

## **Chairperson's report 2011**

With the formal status of Local Nature Reserve being achieved in late 2009, the focus for the Friends in the past twelve months has been promoting activities on the Moss and supporting the management plan activities. This involves us in activities such as: fundraising; promotion; and communicating with bodies such as EDC, SNH and the Countryside Rangers.

In my report, I would like to give you a review of the activities and also the issues that the committee are currently looking at. As well as giving an insight to the committee's work, we also hope that members will volunteer to join the committee. We have lost 3 committee members in the past three years, gained 1, so another 2 or 3 new members would bring us back to full strength.

### **Activities:**

Our activities can be split into two broad sections

1. Walks and talks on various subjects
2. Conservation work supporting the Countryside Rangers.

In 2010 we received a grant from SNH to print leaflets on our activities. These were passed out to every primary age pupil in Lenzie, as well as other local places. Together with the Mugdock website, the promotion of the events was very successful with every event fully subscribed.

The walks and talks over the past year started in June with the history walk led by Anna Illingworth. Anna's encyclopaedic knowledge of the Moss was put to good use, and the Countryside Rangers contributed with additional information on the local wildlife.

The family fun day in August combined bug hunting for the children with birch bashing for the adults. With excellent weather, the large number of people who turned out (40 plus) made a significant contribution to removing birch trees from the area close to the boardwalk.

We had a stall at the canal festival in August, and it was surprising how many people did not know about Lenzie Moss, highlighting the value of attending this event to reach new people.

Our Harry Potter birch broom event was another opportunity to fell birch and make good use of the wood. Over sixty people attended this event, proving the ongoing popularity of witches and broomsticks at Halloween.

All of the events in 2010 were well attended, with numbers having to be restricted for some. In total the six funded events had 190 attendees, with around one third being children and up to half being first time visitors to the Moss.

In 2011 we started with a walk in April, due to be from Auchinloch through the Moss. The Gadloch flood interrupted that, but an alternative walk was made around the Moss.

This event is a good way of showing newcomers to the Moss. Last year, for example, we had a bus load from Lennoxton.

In May, we enjoyed a Ranger led talk on birdsong, with Fiona Morton taking us around the Moss on a very wet election day evening. After the rain stopped we did manage to hear many of the Moss's birds, such as the Willow Warbler, Chaffinches, Robins and Blackbirds.

Coming full circle, we had this year's history walk on 7 June this year. Christine Morrison led this event, with Anna's hip ruling her out of the walk. Christine was given a practice run taking two primary classes from Lenzie Primary around the Moss during their Health Week.

We hope Anna's new hip will allow her to return to full participation in events on the Moss, and wish her good luck in her operation and recovery.

One forthcoming event worth mentioning is our Dragonfly weekend. On July 10, Jonathan Willet from the British Dragonfly Society will conduct two walks to find out how many dragonfly species live on Lenzie Moss. On 9 July Jonathon will give a talk here at 4pm, on the subject : 'The dragonflies of Central Scotland'. I would ask as many of you as possible to attend and bring your friends.

The other side of our activities has been the continued work on the birch trees. These trees need to be removed as they are taking up the water from the Moss. As they are removed, plants and animals that used to live on the Moss will return. The work needs to be carried out in winter, which can mean bad weather, but we have had good turnout on most days (20 people), and a real difference has been made on the birch. The view from the boardwalk towards Lenzie is now unobstructed by birch, a huge difference from 2 years ago. We need to keep working on this, and any time that you can give to support this work is welcomed. It is good fun and very rewarding.

### **Committee Work:**

The committee meets around 5 times a year, in addition to this AGM. At present we are discussing a range of issues such as :

1. Naming of the Right of Way : Bea's Path
2. Signage on the Moss. We want to keep the Moss a wild place, and have resisted proposals for memorials, yet supported introduction of new EDC signage. It's a fine balance.
3. Benches. We have one, and intend to place a second to allow people to have a rest on the 2km circuit path.
4. Bins. The Moss is generally good with respect to litter, but this is in part due to the work of walkers who regularly pick up litter and take it home. A new pole mounted bin will be fitted soon at the station for evaluation.
5. Non slip covering to the boardwalk.

## **Communication**

It is worth mentioning that FOLM is now on Facebook. We have had a website for some time, but the Facebook facility is an effective way of communicating events to people. We have yet to see how many people sign up to receiving news feeds from us, but we are moving with the times here ! We also have a new email address that we will use for future newsletters etc. This can be accessed by any of the committee members.

## **What does next year hold for us ?**

I see the next 12 months as a continuation of what we have been doing. It is probably fair to say that the grants we have previously received will be more difficult to come by, but we have been successful this year in obtaining a grant from EDC for the boardwalk. The council have not replaced the Greenspace Officer, and Lesley Scott previously did a huge amount of work in obtaining the LNR status. We continue to receive excellent support from the Countryside Ranger Service, who are key to all the events that we manage to support. I would like to thank them, our committee and all the volunteers for their work through the year.

P Dudman  
20 June 2011