

HELENSBURGH ADVERTISER

Thursday, December 14, 2017

90p www.helensburghadvertiser.co.uk



FAST FIT TYRE SERVICES
AUTOPOINT

Tyres Exhausters Batteries Service

.....01436 676767.....

www.autopointautosdunbartonshire.co.uk

Community woodland proposals gain support

Group's buyout hope for controversial land at Cumberland Avenue

By **DANIELLE LAPPIN**
danielle.lappin@newsquest.co.uk

A **HELENSBURGH** conservation group has unveiled plans to create a community woodland at the town's Cumberland Avenue - with the

proposals receiving the backing of the council leader.

Helensburgh Community Woodland Group's application to register an interest in the privately owned site was approved by the Scottish Government last year as an initial step towards a community buyout.

This week the group has unveiled

plans for a "real environmental asset for everyone's benefit", featuring paths, an open meadow and boosting local biodiversity.

David Adams, HCWG convener, said the detailed plans were drawn up in close consultation with the local community.

The plans to bring the site back

into public use have been welcomed by Argyll and Bute council leader Aileen Morton and members of Helensburgh Community Council.

Councillor Morton said: "The site at Cumberland Avenue has been a matter of concern to local residents for years now and it's great to see the community create proposals to

bring the site back into use and ensure public access to it."

But so far, the landowners Thomas Paterson and Margery Osborne, have said they are not selling the site, despite moves from the local trust.

FULL STORY ON PAGE FIVE

ON SITE
DRY CLEANING
at
HELENSBURGH LAUNDRETTE

One stop shop for all your laundry and dry cleaning needs.
35-37 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh G84 7NY (next to Arnold Clark)



Trust reveals Cumberland Avenue plans

But landowners say site not for sale

By DANIELLE LAPPIN

danielle.lappin@newsquest.co.uk

PRESSURE is mounting on the owners of land on the town's Cumberland Avenue to sell now Helensburgh Community Woodlands Group has revealed its plans for the site.

Last year, the Scottish Government approved HCWG's application to register a community interest in the former woodland, as a first step towards a community buy-out.

Draft plans have now been revealed by HCWG's environmental consultant, Iona Hyde, which seek to transform the area "into a real environmental asset for everyone's benefit".

Aileen Morton, Argyll and Bute council leader and Helensburgh councillor, said she believes the site would be best placed in the hands of the community.

She said: "The site at Cumberland Avenue has been a matter of concern to local residents for years now and it's great to see the community create proposals to bring the site back into use and ensure public access to it."

"There is obviously still some way to go but I think that this site would be best placed in the hands of the community to ensure it is protected for future generations."

An open meeting was held in May of this year and the plans were drawn up to reflect the preferences of those who attended.

David Adams, HCWG convenor, said: "The launch of these detailed plans, which have been drawn up in close consultation with the local community, represents a major step forward in our campaign to transform the land at Cumberland Avenue."



■ Cumberland Avenue concept design

encouraging responsible use by dog owners and encourage people to be active in managing the site.

In addition, the trust says the plans will ensure the site remains free from all invasive species of plants, and site boundaries will be managed to ensure security, whilst maintaining the privacy of neighbouring proper-

Act which permits a community group to register an interest in land and then buy it if the conditions are favourable."

Although the group's applications - giving them the right of first refusal in the event of the land being put up for sale - were approved by the Scottish Government towards the end of 2016, the land owner, Thomas

Cumberland Avenue plans

But landowners say site not for sale

By DANIELLE LAPPIN

danielle.lappin@newsquest.co.uk

PRESSURE is mounting on the owners of land on the town's Cumberland Avenue to sell now Helensburgh Community Woodlands Group has revealed its plans for the site.

Last year, the Scottish Government approved HCWG's application to register a community interest in the former woodland, as a first step towards a community buy-out.

Draft plans have now been revealed by HCWG's environmental consultant, Iona Hyde, which seek to transform the area "into a real environmental asset for everyone's benefit".

Aileen Morton, Argyll and Bute council leader and Helensburgh councillor, said she believes the site would be best placed in the hands of the community.

She said: "The site at Cumberland Avenue has been a matter of concern to local residents for years now and it's great to see the community create proposals to bring the site back into use and ensure public access to it."

"There is obviously still some way to go but I think that this site would be best placed in the hands of the community to ensure it is protected for future generations."

An open meeting was held in May of this year and the plans were drawn up to reflect the preferences of those who attended.

David Adams, HCWG convener, said: "The launch of these detailed plans, which have been drawn up in close consultation with the local community, represents a major step forward in our campaign to transform the land at Cumberland Avenue."

"They offer a new dawn for the land after years of neglect and controversy."

"We are confident that if we can acquire the land, we will be able to secure the necessary funding to implement what will be a significant project for Helensburgh."

The plans would see woodland and public access through the path reinstated and maintained.

The group also propose to create a path – suitable for all abilities – and an open meadow area within the site. It is claimed the designs will enhance the site's biodiversity by providing a habitat for various species whilst



■ Cumberland Avenue concept design

encouraging responsible use by dog owners and encourage people to be active in managing the site.

In addition, the trust says the plans will ensure the site remains free from all invasive species of plants, and site boundaries will be managed to ensure security, whilst maintaining the privacy of neighbouring properties.

Helensburgh Community Council also support the ambitions of the group.

Norman Muir, HCC convener, said: "The community council supports the aims and ambitions of all the 'green' groups in the town."

"Any development which enhances the appearance and ambience of Helensburgh is to be applauded."

"The Community Woodlands Group has been battling this issue for a long time and they are well-versed in the application of the Community Empowerment

Act which permits a community group to register an interest in land and then buy it if the conditions are favourable."

Although the group's applications – giving them the right of first refusal in the event of the land being put up for sale – were approved by the Scottish Government towards the end of 2016, the land owner, Thomas Paterson told the *Advertiser* that the land was "not for sale, now or in the near future".

And as it stands land owners Mr Paterson and Margery Osborne still do not intend to sell.

Mr Paterson spoke to the *Advertiser* following the release of the plans.

He said: "For us the situation hasn't changed. As far as myself and Margery are concerned the land isn't for sale."

Mr Adams said the next step in the process was to hopefully meet with the landowners in the new year when they hoped to have a "positive negotiation".