

'Thoughts on Our Woodland' response

Mr & Mrs Cooper's letter in the last BLV raised very understandable concerns, given their personal experience. All of the issues raised are being taken very seriously, were included in the Frequently Asked Questions and hopefully answered in the January drop-in sessions.

Public liability insurance will be organised, along with expert contractors to carry out regular tree inspections & work needed plus to respond to emergencies. FCS's current annual inspection regime and response times will be matched or bettered with costs included in the financial plans. Contact details for emergencies and reporting dangerous trees will be given to residents bordering Coilhallan, displayed at entrances to the woods and included in the BLV's 'Local Information' list.

Working jointly with FCS has been suggested by a number of people. Historically, our community has had a good relationship with FCS but it has its own priorities and resource limitations while a Community Woodland Group has access to other funding sources. FCS was supportive of the previous proposal for mountain bike trails but clear that this would not be permitted under their ownership. That prompted the idea of CCDT acquiring the wood on behalf of the community with the aim of managing it for a variety of potential uses. At the time of writing, 60 new volunteers have come forward. If the project fails due to inability of the community to manage the woodland then it will revert to FCS ownership.

As for the lycra-clad lemmings (a wonderful image), the original proposal for mountain bike trails is being reviewed in the light of community comments on this and other suggested uses of the wood. Continuing communication and consultation are key to getting the right balance between the community 'wants' for wildlife, quiet areas and increased recreation.

Discussions are very much work in progress and if the acquisition goes ahead it will not be before 2020. All residents are encouraged to continue to give their views. Elsewhere in this BLV issue should be a summary of the comments received from the survey and at the drop-in sessions. Full details are available on the InCallander website www.incallander.co.uk/woods and there is a copy in the library.

Callander Community Woodland Group