



## Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) – Activity Plan 2022-2024

This document sets out list of tasks which FODW proposes to carry out over the next 2 to 3 years with the agreement of Luss Estates Company (LEC). Some of these tasks are already take place while others are new.

Some of the proposed work will require external funding. This will come from grant application, FODW funds and, where possible, a contribution in the form of professional expertise, labour or materials. Some activities will require specialist advice. We would propose to consult LEC and seek additional advice where required from other sources. For completeness a number of tasks currently being progressed by LEC such as the tree, and burn crossing, safety surveys are included in the list.

The planned actions are grouped under a series of headings:

- Woodland Management
- Public Access
- Maintenance& Amenity
- Education and Citizen Science
- Recreation and Events.

The proposed actions and timelines are set out in the table below. At this stage no financial cost has been allocated to the activities proposed. This will be done on an activity-by-activity basis.

Area of activity	Task	Comments
<b>Woodland management.</b>		
Planting	Progressively transplant oak, maple, birch and hawthorn saplings as they mature in the tree nursery to areas where tree cover is spare and conditions suitable.	Suitable areas of ground will need to be cleared and prepared before planting can take place and saplings suitably protected until established. We propose starting with birch saplings in Q1 planting in the area below the lower pond.
	Restock the nursery to provide a succession of saplings for planting out in the Wood.	
Invasive species	Cut back and keep under control outcrops of species such as rhododendron ponticum, laurel, and Japanese Knotweed. Eradicate where possible.	Japanese knotweed is treated by LEC.
Sapling regeneration	Where clusters of saplings regenerate naturally, thin to	

	remove the weaker plants and select and protect stronger plants.	
Sycamore	Cut back sycamore regeneration on old stumps and cut down smaller sycamore particularly in compartments 2 and 3 and where sycamore is the dominant species	Compartment map attached
Juvenile tree plantations	Manage the 100 oak plantation (compartment 3) to select a few trees for development to maturity. Manage the small plantation of maple and cherry (compartment 4) to select one max two trees for development to maturity	Specialist advice needed.
Felled and fallen trees	Where manageable, collect timber with a view to offering for supply for donations.	Support from tree surgeons needed to manage collection of timber from large trees.
Tree safety survey	LEC to follow up on the recent tree safety survey.	FODW to provide assistance where practical and safe for volunteers.
<b>Visitor Access Amenity</b>		
All-Abilities Paths	Extend the All-Abilities path network to cross the Pony Field to join up with the new path to Duchess Gait and from the car park to the lower wildlife pond.	Funding required (Note: The link path behind Duchess Gait is fast becoming non-all-abilities)
Signage	Review and update the welcome boards at the main entrances to the Wood. Install additional fingerpost direction signage as appropriate including application to A&BC for a brown tourism sign off Rhu Road Higher to the car park. Maintain colour coded way markers to indicate routes around the Wood.	Discuss map board and welcome boards with LEC.
Information Boards and information leaflets	Update and replace visitor information boards and include QR codes to direct visitors to additional	Funding required. Review leaflets periodically and update if necessary

	information on the web site. Maintain leaflet holders and keep supplied (membership, spring flower walk and top 10 things to see and do leaflets).	
Map Boards	Update to include new path to Duchess Gait, wildlife ponds and remove reference to A&BC.	Funding possibly required. Include LEC in discussions.
Social Media	Make use of social media (Facebook and Website) to encourage membership and raise awareness of activities in the Wood.	
Outdoor Access Code	Provide information to visitors on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.	Include latest version on map board update and Information Boards
<b>Maintenance</b>		
Footpaths	Initiate repairs to paths and associated drainage, particularly the All-Abilities Path, as required.	Some funding may be necessary depending on the extent and cost of repairs
Bridges. Wooden Bridges (east of the Pony Field and mid-way along the top path)	Regularly check for wear and damage and initiate repairs as necessary.  Investigate options for replacing these wooden bridges with a more permanent structures (culverts or small span bridges)	Bridges may need to be temporarily closed to allow work to be done safely.  Significant funding required. May require SEPA approval.
Thurgood Bridge	Regularly check steps for wear and replace risers and repack with type 1 as necessary. Check rails and supports are secure and repair as necessary.	Some funding required for materials. Bridge has to be closed temporarily to allow this work to be done safely
Bridge survey	LEC to carry out a bridge and burn crossing safety survey.	Request LEC share this information with FODW
Seating	Check for condition and repair as necessary. Advise LEC of any new memorial benches installed.	
Grass strimming and brush cutting.	In season regularly strim the Pony Field grass, between the trees in the orchard, around the lower pond and east of the tree nursery including the banks of the raised rugby pitch.	Community Payback and if possible Lomond School.

	Brush cut brambles in the fruit tree orchard also to the east of the Pony Field and along the path to the upper pond.	Support from someone with access to a brush cutter would help control brambles in these areas.
Bracken bashing	Routinely in season on the Pony Field and south of the rugby pitch.	
<b>Education and Citizen Science</b>		
Schools and Nurseries	Build on established links and create new links with local schools and nurseries and encourage them to use the Wood for science and art etc.	
Scouts, Cubs and Beavers	Maintain contact with existing groups and see what other activities might be carried out.	
Citizen Science	Promote Citizen Science projects e.g. bat monitoring and species identification using the bat monitor and mammal identification using the wildlife camera. Also species counts (e.g. butterflies and moths in season) and pond life surveys	Projects suitable for adults as well as children.
<b>Recreation and events</b>		
	Adopt positive approach to any third party wishing to hold an event but ensure the organisers seek permission from LEC.	Ensure adequate advance notice is given to the public about any planned event. Liaise with event organizers as required. All event organisers to ensure the Wood is left in the same condition as before the event takes place.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
FODW Membership	Encourage and increase membership numbers and active support to Trustees.	
Maintain links with other local and national environmental groups.	Community Woodland Association, the Conservation Volunteers, the Woodland Trust, Bug Life, the Access Trust and the Castle Woods group.	