

**MINUTES of MEETING of DUCHESS WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE COMMITTEE held
in the LOMOND SCHOOL, HELENSBURGH
on TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2020**

Present: Councillor Lorna Douglas (Chair)

Attending: Keith Robertson, Facilities and Estates Manager, Lomond School
Martin Grafton, Secretary, Friends of Duchess Wood
Matt Offord, Chair, Friends of Duchess Wood
Shona Barton, Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Steven Brookfield, Assistant Team Leader, Argyll and Bute Council
Larry Malone, Amenity Supervisor, Argyll and Bute Council
Sean McCay, Land Agent, Luss Estates
Andy Galloway, Helensburgh Advertiser

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

Apologies for absence were intimated from:

Lorna Pearce, Senior Development Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Eileen Kay, Child Youth Worker, Argyll and Bute Council
Elizabeth Pryor, Scottish Natural Heritage
Johanna Urquhart, Principal, Lomond School

2. MINUTES

(a) **Minute of the Previous Meeting of the Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee Held on Tuesday, 19 November 2019**

The Minute of the previous meeting of Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee held on Tuesday, 19 November 2019 was approved as a correct record subject to the correction of a typographical error at item 8 of the minutes to reflect that the dates agreed for future meetings would be 25th February 2020 and 9th June 2020.

3. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Larry Malone confirmed that works agreed at the last meeting of the Committee had now been completed, including the addition of non-slip material to one of the larger bridges. Mr Malone noted that he had received positive feedback on the work which had been carried out and apologised that he had not come back to the Committee with a timescale for works being completed as the work had been undertaken when time and employees were available.

Councillor Douglas thanked Mr Malone for the work which had been carried out by the team and advised that the area now looked much better than it had previously. Mr Malone confirmed that work had been carried out around the fences in the area as many had been missing. Bridges within the Woods had also been fixed where required, steps had been replaced and a number of trees had been removed.

Mr Malone confirmed that 97 trees had been identified in the original survey as hazardous and those trees identified around pathways and areas where people would be walking have now been removed.

Mr Grafton advised that work parties would commence at the end of March and there would be a Committee meeting at the end of March to decide what the work parties will be doing. Mr Grafton noted that Friends of Duchess Wood were engaging with Chivas who do work in the community once a year and it was hoped that 10-20 employees may spend a day doing work in the Woods.

Mr Grafton confirmed that Stewart Campbell had been liaising with Scottish Natural Heritage regarding the Local Nature Reserve Status and this would be explored further. It was agreed that Mr Grafton would forward this information to Sean McCay and would discuss this and future arrangements with him following the meeting.

Mr Grafton advised that Friends of Duchess Wood may contact Persimmon Homes to ask if they would be willing to assist with funding as a goodwill gesture. Councillor Douglas noted that the path which Persimmon Homes have put in place appears not to be fit for purpose and stops quite abruptly in the Woods without connecting to a main path which could be used by wheelchair users or prams. Mr Offord confirmed that Persimmon appear to have made an effort to blend in the development to the area in comparison to their developments in other areas. It was agreed that Councillor Douglas, Mr Grafton and Mr Offord would draft a letter to Persimmon regarding the path and that Councillor Douglas would check with the appropriate officers within Argyll and Bute Council regarding what had been agreed for the path with the planning department.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the content of the update; and
2. that Councillor Douglas would research the planning specifications of a path connecting the Persimmon Homes development to Duchess Wood and subsequently draft a letter with Mr Grafton and Mr Offord to Persimmon Homes regarding this.

5. LOMOND SCHOOL ACTIVITY UPDATE

Councillor Douglas advised that Stewart Campbell had been liaising with Scottish Natural Heritage regarding Duchess Woods Local Nature Reserve Status while Councillor Douglas and Shona Barton had been looking into the Local Nature Reserve Status in relation to Argyll and Bute Council. Councillor Douglas noted that the situation was complex as Argyll and Bute Council had inherited Duchess Woods Local Nature Reserve Status from Dumbarton District Council and therefore had not been the Authority in