

Friends of Lenzie Moss chair report 2022 to 2023

As we approach the end of my year as Chairperson, it is normal for me to report on the highlights of the year. This year, the highlight has undoubtedly been the upgrade of the paths and boardwalk. This leaves the Moss in great shape and accessible to a wider range of visitors.

As part of that review, particularly now that we're getting back to normal after the pandemic, I think it's also a good opportunity for us to look ahead and see where we're going to in the future. I find it's always useful from time to time to re-examine what our aims are and whether we're fulfilling these. It came into focus recently when we presented a slide show to a local group, The Inner Wheel, who had asked us to talk to them about what FoLM was about and what we did.

Our starting point, as always, is our purpose as set out in our Constitution -

"To conserve Lenzie Moss for the benefit of present and future generations through education, liaison with official bodies, and appropriate environmental management."

In the beginning of FoLM in the 1980's, the motivation of the original FoLM members was clear – to protect the Moss from an adverse housing development, and to conserve the Moss for the enjoyment and benefit of the whole community – and we have Bea Rae and her compatriots for all their efforts in this respect. Development proposals since have reinforced the need to be vigilant on the cyclical nature of new proposals.

Then there was the longer term aim to reinforce this protection by establishing the Moss as a Local Nature Reserve. This took until 2009 to achieve. Since then, FoLM has continued to support EDC and the Rangers in maintaining the LNR status. To comply with an LNR status, good practice recommends that the Moss should ideally contribute to:

- our informal recreation, social interaction, relaxation and the experiencing of nature.
- our wellbeing through a well-managed and interesting natural heritage site which is accessible to all.
- bring the local community together through volunteer days, open days, and management committees.
- encourage the local community, including schools, to visit and learn about the Moss and its natural heritage.

And over the years we have done this, along with the encouragement and assistance of EDC and the Rangers. We have a good working relationship with both.

None of this happens by chance though, and we have to thank in particular all those committee members past and present for their efforts – for running events, maintaining our website and Facebook page, producing our newsletters, maintaining our notice boards, looking after our financial affairs, lobbying relevant parties when the Moss seems under threat - and of course the volunteers who have turned out regularly to repair paths, remove the birch saplings, clear litter etc. And thanks go to our members themselves who are always ready to let us know of anything untoward happening on the Moss, as well as more pleasant things like sending us photos of wildlife seen on the Moss.

So, what have been our activities over the past 12 months.

April

We received a report on the Peat processing history and listed it on the website.
Reported non-native species and knotweed locations to the Ranger service.

May

Two events ran by Scottish Butterfly Conservation looking for green hairstreaks.

June

Watervole guided walk funded by us and ran by Starling Learning.

Report received on rare spiders identified on the Moss.
Discussions with EDC re. informal paths around the watervole bunds.

July

Summer newsletter issued.

August

First notice of the upgrade to paths and boardwalk replacement. These items would involve us replying to many queries over the time of the works
Meeting with members of a group interested in a Friends of group for another area in East Dunbartonshire.

September

Walk on Peat Bogs and Climate change ran by the Countryside Rangers.

November

Consultations with Butterfly Scotland to help them make a 'toolkit' for Community Bog groups.

December

Talked to EDC about progress on the proposal for a cycle track to Bishopbriggs that is proposed to run through Lenzie Moss (Active Travel Strategy).
Discussions with Scouts on possible conservation projects.

January

Online meeting with Butterfly Scotland and possible new Friends group for Low and High Moss.

February

Online presentation to Kirkintilloch Inner Wheel.

March

Feedback from previous discussions with Ian the woodturner on progress with his work on salvaged logs from previous tree cutting.

April

Opening of the new paths and boardwalk with EDC, the contractor and one of our councillors.

May

Guided Walk for Lenzie Academy teachers during their in-service day.
Approach from Lenzie Meadow School to help with their project on Lenzie Moss

You can see that we have been relatively active in what might be considered a fairly quiet year. Going forward, we want to continue to protect the Moss and to provide enjoyment for our community. And we know that you, as members of FoLM, want to do so too. However, as a committee, we've now reached a point where we need to think about how we're going to resource this effort. We have recently learnt that Joan and Ian Christie, long time members of FoLM, are having to retire from the committee due to health reasons. We need to fill their shoes, plus, ideally, have some additional support if we are to continue with all the activities we would like to. I know we always ask for anyone who is interested to join us on the committee – and we also know this sometimes causes a quick exit for the door! But, we are currently very thinly stretched and really need additional help in order to continue the good work. As an encouragement I can say that it's actually very enjoyable doing the practical work that goes on behind the scenes.

So, what are we looking for help with? First of all, I should say that we work as a team, no-one has to take on sole responsibility for any particularly activity. We all join in discussions about particular topics, either in

person or by email, and whilst we have individual members who then take on the responsibility of progressing things, we're a very supportive team. Usually, meetings are only held three or four times a year and the rest of the time we communicate by email or phone.

And we value members' ideas – a fresh pair of eyes does all of us good, particularly when it comes to our future activities.

We'll shortly be having a look at some of the activities we've been involved with in the past through our slide show – always good to remind ourselves – but perhaps it would help if I outline in a bit more detail where we're looking for help.

WEBSITE / FACEBOOK

We currently have a presence on both platforms. New content is decided by the committee, so we just need someone who will do the posts for us.

NOTICE BOARDS

Another of our shop windows is the notice boards, one at the top of Heather Drive and one at the station carpark entrance. We try to make these as interesting as we can, and use them more to give information to visitors about the Moss itself. In the past we have run themes on "What to look out for" each month; photographs of its flora and fauna; photographs of activities; the history of the Moss; climate change. Katherine and Christine currently look after the 2 boards, and we would like someone to join our "thinking team" to decide what to put up.

NEWSLETTER

As you know, we currently issue a newsletter twice a year, in which we highlight things that have been going on over the previous months. The actual production is carried out by Deacon Bros. in Kirkintilloch and they are very helpful in giving us advice about layout and presentation. We now need another member to join our newsletter team, to think – perhaps outside the box at times – what would be interesting for each issue. Our newsletters go out to local councillors, MP, MSP, the Mugdock Rangers, EDC, and the National Library in Edinburgh, so it's our opportunity to let the outside world know about what's going on with on the Moss and within FoLM, and keep us in the public eye.

ACTIVITIES

Again, these start off as group discussion, and we have recently been agreeing on what activities we would like to see happen on the Moss for 2024. We put these on ourselves sometimes, and at other times work closely with the Mugdock Rangers and EDC. Emily has taken on responsibility for undertaking the practical aspects of each activity, and we need another person to join her on this team. There is plenty of knowledge about suitable activities within the committee to get the ball rolling.

I like to think that we make committee life as enjoyable as possible, and it's a very worthwhile task for any of us to become involved in. I can't emphasise enough that what you bring is a new pair of eyes. It keeps us all fresh, and keeps our group on the ball.

So please have a chat with us while you're here, and if you have thoughts on what you want us to be involved in going forward, let us know.

Finally, for this part of our AGM, on behalf of the other committee members, I should like to thank the Countryside Rangers, and Jackie Gillespie at EDC, for all their interest in the Moss and their hard work. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee for their continued support.