

We Need New Trustees!

Current membership stands at 173 households, an increase of 48 since March 2021. This reflects some hard work in promoting the FODW to households living adjacent to the Woods.

Following the recent resignation of two trustees we need new blood to restore the committee to its constitutional membership of ten Trustees. This is your chance to get involved in the running of the wood and in guiding its future. The commitment is not onerous and consists mainly of attending the four committee meetings per year (March, June, September and December). If you are interested in helping out please contact either the Chair (David Lewin), Secretary (Martin Grafton) or leave a message on the contact page of our web site – www.duchesswood.org.uk.

Recent Committee Meetings

Since the last newsletter two committee meetings have been held, one virtually. Topics of discussion included draft of a five-year activity plan (to update/replace the current Management Plan), update to maps and notice boards, Go cardless for fund collection (see below), liaison with Luss Estates and general maintenance activities. The bank account balance on 1 March was £5239.24.

CoCardless

We are working with GoCardless and hope shortly to introduce a new way of joining the FODW and making donations. Those who want to join will be able to fill in their details and set up a direct debit payment or make a donation via their mobile phone or tablet. However, the current membership leaflets will continue to be available until this new facility is proven and well established and we do not envisage changing standing order mandates to direct debits for current members in the foreseeable future.

Storm Damage

Winter storms Corrie, Dudley and Eunice in January and February resulted in a number of trees of varying sizes being blown down. All trees which came down over the main paths or were lodged in trees above it have been removed. Some very large trees off the main paths will either be left or removed in whole or part by Luss Estates Company. Windblown trees are a natural part of the evolution of a wood, don't necessarily have to be removed unless they are hazardous, and can provide alternative habitats for wildlife.

Vision for Helensburgh

The FODW were present at Vision for Helensburgh, organised by the Community Council and designed to inform the community about what is going to be happening in the town and what various organisations such as FODW are and will be doing. We received donations of £260 towards this year's footpath upgrade projects, a new bench donation and gained some new Members. We are extremely grateful to all donors, members and the public who visited our stand at this event.

Top Ten Walks in Scotland

In January the Glasgow Herald published a list of the top 10 walks linked with a cafe in Scotland. Duchess Wood was the first on the list paired with the Ginger Breadman Cafe. How many new visitors it brought to the town we don't know but it was an excellent piece of publicity for both organisations.

Annual General Meeting

The 2020/21 AGM was held on Tuesday 24th November 2021 at 7:30pm at the Helensburgh Community Hub. Seventeen members were present. At the meeting a new Trustee was elected (Eilean Yendell) who was also elected as Treasurer. The Chair thanked Stewart Campbell for his work as Acting Treasurer over the last six months. David Lewin and Martin Grafton were both re-elected as Chair and Secretary respectively.

New footpath

Last summer we raised sufficient funds to construct a new path from Duchess Gait into Duchess Wood and to resurface the low level path from the car park round to Rhu Road Higher bringing it back to an All Abilities standard.

Later this year we plan to extend the All Abilities paths network by upgrading the paths across the Pony Field. However to do this we need to raise funds and ask - can you help with this? A donation of £25 will pay for the materials the construct 2 meters of upgraded path. If we are able to do this people with limited mobility will be able to access more of the Wood and get the benefits to their mental and physical wellbeing this brings.



News in brief

Bridge repairs

The wooden bridge to the east of the Pony Field which was damaged at New Year 2021 is in need of some major repair work. This is a heavily used bridge, and we can't close it while work is in progress. Work will take place progressively over the next few months and we ask walkers to be patient with us while this work is carried out. Signs will be put in place requesting visitors avoid the bridge if possible on days when work is being carried out.

Information Boards

Over the last few months we have been updating the map and information boards and plan to reinstate them in the Wood over the next few months. We are grateful to Babcock for updating the "Routes" map for us which now includes the Duchess Gait development and the new link path and short path to the upper pond.

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, Branching Out and a range of other bodies especially Luss Estates Company which is responsible for the Wood. We are grateful to them for the contributions they make to the successful running of the Wood.

Membership of FODW costs £10 per household per year and requires no obligations although volunteers to help with simple maintenance tasks are always welcome.

Current FODW Trustees are:

David Lewin (Chairman) david.lewin26@gmail.com

Martin Grafton (Secretary) martin.grafton@outlook.com

Eilean Yendell (Treasurer) e.m.yendell@googlemail.com

Morag Young (Membership Secretary) moragyoung@ymail.com

Laura Baird, Paul Blackburn, Stewart Campbell, and Richard Horrell.

YOUR VIEWS

The FODW email address is admin@duchesswood.org.uk.

Website - www.duchesswood.org.uk

Facebook - www.facebook.com/FODW1/

Charity number SC039527



Friends of Duchess Wood



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