

Appendix 2 : Background

Origins of Duchess Wood

The Wood was owned by the Dukes of Argyll in the 19th century and was probably named after Ann, Dowager Duchess of Argyll, who came to live at Ardencaple Castle in 1847 on the death of her husband. The castle was near the waterfront at the west of Helensburgh, but all that remains today is a tower above Ardencaple Drive and its woodland, including Duchess Wood. The estate was sold to the Colquhouns of Luss in 1862, and it remains in the ownership of Luss Estates Company today. Community use of Duchess Wood before it became a local nature reserve in 1998 was extensive, and older Helensburgh residents recall playing in it in childhood.

Origins of the Friends of Duchess Wood

Duchess Wood became a Local Nature Reserve in 1998, the 25th to be created in Scotland and the first in Argyll and Bute. There are now 72 in Scotland.

An initial community group was set up in March 2003 by several organisations, but on 4th. July 2007 the **Friends of Duchess Wood** (FODW) was inaugurated with Sandy Kerr as chairman. Its constitution states that the Friends may :

- arrange meetings, exhibitions, talks, surveys and training courses
- organise / carry out practical environmental projects
- raise and expend funds
- liaise and work in partnership with other organisations and individuals
- collect, disseminate and exchange relevant information
- publicise their activities by any appropriate means
- buy, hire or borrow any equipment, tools or other items required to fulfil the objectives
- acquire and hold land or property

The Friends of DW is also committed to the three Local Nature Reserve aims of :

- biodiversity
- research and education (“education” being more than just schooling)
- access by the public for “informal recreation and enjoyment of nature”

To represent the community, the Friends have two places on the authority-run DWLNRC. Both the Scottish Natural Heritage and the Lower Clyde Greenspace assisted in creating the current arrangement.

Thus a constructive partnership was formed between A&B Council's DWLNRC with policy-making, financial and management responsibilities for the Wood, and the Friends, representing the community and carrying out day-to-day tasks and assisting with management.