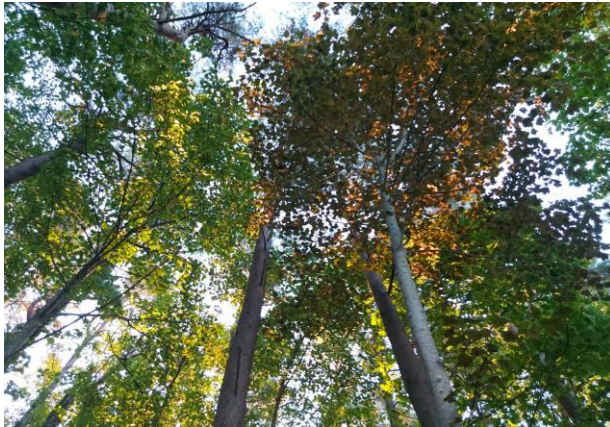




Friends of Duchess Wood

Autumn Newsletter 2022



We Need New Trustees!

Current membership stands at 182 households, an increase of 9 since March 2022.

However we are still struggling to recruit two new trustees to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee. 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. Topics of discussion included governance policies, update to maps and notice boards, GoCardless for fund collection (see below), and general maintenance activities. The bank account balance on 1 Sept was £3389.84.

CoCardless

We are glad to say that the GoCardless system for collecting funds and subscriptions is now up and running. Up until recently anyone wanting to join FODW has had to fill in the forms on the Membership Leaflet. However we wanted to make it easier for the mobile phone generation to join through their mobile. As a result we have partnered with GoCardless, a business payments system which also offers a service to charities to facilitate membership and subscription payments. You will see QR codes around the Wood and when you scan this with a mobile you are automatically taken to the membership page of the website where you can fill in the membership form and complete a direct debit mandate. We hope this quick and easy means of joining FODW will generate more members and cash for us to carry out the work we do.

Governance Documents

The Committee has recently generated statements related to Safeguarding, Data Protection and Health and Safety.

These statements will shortly be loaded on to our website and you are welcome to view them under the heading Governance on the home page.

Additionally the Constitution has been reviewed and some minor changes, the first since 2009, will be discussed at the forthcoming AGM.

Annual General Meeting

The 2021/22 AGM will be held on Wednesday 23rd November 2021 at 7:30pm at the Helensburgh Community Hub. After the normal agenda of the Executive Committee presenting the annual report and accounts minor changes to the Constitution will be discussed and then a local archaeologist, Fiona Baker, will lead a short discussion on the history of the wood.

New footpath

Following the completion of upgrades to the All-Abilities paths and the receipt of donations (grateful thanks to all those that contributed) we completed an extension to the path network by upgrading the path across the Pony Field. We are grateful to the excellent work by Robert McKendry who carried out these improvements on our behalf. Robert has since retired and his skills will be sorely missed by the Friends.



New Find!

During work carried out by senior Lomond School pupils to continue the FODW work of clearing laurel from around the burn in the southwest corner of the Wood, a mid-19th century sluice and weir were uncovered. The existence of this structure was known about, but it had recently become buried in laurel growth. This sluice and weir enabled the stream to be dammed, providing a steady flow of water to the water powered sawmill on the site previously occupied by Dobbies but now by the Duchess Gait development. The sawmill was part of the Ardencape Castle estate and is shown on the ordnance survey of 1860, but by 1898 it was no longer shown on these maps as the sawmill was no longer in use although there is reference to "the old weir". At the FODW AGM on Wed 23rd November, local professional Archaeologist Fiona Baker will talk more about this and other structures in the Wood.



News in brief

Work Parties

We are grateful for the support of members who join our monthly work parties (2pm last Sunday of each month meeting at the garages). We are also grateful for the support of Wearewithyou, Community Payback and Luss Estates who also have done some valuable work in maintaining structures in the Wood. In particular the work by the Wearewithyou group in carrying out repairs to the Thurgood Bridge are much appreciated.

Local Councillors

Following recent council elections, we are pleased that two new councillors, Fiona Howard and Math Campbell-Sturgess, have accepted our offer of a guided walk around the Wood where we can emphasise its value to the local community and the work carried out in maintaining it as a much treasured asset.

Educational Use of Wood

During the summer both Lomond School (45 S3 and S4 pupils) and Hermitage Primary (109 children from P5 and P6) have made good use of the Wood for their outdoor education work. Lomond School are hoping to support further work in support of Wood maintenance as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteering activities.

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

