

# The Friends of Duchess Wood Autumn Newsletter 2017

## AGM of the FODW: Please note the date.

**Wednesday 17th January 2018 at 7.30 p.m.**

The FODW Annual General Meeting will be held at **7.30 pm on Wednesday 17th January** in the new Church Parish Halls, Colquhoun Square. Papers for the session will be sent to members in advance.

The formal session will be followed by a talk "A forester's view of Duchess Wood" by retired forester David Robertson who has a wide knowledge of this area. He has also served on the committees of several local groups

**Refreshments. Everyone welcome. Please bring friends and family.**

**Reminder:** Any motions from paid-up members for the AGM should be sent to the Secretary, FODW, 17, Queens Point, Shandon, G84 8QZ proposed and seconded by registered members, by 20th December 2017 (or by e-mail to [martin.grafton@outlook.com](mailto:martin.grafton@outlook.com))

## TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF FODW



Supported by the Provost of Argyll and Bute Council, the tenth anniversary of the Friends of Duchess Wood was marked by a reception in the Council's Civic Centre. Speeches by Councillor Ellen Morton (sitting second left), Sandy Kerr (first chairman of FODW, standing front right) and our current chairman Stewart Campbell emphasized partnership as the essence of success – partnership between the Council's Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee (DWLNRC, which is responsible for managing the Wood), Luss Estates (which owns it) and FODW, but also with a range of other local organisations which were represented at the occasion. Readers will recognise other faces including Jackie Baillie MSP and Councillor Lorna Douglas (Convener DWLNRC, front left).

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### New FODW Secretary

We welcome Martin Grafton who takes over as FODW Secretary from Alastair Macbeth.

#### Major grant bid

Together with A&B Council, FODW is preparing a bid for a major "Woodlands in and around Towns" grant. At the time of writing the application is with the Council and Forestry Commission legal teams.

**Further details of both will be given at the AGM.**

#### Car Park Bridge

You will notice that a new fence has been erected, protecting the part of the bridge that has subsided. The DWLNRC have been chasing this up with the council and Lomond School.

#### Pony Field East Bridge

Thanks to Sandy Abel for the major repairs he has conducted on the railings and deck of the bridge to the east of the Pony Field. This has shown there will be a need for some more major work in the near future.

#### Plantings

You may have noticed that the willow plantings around the lower pond have largely disappeared. We will have to look at what we do here and may invest in, say, some mature willow saplings. Additionally some of the new Scots Pines in the lower wood appear to have settled in well, whereas others appear withered. We will look at what to do here as well.

#### Posts

A new finger post, provided and erected by FODW, has been installed at the Rhu Road Higher entrance. Also some of the waymarker posts have been fixed more securely into the ground.

**Persimmon Homes planning application.** FODW has argued that this proposed housing estate, contiguous with Duchess Wood, should have a deeper wildlife corridor to the north of it and an improved footpath. The Council has decided to hold a public hearing. FODW will join the Green Belt Group in making a presentation about countryside issues at that hearing.

## NEW CULVERT

The wooden bridge to the west of the Pony Field has been showing its age for some time and a number of “temporary” repairs have been carried out by FODW working parties. During the summer vandals kicked out the railings and this prompted us to consider its



BEFORE ...



... AFTER

urgent replacement. Thanks to a grant from The Round Table, and some sterling work by Robert McKendry with his trusty excavator, the bridge was replaced by a culvert set in a stone supporting wall – similar to the one FODW organized at the north-west corner of the wood. This is wide enough to take small servicing vehicles when needed for maintenance work. There have been many favourable comments about the new crossing. Vandalism of this nature has been limited over the years although there have been instances of graffiti, marker posts knocked over, mud on signposts, carving on tables and, of course, litter. None of this is excusable, but identifying culprits is difficult. The FODW policy is to rapidly rectify vandalism so that deterioration does not build up.

## Alastair Macbeth reflects

I've been asked to reminisce as I hand over the FODW secretaryship to Martin Grafton after ten years. But I'll go back to the day in 1998 when Magnus Magnusson, of TV fame, formally opened Duchess Wood as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Then there were only 25 LNRs in Scotland – now there are 74. The old photo below shows Magnus with myself and Alan Day. Alan and I were both from the Helensburgh Green Belt Group which did work in Duchess Wood at that time and Alan was the initiator of the footpaths network around Helensburgh.

Scottish Natural Heritage, which links LNRs throughout Scotland, advised that the Duchess Wood LNR should have its own management committee. Sandy Kerr and I set one up, and when Argyll and Bute adopted it as a foral Council committee, Sandy and I created the Friends of Duchess Wood to serve and assist the Council's Duchess Wood LNR Committee. A&B Council has a legal agreement to manage the Wood with the landowners, Luss Estates. By our assessment, it is the second most used recreational open space in Helensburgh, topped only by the waterfront.



The Wood is a fine public facility. Members of FODW have been delightful to work with, and the constructive partnerships with other organisations have been effective. Long may those continue.

## Winter in DW greetings cards for Christmas

(Autumn cards also available)

In our last newsletter we featured the Spring and Summer cards printed from Mary-Jane Selwood's lovely paintings, use of which she kindly donated to FODW. Here are Autumn and Winter in Duchess Wood. Cards can be purchased from The Scandanavian Shop on Sinclair Street or Ardardan Garden Centre. The winter cards are also available with “Seasons greetings” inscribed on the front, for use as Christmas cards. For multiple card purchase at reduced rate contact Morag Young at (moragyoung@ymail.com)



## YOUR VIEWS

The FODW email address is [fodwg84@gmail.com](mailto:fodwg84@gmail.com). The website shows the contact email as [enquiry@duchesswood.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@duchesswood.org.uk), and this forwards emails to the fodwg84 address.

Website: [www.duchesswood.org.uk](http://www.duchesswood.org.uk)  
Facebook: [@FODW1](https://www.facebook.com/FODW1)

FODW is a voluntary, non-political local community group and a registered charity. It works co-operatively with other groups such as Community Payback, the Access Trust, the Green Belt Group, and a range of other bodies especially, of course, the Council's Duchess Wood Local Nature Reserve Committee which is responsible for the Wood. We are grateful to them for the contributions they have made to make the Wood so special.

Current FODW Trustees are Stewart Campbell (Chairman), Martin Grafton (Secretary), Bill Hassall (Treasurer), Morag Young, Rachel Bailey, David Lewin, Richard Horrell, Paul Blackburn and Pete Minting.