

# Helensburgh Community Woodlands Group (HCWG)

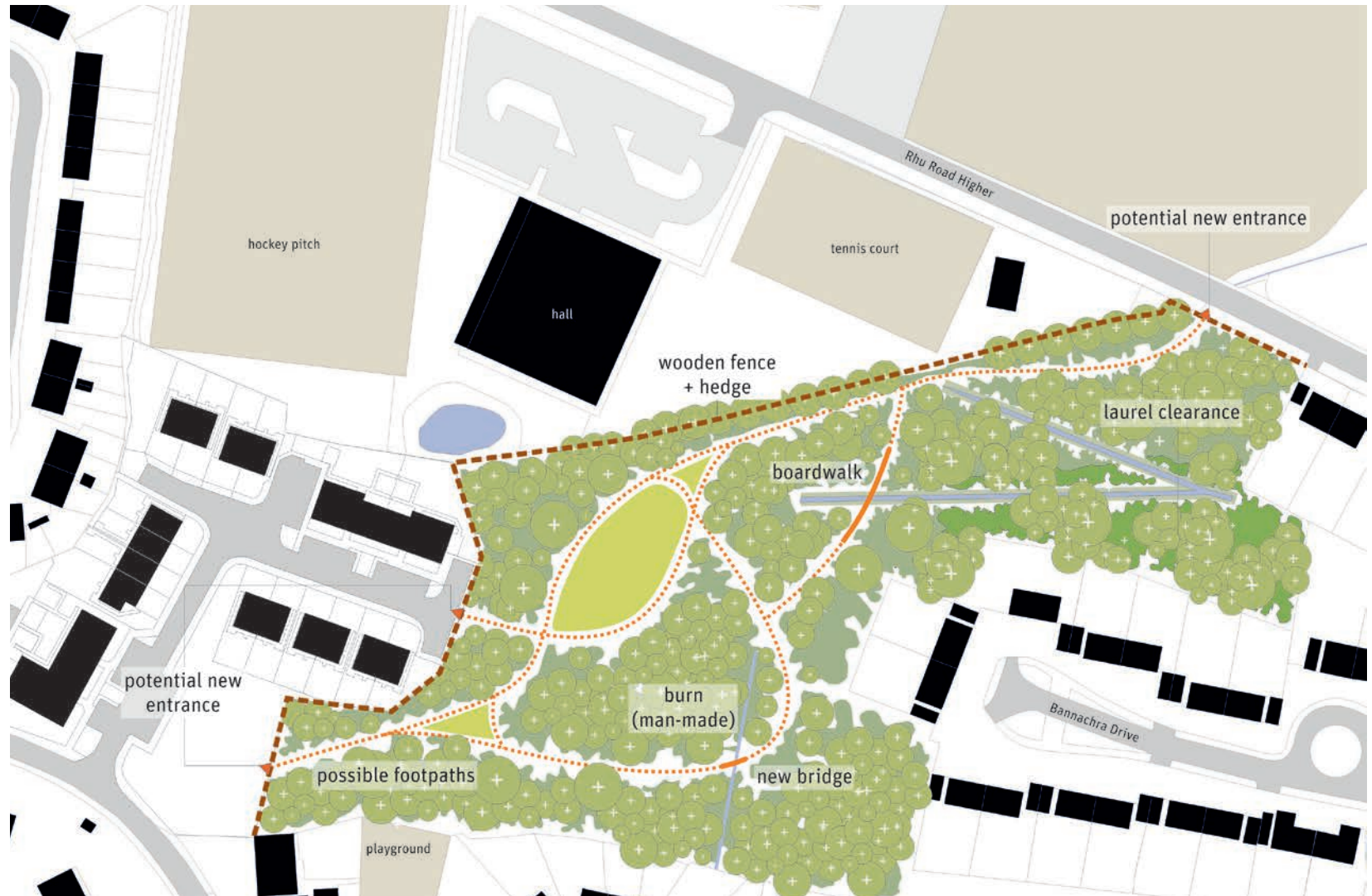
## Castle Woods Management Plan 2018

### Introduction

In 2012, HCWG put forward a draft management plan for wider community consultation. The plan was initiated from local knowledge of the woodland along with information drawn from the detailed woodland assessment previously commissioned by Argyll and Bute Council. About 50 people attended a public meeting we held in November 2012 at which we gathered detailed comments about the draft plan through individual questionnaires and small-group discussions. Now that the redevelopment of Jutland Court is underway to the west of Castle Woods, we have decided to update the draft management plan, taking account, where appropriate, of comments received during the earlier consultation and making best use of the chance we now have to connect the redeveloped housing directly into the woods.

### Intended work

Our immediate proposals are intended to enhance the tree coverage and remedy the environmental neglect that the woodland has suffered over the years. These priority tasks would include:



- Creating better quality footpaths and boardwalks in the woodland. These intended routes have been identified from the obvious desire lines that are already visible on the ground. Their exact route and lengths will be determined at a later date.
- Creation of specific welcoming access points to and from the woodland, with appropriate signage.
- Constructing quality timber fences where appropriate to demarcate the boundary of the community woodland. Following consultation, it has been agreed also to include a native tree species hedge on the same route as the proposed boundary fence.
- Felling and management of trees which are dead, dying or dangerous, particularly on the boundaries with neighbouring houses.
- Ensuring positive ground water management within the woodland, and utilising the water to create a new pond, while at the same time preventing downstream water problems that have affected neighbouring properties. The exact location of the pond will be finalised after a water

- management assessment has been carried out.
- Encouraging suitable wildlife habitats to promote local biodiversity.
- Removing the invasive laurel bushes to let more light into the woodland making it more accessible and welcome to the walkers and users.
- Felling some non-native trees within the woodlands to make the vegetation more open and to allow native shrubs and trees to prosper.
- Planting specific native trees to ensure a stronger woodland structure.

### Way forward

HCWG is keen to involve local people in planning a better future for Castle Woods and is committed to keeping the local community informed and involved in management decisions.

We already have an active membership and will be seeking to build this up. This will ensure that all the necessary administrative and management tasks that

will be involved in looking after Castle Woods can be undertaken effectively.

Now that we have revised and updated our draft plans, we are looking to purchase the land as soon as possible. At that stage, a further community consultation will be carried out to ensure that all local residents and woodland users have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and thoughts as we finalise our detailed plans and specifications. Indeed, the key part of a Community Woodland is the involvement and endorsement of all the plans by the wider local community.

We will need to obtain funding for the purchase and transformation of the woods. There are numerous potential sources for this, eg Forestry Commission, SNH, Armed Forces Community Covenant Fund, MOD, Scottish Land Fund, National Lottery, Argyll & Bute Council



artist's impressions of the central woodland space