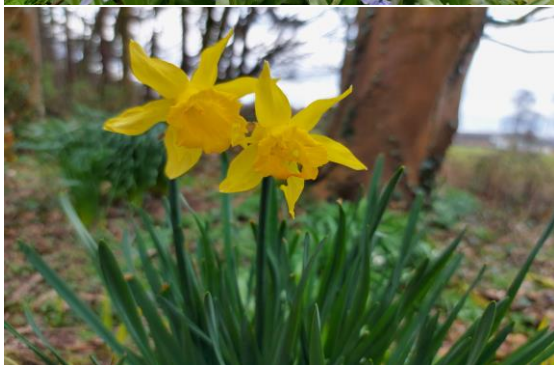




Friends of Duchess Wood

Spring Newsletter 2023



Archaeological Walks

Following the very interesting talk she gave at the last AGM Fiona Baker, a local Archaeologist, has kindly agreed to lead a walk around the Wood pointing out items of historical and archaeological interest, particularly but not limited to the Mill Pond area. Space on the walk will be limited to 20 and allocated on a first come, first serve basis.

The walk will be on Sunday 21st May at 2pm, meeting at the Car Park, and will last approximately 1½ hours. If you are interested please contact the secretary to book your place at martin.grafton@outlook.com Donations for Fiona's time will all be passed to the Friends of Duchess Wood.

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, Nicky Brownrigg, Stewart Campbell, and Richard Horrell.

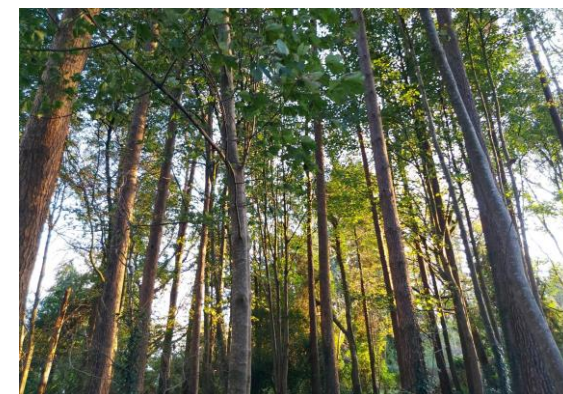
YOUR VIEWS

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

Website - www.duchesswood.org.uk

Facebook - www.facebook.com/FODW1/

Charity number SC039527



Wild Flower Walks

Stewart and Sue Campbell's garden at 18 Duchess Park will be open to the public under the Scotland's Gardens Scheme on Sunday 14th May (2 – 5pm). Westburn in Queen Street will also be open. Admittance to both gardens costs £5 and tickets can be bought at either garden. FODW will lead wildflower walks in the wood from Stewart and Sue's Garden and a portion of the proceeds will go to FODW. All welcome.

New Trustee joins

Current membership stands at 193 households, an increase of 20 since March 2022.

Nicky Brownrigg has recently volunteered to become a Trustee. She is a wildlife enthusiast with a particular interest in wild herbs and their uses. The Committee look forward to her contributing to their work.

This brings the number of Trustees up to 9. Our constitution allows for ten Trustees so 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 draft of a five-year activity plan (to update/replace the current Management Plan), update to maps and notice boards, GoCardless for fund collection (see below), liaison with Luss Estates and general maintenance activities. The bank account balance on 16th March was £4413.86.

GoCardless

The GoCardless facility for paying membership subscriptions by direct debit is now up and running and currently 19 members are making use of this facility. We are now investigating whether there is an online route for individuals who wish to make a one-off donation and more news on this will be promulgated in future newsletters. Those that wish will be able to retain paying via their current standing order mandates.

Information Boards

Over the last few months we have been updating the Map and Information Boards and the Map Boards are now in place at all entrances and reflect changes to the footpath network and proximity to Duchess Gait to the Wood. We also plan to install 6 new Information Boards around the main paths covering various topics such as "What makes a woodland?" and "Seeds nuts and fruits". Luss Estates have kindly agreed to cover half the cost of the new Information Boards, and these will be installed in the near future.

The "Top 10 things to see and do in Duchess Wood" leaflet has been updated and, together with the Spring Flower Walk leaflet, are in sturdy leaflet holders at the Information Hub. Both these leaflets are now also on the website.

Ponds

Sadly, we have taken the decision to lock off the gates to the two wildlife ponds. Dogs continue to get into the ponds disturbing the plants and wildlife. Also disturbing the sediment increases the risk of blue green algae developing which is dangerous to dogs in particular. The willow planted round the fences is developing well particularly at the upper pond.

Again this year there was frog spawn in abundance in both ponds.

Community Clubs event - Helensburgh

The FODW were present at the Helensburgh Community Clubs event held at Hermitage Academy on 4th March. Organised by the Community Council it was designed to inform the community about what is going to be happening in the town and what the various organisations and clubs, such as FODW, are.



Vandalism

Sadly, there has been a recent incident of vandalism in the north west corner of the wood. If you see any vandalism anti-social behaviour occurring, please report it to Police Scotland on 101.

Community Payback

We have benefited from work done by these groups to replace base boards on the bridge to the east of the pony field, mulching newly planted saplings and filling the potholes in the car park. Our thanks and appreciation for the work done.

AGM

The last AGM was held on 23rd November 2022 with seventeen members in attendance. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts were approved as were minor updates to the Constitution. Following the formal agenda Fiona Baker, a local Archaeologist, gave a fascinating talk on the history of the Wood and the Mill Pond Area.

The 2022/23 AGM will be held on Tuesday 24th October 2023 at 7:30pm in the Helensburgh Parish Church Hall (small hall). The calling notice will be sent out late September. Iona Hyde (Woodland Trust) has agreed to be our guest speaker.

Governance

A number of Governance documents covering Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Privacy have been produced and are available for perusal on the website.

Saplings

During the winter work parties birch saplings were planted at the car park and birch and hawthorn on the bank to the right of the path up from the car park. They seem to have taken and are budding up well.

There are oak, hazel, hawthorn, maple and a few sweet chestnut saplings in the nursery by the lower pond but these are small and will take a few years before they can be planted out.

