

FRIENDS OF LENZIE MOSS CHAIR PERSON'S REPORT 2017

Lenzie Moss continues to be a well used local resource. This year we have seen visitors coming from near and far, and not just for a walk or a look at the peatbog. A common comment from new visitors I have met, for example researchers from Aberdeen, and artists from Edinburgh, is that we are very lucky to have the Moss on our doorstep.

The overall condition of the Nature Reserve remains very good, apart from the boardwalk, which is giving some cause for concern. I would like to thank all the people who collect litter on an ongoing basis. With most of the birch removal complete, maintenance of paths has been a focus for the conservation volunteers this past winter. A big improvement can be seen at Fern avenue, but there have also been patches made at various points around the circular path.

Other work carried out by the volunteers included further planting of wildflowers near Heather Drive. We were very well supported by the local Beavers and Cubs when completing this work.

Unfortunately the high level of use has also lead to some unwanted visitors. We have had the noticeboards at Heather drive and Hawthorne Avenue vandalised, the seat on the boardwalk broken, and already some of the artworks recently installed have been targeted.. Repairs have been made to all of these, but I would ask members to immediately report any suspicious activity to the police.

It is clear that our group is both valued and listened to by other bodies. In December we welcomed members of the Hutton Research Institute to one of the conservation volunteer events, and met afterwards to discuss why people get involved with preserving peat bogs. This research aims to inform both academic debates and policy initiatives on peatland restoration. To quote the researchers :

“In recent years, there has been increased focus on the many benefits which society derives from peatbogs. Previous work carried out in Scotland by the James Hutton Institute and Scotland’s Rural College has shown that people have different perceptions and views of the values of these benefits, and what the right management of peatbogs is. While peatbogs by some people are seen as iconic wilderness areas that are home to rare plants and animals and which offer opportunities for adventure and are part of Scotland’s identity and heritage, others see them as bleak and sinister places where people may get lost or stuck and where pre-historic populations carried out human sacrifices. The current research project looks at existing restoration projects to find out how these are perceived by people and why people may or may not support the restoration of peatbogs and become involved in it, for example through volunteering.”

The researchers will be visiting again later in the year and would be happy to hear from anyone who is interested in sharing their opinion with them and to take part in an interview.

We were also consulted on the Inside Lane art project, and met with some of the artists responsible for that. Inside Lane is a series of events taking place over a two month period: artists' installations, temporary street interventions, writings, photography and conversations. Nathalie Holbrook has now installed her tree orb, and several of Deirdre Macleod's small artworks, part of her 'Common Ground' project, have been installed in places in Lenzie Moss.

There is now a Geocache on Lenzie Moss. This is an adult game of hide and seek. Participants solve clues to the location of the box, find it and record their visit.

More recently, we met East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Culture Trust and several artists, to discuss their Tales and Trails project. Lenzie's suggested trail theme relates to Merchant's of Glasgow and their villas which have formed the core of the village centre and provide a great deal of interest to the smaller trail loop. The homes or associated buildings of notable characters (Bud Neil, McKellar, Beatrice Clugston) have also proved popular including two references to philanthropic social care and convalescence (Beatrice Clugston's convalescent home and recuperation of wounded veterans at Grove Park). Lenzie Moss' paths will form part of the trail.

Christine has also given talks to the Cubs and Bishopbriggs Tuesday club. Thanks for doing this, as there has a lot of preparation needed, which I know Christine will use for future invites.

The schools and local nurseries also continue to use the Moss, for example in their Health weeks. While we have not ran many events this year, the annual Harry Potter broom making in October continues to be very popular, with around 60 people attending. In fact with the cleared birch we will need to determine how much longer we can run this event !

It is great to see the area used by such a wide diversity of people.

Our presence on the internet and Facebook continues to grow, with an increasing number of people opting to receive Facebook updates from us. Our bi-annual newsletters remain a very well appreciated resource, and I would like to thank David and Christine for their hard work on that.

In early spring we were visited by a drone enthusiast. The drone is small, with 4 sets of helicopter type blades. The camera it carries is capable of producing stabilised images in high definition, even when being blown around on a windy day.

The coming year.

The conservation volunteers will continue to work on the paths. The boardwalk is nearing the end of its life and is requiring frequent repair as spars rot away. We will be investigating possible grants that could be applied for to provide a replacement.

We also expect to be involved with discussions on new paths and upgrades to existing paths. There is a new path funded by Sustrans planned across to the rear of the new school, and we are aware of proposals to include the Moss path in a new path through to Bishopbriggs.

The committee would like to be able to fund a series of walks and talks. The ranger service are not able to give as much time as they have historically done, and we are investigating alternative ways of running these. We will seek grant funding for this if possible.

We are still looking for two new committee members, as we would like a member with the enthusiasm to run events, and another to look after our web and Facebook resources. The committee meets three times a year, and the duties are not extensive. Please consider helping out with these roles or as a normal committee member. I can vouch that it is very interesting voluntary work and key to the ongoing protection of Lenzie Moss.

I would like to thank Jackie Gillespie for supporting us and making sure Lenzie Moss has been high on her priority list. Jackie too is very busy, and her work in obtaining funding for improvement works has been so valuable in the past few years.

We continue to receive excellent support from the Countryside Ranger Service, who do so much of the background work that keeps the Moss in such good condition. Unfortunately we lost the services of Fiona Burns this year. Fiona left the ranger service and has not been replaced. Her enthusiasm and dedication to the Moss will be missed.

Finally, I would like to thank the Ranger Service, our committee and all the volunteers for their work through the year, and our members for your ongoing support. When we are representing the interests of our group, the numbers of members we have is an important factor.

Paul Dudman, Chair, June 2017