



Friends of Duchess Wood (FODW) – Activity Plan 2025-2027

Updated October 2025

This document sets out list of tasks which FODW proposes to carry out over the period 2025 to the end of 2027 and with the agreement of and Luss Estates Company (LEC) as owners of Duchess Wood. Some of these tasks are already taking 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 contributions in the form of professional expertise, labour or materials. Some activities will require specialist advice. We would propose to consult LEC and where appropriate seek additional advice where required from other sources.

Note In October 2024 LEC put the majority of the Wood up for sale but intend to retain ownership of some parts of the Wood. As at August 2025 while a commercial agreement for the sale with a third party has been agreed sale process is currently in the hands of both parties Solicitors.

For completeness a number of tasks currently being progressed such as the sapling planting, the feasibility of upgrading burn crossings and safety surveys are included in the list.

The planned actions are grouped under a series of headings:

- Friends of Duchess Wood structure and organisation
- 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.

Comments in red are progress updates

Area of activity	Task	Comments
FODW		
Membership	Seek to increase	Through Information Days,

	Membership numbers from current c200 households.	events and leafleting households adjacent to Duchess Wood, website and social media. May 25 membership 220 with 10 new members after the April Information Day. Membership at Oct 25 227
Succession planning	Seek new Trustees and Office bearer to succeed time served Office Bearers and Trustees	A succession plan for Trustees and Office Is essential if the FODW is to have a long term future. Use the same tools as for increasing Membership. Sept25 update. Three new prospective Trustees in line to be confirmed as Trustees at the November AGM. Oct 25 update Two of the above have joined the Committee as Acting Trustees in October 25. All 3 to be confirmed as Trustees at the AGM In September 25 both the Secretary and Chair became unwell and this has accelerated the need to seek replacements. Also 3 long serving Trustees have given notice they will serve another year but not seek reelection at the 2025/26 AGM. Plan to resolve the above issues are underway. Due to medical conditions above the 2024/25 AGM has been move to 19 Jan 2026.
Constitution	Review the current Constitution and update in line with OSCR requirements and guidelines .	Target is to present a revised Constitution to the AGM 2024/25 in Oct /Nov 2025. April 2025 .Draft Constitution out to Trustees for comment.

		August 25. Draft revised Consitution completed and will be put before the Membership for approval at the rescheduled Jan 26 AGM provided the Secretary can attend. If not this issue is likely to be deferred to the 2025/26 AGM
Fundraising.	Revisit the option of a donation scheme. Apply for grants when available for specific projects.	August 25. A SumUp card was purchased in August 2025 to facilitate taking donations by bank or credit card. With the closure of the BoS branch in March cash will become increasingly difficult to manage.
Woodland management		
Planting	Continue to plant out maturing saplings from the tree nursery in locations deficient in trees and coppice plants and where conditions are suitable	Jan/Feb 2025. Hazel and remaining hawthorn from the nursery planted out on the bank adjacent to the path up from the car park. Lomond School seniors mulched around All the trees at this location on 6 May 25
	Restock the nursery to provide succession planting. Focus on oak, lime, native cherry, birch, sweet chestnut and coppice plants.	March 2025. Ninety saplings from the Woodland Trust planted out, some by Community Service personnel. Silver birch, rowan, wild cherry, dog rose, hawthorn, hazel, crab apple, dogwood.
Glade creation	Following advice from the FODW CWA mentor Syd House, create initially one or two 10 meter diameter glades and plant with native species or allow natural regeneration to take place.	Sites to be chosen where trees are overcrowded or doing badly and timber can be extracted for supply as firewood. Unwanted re-growth will need to be controlled e.g. brambles. Glades will need to be protected from deer. Landowner

		permission needed. August 25. Revisit with new owners once sale completed. Horse logging identified as a way of extracting cut timber.
Ash and beech regeneration	Where clusters of ash and beech are regenerating, thin down to a few healthy specimens and keep thinning as years progress to encourage the growth of large specimen trees.	On going. Confine beech to the north-west of the Wood
Sycamore	Cut down sycamore regeneration on stumps and where saplings naturally regenerate.	On going.
100 oak plantation	Continue to monitor growth and thin again to half the current population in 3 to 5 years. Long term objective is to create 2 to 4 specimen trees in this area to grow to maturity which will take 25 to 50 years. Trees planted in 2010	Keep understory cut down to maintain access
Tree safety survey.	Follow up with new owners to ensure that appropriate tree safety surveys are in place	Required to comply with owners third party insurance. Will be the responsibility of the new owners.
Urban Woodland management Plan (2018)	Try to obtain a final copy from LEC or new owners.	Can be used as a reference document and to inform various projects.
Tools	Maintain a stock of tools for work party use.	2025 update. During the year spades, shears, shovel and loppers bought. There have also been reengraved with code so we can identify them and keep an inventory.

Invasive species	Continue the work already begun to cut back and stump treat outcrops of laurel, ponticum, rhododendron and shrimp plant. Report outbreaks of Japanese knotweed to the owners with a view to getting professional treatment and eradication carried out	On going March 2025. Laurel strumps at the glade above the car park bridge drilled and treated with herbicide June 25 Rhododendron regrowth in the middle of the Wood cut down to woodland floor level. Keep monitoring and repeat cut back as necessary.
Visitor access and amenity		
Footpaths	Following the creation of two new footpaths in 2022/23 no new paths are currently planned. A nature corridor linking Castle Wood, through Duchess Wood, to Glenoran and on to Ardenconnel, passing through Aldonaig Glen ancient woodland and proceeding above Shandon via Blairvadach and ending in the ancient woodland at the MOD base.	Condition of paths to be monitored (see Maintenance section below). FODW will contribute to the working group set up to examine the feasibility of a Nature Corridor. April 2025. Nature corridor group established with representatives from H&S CT, HCG and Duchess Wood. August 2025. Lots of discussions but as no clear picture of what a Nature Network/Corridor between Castle Wood via Duchess Wood, Glenoran Wood and on to Ardconnel Wood and beyond would look like, no real progress has been made.
Car Park	Fill pot holes with aggregate and put down suitable branches around the edges of the island and borders to prevent damage by cars. Consider installation of blue /white traffic direction signage.	Keep a small stock of type 1 and whin dust at the car park. August 25 1t bag of aggregate delivered and this will continue to be addressed at work parties.
Signage	Review with the new owners the content of the green LEC/FODW board at the car park. Review the option of a	Change of ownership of part of Duchess Wood likely to lead to new signs at all entrances.

	brown tourism sign at the bottom of Kathleen Park. Colour coded way-markers to be updated and replaced where necessary.	
Information Boards	Update completed Q2 2023 and new boards installed. Investigate installation of additional boards with the focus on climate change.	ABCAN may have some material they could supply us with.
Information hub	Content needs refreshing as appropriate.	Coat of wood preservative required and minor repairs to roof. May 25 Roof repairs carried out- slat replaced
Membership and information leaflets	Continue with reprints of "Top10 Things to See and Do" leaflet. Refresh wild flower walk leaflet. Generate a children activity orientated leaflet	Membership leaflet discontinued in 2024. In its place as a tri-fold leaflet with a Routes map on one side and a Membership QR code on the other and for distribution at events. April 26th 2025. Issued at the Information Day and 10 new members resulted.
Tree identification	Review what information we can make available to visitors to help them identify trees e.g. small in the ground signs, additional information board (s)	300 tree identification leaflets from the Woodland Trust ordered and will be placed in the leaflet holders and handed out at events. Complete.
Social media	Continue the progress made to use facebook and the website to communicate with visitors and followers.	August 25 Over the last year increased use of facebook mde to report work parties, advertise events and advertise for new Trustees. We now have approaching 1000 followers on facebook.
Outdoor Access code	Continue to promote the awareness of this to visitors via map boards and on notice boards	
OSCR	Include OSCR logo on all presentation materials and external communication e.g. emails, to make visitors aware of the charitable status of the FODW.	This is now an OSCR requirement. August 25. Headed note paper and notices changed to reflect this and email signatures also changed.

Maintenance		
Footpaths	Carry out regular checks on the condition of main paths as shown on the Routes Map and carry out or arrange with Community Payback for repairs to be carried out	Maintain a small stock(1t bag) of type 1 at the car park and Patterson Drive and whin dust at the car park. Complete
Bridges (wooden bridge east of the Pony Field and the chicane bridge at the top of the Wood)	Regularly check for wear and tear and organize repairs as appropriate.	Base boards on both bridges largely repaired over the last two years but some older boards will need to be replaced. Some posts and rails may need replacing over the next 3 years. March 25 Two new base boards fitted to Millig St Bridge.
Thurgood Bridge	Check condition of base boards, posts and tails and arrange for repairs. Check condition of step risers and side beams and organize repair or replacement. Monitor bridge supports for signs or erosion at the base by the burn.	Arrange work on this bridge with Community Payback. Advise LEC and new owners to get a bridge survey done. (This has been advised to LEC on a number of occasions but nothing done). Note: The grid board put in place by the Council has never been lifted so the condition of the boards underneath is unknown but this structure is permanently wet so some deterioration must be expected. Feb 25 .Community Service replaced 3 step risers which had collapsed and made stable two support posts. August 2025 Three step risers replaced and additional work done to secure posts. Sept 25 Three more risers replaced and more

		identified for replacement. The support columns under the bridge in need of reinforcing with large stones
Seating	Inspect periodically and check, damage and repair	June 25 New recycled plastic picnic bench bought for the Pony Field and installed. September 25 Portable angle grinder needed to remove metal back beam support from the seat by the burr oaks. Done. One of the “ perch seats at on the top path decommissioned as some timbers rotten.
Grass strimming, brush cutting and bracken bashing	To be carried out with the help of volunteers, Community Payback and School volunteer days.	Contact HMNB Clyde and associated third party contractors to see if volunteerevents can be organized. The donated petrol strimmer/brush cutter has been serviced and recommissioned. Works well. April 2025 FODW has been gifted a lawn mower which can be used at the Pony Field and to give access to the lower pond.
Education, Community Support and Citizen Science		
	Encourage local schools and nurseries to visit the Wood to support science education, outdoor learning and volunteering.	On going from previous plan with a nominated Trustee responsible for schools liaison. April 2025 Chair obtained Disclosure Scotland approval to work with pupils from Lomond School who are always accompanied by 2 or more teaches as the responsible adult. However, after discussions with the

		Scottish Voluntary Organisation it has been concluded as FODW personnel are not responsible for or in control of pupils Disclosure Scotland clearance isn't required when we accompany school groups and isn't required when we accompany school groups. For clarification when promoting events we say no persons under 18 can attend unless accompanied by a responsible adult.
	Make contact with Community support groups such as those involved with mental and physical health and encourage them to visit and use the Wood.	On going from previous plan.
Scouts, cubs and beavers and Blairvadach Outdoor Centre	Provide contact with these groups and support activities as required.	Make contact with Leaders and try to encourage one of them to become a Trustee.
Citizen Science	Promote Citizen Science through use of the Bat Detector and Wildlife Camera. Organise events centered around these tools and other citizen science projects.	Other possible activities: -investigate potential for "what 3words" as a tool for identifying the location and spread of wild flowers particularly bluebells and primrose. -hold a butterfly count during the summer. -veteran tree survey and mapping. 19 April. Bat walk on raised £100 to be split between FODW and the Lomond Bat Group.
	Woodland Trust Ancient Tree inventory	August 2025. Ancient /veteran trees in \duchess Wood will be identified and added to the Woodland Trust national inventory of ancient trees.

Recreational events		
	Adopt a positive approach to any third parties wishing to hold events and ensure landowners are informed and give their permission.	Ensure organisers give visitors adequate notice of the event through posters in the Wood and social media. Organiser to ensure the Wood is left in the same condition as before the event.
	Plan a series of events such as bat walks, treasure/ Easter egg hunts for children and species counts e.g. butterflies.	Events coordination sub group established Feb 2025. AUGUST 2025. The following have been held so far in 2025 June 8th Family Treasure Hunt and Tree Identification quiz. July 19th Wonderful World of Trees talk bt Archie Wilson and Nicky Brownrigg Planned Foraging walk 13 September Tree Treasure Trail (TTT) put up in the Wood for October half term and well used. An event for children involving apple harvesting etc did not go ahead as all the orchard apples were stolen. Willow based events planned for late Autumn/early winter. Jan 26 Wassailing event. Also repeat bat walks
Miscellaneous	Maintain links with other land management /nature based organisations,	CWA, Access Trust, HCWG, TCV, Woodland Trust, CLMG (A&BC).