



Friends of Duchess Wood

(Charity number SC039527)

ANNUAL REPORT and ACCOUNTS

for the period

1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022

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Section A: Details

1. Current Trustees

David Lewin (Chair)
Laura Baird
Paul Blackburn
Stewart Campbell
Martin Grafton (Secretary)
Richard Horrell
Pete Minting (resigned 29 Mar 22)
Miriam Walker (resigned)
Eilean Yendell (Acting Treasurer from 1 Jul 21, Treasurer from 24 Nov 21)
Morag Young

2. Trustee changes during the year

There were a two Trustee changes during the reporting period. The Treasurer position was filled on an acting basis by Eilean Yendell until the AGM (held 24 Nov 21) when her appointed was confirmed. Pete Minting resigned due to other commitments on 29 Mar 22. Miriam Walker left the area so we are left with two vacancies which, despite considerable efforts, we have, to date, been unable to fill.

3. Governing Document

The Friends of Duchess Wood is a charitable, unincorporated body. Its purposes and administration arrangements are set out in the Constitution. Trustees are appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

4. Charitable Purposes

The objectives of the Friends, as set out in the Constitution, are “to assist in the management of Duchess Wood and safeguard its benefits to the community in terms of biodiversity and quiet enjoyment by the public – including recreational and educational use”.

5. Financial Examiner

Terence Brownrigg

6. Bankers

Bank of Scotland, Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh

7. Contact Address

c/o The Secretary
17 Queens Point
Shandon
Helensburgh
G84 8QZ

Section B: Report on Activities

1. Objectives

The objectives of the charity are “to assist in the management of Duchess Wood and safeguard its benefits to the community in terms of biodiversity and quiet enjoyment by the public – including recreational and educational use”.

2. Review of progress

2.1 Administration

The Executive committee met on four occasions. The Annual General Meeting for 2020/21 was held in Helensburgh on 24 November 2021 where 17 members were present.

We remain an affiliate member of The Conservation Volunteers for Scotland (TCV) group and we have arranged insurance with Zurich through them to cover our membership. We are also members of the Community Woodlands Association (CWA).

2.2 Membership

Over the year membership numbers have increased from 146 to 180 households although 19 of these are being followed up as they haven't paid their membership fees for 2022. We also have two honorary members. There are, therefore, 163 confirmed members which is a significant increase on previous years, noting that the membership stood at 102 households in June 2020, and reflects the ongoing recruitment drive. We are still keen to get more involvement from members and, as highlighted above, are still looking for two new Trustees. Two newsletters were issued to members during the year.

2.3 Liaison

Contacts were maintained with the Nature Scot, Community Payback, The Conservation Volunteers in Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Community Woodlands Association (the Chair and Secretary attended the CWA Annual Conference and AGM in October 2021), Helensburgh and District Access Trust, Helensburgh Tree Conservation Trust, Helensburgh Community Woodlands Group, Helensburgh Cricket and Rugby Club, Helensburgh Community Council, Hermitage Primary School, Lomond School, Luss Estates Company, Rhu Primary School, Strathclyde Court Residents' Committee, the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire Service, “We Are With You” charity and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

We express special appreciation for the work of the Community Payback Team (led by Stuart McDonald) and their continued assistance, where possible, during the year. Also special thanks go to Laura Baird for the preferential use of a garage near Strathclyde Court in which to store our tools and equipment.

Responsibility for the management of Duchess Wood belongs to the Landowner, Luss Estates Company (LEC), with whom we have good relations which include their

attendance at committee meetings on a regular basis. The five year plan expired in 2020. Following discussion it was agreed that this would be replaced by a three year activity plan highlighting the direction of the Friends activities for the medium to longer term and this is available on the website. [Activities List – Friends of Duchess Woods](#)

2.4 Activities

Following the easing of Covid restrictions the Friends have managed to up the work tempo over the past year and this has been a busy period. A significant project was the resurfacing of the “All Abilities Path” in August and the construction of a new path from Duchess Gait, joining in the main path around the Wood (completed in June 2021). This work, which cost over £4000, was funded by generous donations received from Luss Estates, Persimmon Homes (cash and materials donation), Argyll and Bute Council, Helensburgh District Access Trust, Lomond School and the Scottish Garden Scheme. The work was carried out by Robert McKendry of Milton, Dumbarton.

A number of donations were received which enabled three new benches to be installed in the Wood. We have developed a protocol for such donations to enable us to maintain control of the location and style of bench.

Following the easing of Covid restrictions the Community Payback team have returned to supporting us and have worked on the Thurgood Bridge, strimming the Pony Field, fence work and gully clearance.

The “We Are With You” charity approached the Friends to offer support. They have assisted in the major repairs carried out to the wooden bridge to the east of the Pony Field. Special thanks also to Barry Choules whose engineering expertise was essential to the successful conclusion of most of the work in May.

Secondary pupils from Lomond School have provided a number of work parties to help with laurel clearance and other maintenance tasks in the Wood. This was so successful future sessions are being planned. Hermitage Primary School utilised the Wood for research projects (history and wildlife/fauna) by their P5 and P6 pupils.

In August 2021 the Friends set up visitor number recording stations at the car park and Millig Street entrances. Compared to the last time this was done (2016) visitor numbers were up 45% and dog numbers up 69% confirming the Wood’s increasing attractiveness to users. From this it is estimated that there are up to 90,000 visits a year to the Wood.

Routine work by the Friends has included weeding the tree nursery, cutting back invasive species, repairing minor damage to footpaths, fences and benches and other routine maintenance.

In October 2021 the Chair and Secretary attended the Community Woodlands Association Annual Conference. It was interesting and informative to network with similar organisations and see how they are tackling the challenges that face us all. Later in the autumn Piers Voysey, Senior Woodland Officer for the CWA, visited the wood and gave some valuable advice on woodland maintenance.

In December the Chair gave a talk to the Helensburgh Community Council about the role Duchess Wood plays capturing carbon dioxide and storing carbon.

During the year we started to introduce a more modern way of receiving funds. GoCardless allows us to receive electronic donations from individuals and also allows membership fees to be paid by Direct Debit rather than Standing Order.

We are in the process of updating and renewing the map and information boards in the Wood and are grateful for the support the Babcock Marine Clyde graphics department are providing.

During the previous year we gave an award (presented in July 2021) to a local student who made a video, posted on our website, promoting the benefits of walking in the Wood. Whilst we were keen to make a similar award for the 2021/22 year there was no suitable candidate.

Finally we are grateful for the good work and support from Luss Estates Company which has included swift action to address unsafe trees, especially after winter storms, treatment of Japanese Knotweed, replacement of fencing at the car park and regular emptying of bins. This includes the excellent work and advice received from their Contract Tree Surgeon, Archie Wilson.

Disappointingly there continues to be the odd event of vandalism. We always report this to Police Scotland and address it as soon as we can.

Discarded bottles and litter continue to be a problem and our thanks go to everyone who takes a bag with when walking in the Wood and picks this up.

2.5 Public Relations and Publications

We have maintained good relations with the local press and they have published several articles about the future management of the wood and transfer back of management to Luss Estates. Our main leaflets continue to be available at the main entrances to the Wood. Additionally we received good coverage in January when the Wood was included in the Glasgow Herald's "Top 10 Walks with a café" in Scotland (we were paired with the Ginger Breadman café).

In March we manned a stand at the "Vision for Helensburgh" event organised by the Helensburgh Community Council. We received donations of £27, a new bench donation and gained some new Members.

The Secretary gave a series of presentations about the Wood to P5 and P6 classes in Hermitage Primary prior to them spending a day researching the Wood.

The FODW website and Facebook Account continue to be updated regularly and visited regularly. Two newsletters were published for members during the year.

One of our members, Mary-Jane Selwood, produced a series of four seasonal cards depicting Duchess Wood and offered these to FODW to sell through local craft outlets. These continue to generate a steady income.

2.6 Grants and donations

See comments above re the use of donations totalling over £4000 from Persimmon Homes, Luss Estates, HADT and Lomond School. We have also been grateful for a number of individual donations from members.

3 Outlook

Whilst we do not have a formal Management Agreement with Luss Estates Company (LEC) our relationship is good and we receive excellent support from their senior management. Whilst we are aware of Argyll and Bute Council's (A&BC) position to seek de-designation of the wood as a Local Nature Reserve we are not aware of any moves to initiate such a move.

Meanwhile we will continue to encourage use of the Wood by local schools and others and in maintaining it as a valuable natural resource for the local community.

The current Activity Plan (AP) for Duchess Wood is available at

[Activities List – Friends of Duchess Woods](#)

4. Thanks

Thanks go to all the Trustees on the Committee, to the members of FODW, and to the public who have backed our work and carried out practical tasks, where possible, throughout the year. Grateful thanks are also extended to the individuals and other organisations mentioned above whose help has supported the continuing maintenance and enhancement of the Wood.

Section C: Finances

1. Financial Report

Friends of Duchess Wood	Scottish charity number: SC039527			
Financial Statement for Year to 30 June 2022			Year to 30 June 2021	
	£	£	£	£
Funds @ 1.7.21		7 502		3 940
INCOME:				
Membership	1 610		1 410	
Donations General	655		687	
Bench Donations	840			
Paths grants / Donations	300		4 571	
Donation Scotland Garden Scheme	400			
Card Sales	129		88	
Conference Expenses	65			
Direct Debit Refund	21			
Sundry			43	
Total Income		4 020		6 799
EXPENDITURE				
Maintenance	358		219	
Groundworks and paths	3 109		2 150	
Website	95		54	
Greeting Cards	116		45	
Admin	439		758	
Helensburgh Parish Church / Room Rental	92			
Garage Rental and Repairs	200		100	
Insurance	150		138	
Award	50			
Benches	871			
Sundry			65	
Total Expenditure		-5 480		-3 237
Deficit/Surplus for Year		-1 460		3 562
Add Opening Bank Balance		7 502		3 940
Closing Bank Balance		6 042		7 502

Notes to the Accounts for the year to 30 June 2022

1. Accounting conventions: The accounts are prepared under the historical costs convention and in accordance with the Standard of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting for Charities, and applicable accounting standards.
2. Investments: No investments are held.
3. Taxation: The Friends is recognised by HMRC as a charity and is not liable to taxation.
4. Trustee remuneration and expenses: No Trustee receives any remuneration.
5. Reserves: As a result of activities in the year under review The Friends now hold funds of £6042 (2020 £7502).
6. Financial Reserve Policy: There is one bank account which embraces one unrestricted fund. This records our activities and represents the free reserves of the charity as at 30 June 2022.
7. Risk Management Policy: The trustees have assessed the major risks to the operations and finances of the charity and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to major risks.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf:

David Lewin
24th October 2022

David Lewin, Chair

Examined by J. J. P. Brown
24/10/22

2. Independent Financial Examiner's Report to The Friends of Duchess Wood

APPENDIX 3



		Independent examiner's report on the accounts						v2
Report to the trustees/members of	Charity name	FRIENDS OF DUCHESS WOOD						
Registered charity number		SCO39527						
On the accounts of the charity for the period	Period start date				Period end date			
	Day	Month	Year	to	Day	Month	Year	
	1	July	2021		30	June	2022	
Set out on pages	9						(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)	
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) 2005 Act and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.							
Basis of independent examiner's statement	My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.							
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention [other than that disclosed on the attached page*]							
	1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met, or							
	2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.							
Signed:							Date: 24/10/2022	
Name:	J T P BROWNRIGG							
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	Member ICAS							
Address:	Ardentigh, Glenoran Road, Rhu Helensburgh G84 8JU							

*Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply. If the words do apply, set out those matters which have come to your attention on the following page.