so a thorough tidy up of the boundaries would be helpful.

T84, T88 – and other smaller trees overhanging garages – council committed to this work some time ago but only a few were dealt with. FODW paid to have one dealt with.

T81 – dead sycamore in car park – fell

T96 – dead pine, on own – fell. Another dead pine at T95 is held up at present by another tree – could wait or could be done at same time. (couldn't identify a number of marked trees in this area).

Trees T5, T32, T44, T59, T81, T95 and T96 are graded 1 in the TD Trees report. The others are graded 2, or not identified.

Kind Regards

Lorna Douglas
Councillor Helensburgh Central
Tel: 07824607318

Hi Lorna

Thank you for your email.

I've spoken to

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

**Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve
Committee**

**DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH**

19th November 2019

Duchess Wood WIAT Application Update

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on the status of two funding applications made to Scottish Forestry: the Woodlands In and Around Town – Woodland Improvement Grant and Woodlands In and Around Town – Sustainable Management of Forests

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that members:
- a) agree to the withdrawal of the Woodlands In and Around¹d

3.4

A further application under the Woodlands In and Around Town – Sustainable Management of Forests funding stream was submitted in May 2019. This application is for annua

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For further information contact:

Lorna Pearce, Senior Development Officer
Transformation Projects & Regeneration Team
Tel: 01700 Tel:

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