point of access. There is, however, an opportunity to create a further pedestrian access from the corner of Sanda Street and Kelbourne Street directly into the woodland where a clearing already exists in the boundary woodland. Currently this area of the woodland suffers fly-tipping and a formal use and management of the area might discourage further misuse of the site. The site levels within this part of the site do not readily lend themselves to the creation of a DDA compliant access, but an engineered path could be created which would allow direct disabled access into the woodland.

Ideally, a permanent vehicular access should be created into the site and an access route maintained open to allow access to the edge of the woodland areas to assist with future management of the site (particularly felling and extraction within the woodland areas) as well as events management. A locked gate at the entrance would prevent unauthorised vehicular access.

The site is heavily used for informal recreation as well as for events and regular group activities run by the Children's Wood Committee. There are significant opportunities to formalise the facilities within the site. More urgently, adequate waste facilities need to be provided within the site, particularly dog waste bins and litter bins. Ideally at least three dog waste bins should be installed; one at the Cloutson Street entrance, one at the Kelbourne Street entrance and one within the site beside the footpath and the meadow. Facilities currently exist on the site for litter disposal and separation of litter for recycling. Bins are all emptied and maintained by volunteers. Again, waste disposal and recycling facilities need to be formalised. The Keep Scotland Beautiful campaign may be able to provide further advice and support on this as well as training for volunteers http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/our-services/community-support/.

The site contains some signage and temporary interpretation most of which is in poor repair or temporary in nature. The site would benefit from the development

of an interpretation strategy which involves erecting formal interpretation and information boards at strategic points within the site and at entrances.

Meadow

The meadow area is an important community resource that is well-used for informal recreation. As a result, it experiences a high level of trampling. The Committee's aspiration is to develop the area into a wildflower meadow but it is likely that continued heavy use of the area is likely to limit the success of this. It is therefore recommended that the central area is maintained as an area for intensive use while the peripheries and western site boundary are managed as wildflower meadows. Successful establishment of wildflowers requires low fertility, particularly for the establishment of calcareous grassland. Blaes is generally quite alkaline suggesting that the site would be suited to the development of a calcareous grassland. However, it would be appropriate to undertake soil testing to determine the pH and nutrient status of the soil prior to progressing work on site. A lower pH may dictate that it would be more appropriate to develop neutral grassland using a general use seed mix. Soil testing will also determine whether the growing medium is nutrient deficient and inform the management of the site in terms of use of soil ameliorants (i.e. fertilisers). Following the selection of areas to be developed as wildflower meadow, the areas should be rotovated to remove existing vegetation) or dug over into the growing medium. Existing trees (particularly those tagged 5019 – 5023) should be removed from the open areas to aid future management of the site, although a few of the better birch specimens could be retained as feature trees if it was considered to be appropriate. Following weed removal, the surface of the ground should be broken up with a rake into a fine tilth during dry, calm weather to avoid soil erosion. A seed mix suited to the site (see Appendix 5 for suggested species mixes) with a ratio mix of grass seed: wildflower seed of 4:1 at a rate of 2-5should then be sown at a rate of 2-5g/m^2. Local (Scottish) suppliers (e.g. http://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/) should be able to provide seed of Scottish provenance. If sowing by hand, the seed should be mixed with damp sand or

sawdust to aid even distribution and to allow the sower to see where the seed has fallen. If there is a prolonged dry spell following sowing, light watering will aid germination. Birds and other seed predators should be kept off the areas sown as far as possible. It may also be necessary to exclude people from the areas (by, for example delineating the areas with steel fencing pins or bamboo canes and barrier tape with information panels explaining the purposed).

In order to maintain and develop biodiversity interest it will be necessary to mow the meadow areas. In the first year the emerging meadow should be cut to maintain the sward at height of 10-15cm (but not less than 5cm). Cuttings should be removed from the site to retain low fertility. In the second and subsequent years the meadow will require cutting at least once, preferably in late summer/early autumn once the plants have flowered and set seed. An occasional spring cutting will help to keep pernicious weeds (e.g. nettle, docks, dandelions etc.) and developing scrub in check, although hand pulling or spot spraying with an approved herbicide may be more suitable management for small meadow areas.



***Photograph 7**: Meadow area with willow natural regeneration*

Boundaries

The metal palisade fence which extends along much of the site boundary is a feature of the area, particularly the Clouston Street and Kelbourne Street boundaries. Most of the fence is still present on site but is being damaged in places by tree regeneration. The trees growing through the fence are generally poor specimens that are damaged to a point that they will have reduced life expectancies. The roots of some of the trees on Kelbourne Street are also damaging the pavement.



***Photograph 8**: Trees damaging the boundary fence on Kelbourne Street*

Ideally all of the boundary trees that are growing through the fence should be removed and the fence repaired. There are significant opportunities along the boundaries, particularly the Kelbourne Street boundary to establish trees set back from the boundary. Species such as rowan and whitebeam would create an attractive feature along the boundary to the west of the entrance. To the east of the entrance, bordering the woodland along Kelbourne Street and along the Sanda Street boundary it would be appropriate to establish a hedge. A suitable

specification for the hedge is provided in Appendix 6. Some hawthorn is already establishing along this boundary, indicating that the conditions are suitable for this species. Other existing natural regeneration, including sycamore and ash could be incorporated into the hedge provided it is subsequently managed as a hedge by frequent cutting and not allowed to develop into standard trees. Preparation of the ground for hedge planting also offers the opportunity to incorporate spring flowering bulbs into the planting.

The western boundary is currently unmanaged and dense natural regeneration is developing. Some trees are already growing through the fences and are damaged as a result (e.g. tree 5004) and should be removed. As discussed above, there is an opportunity to manage the western margin of the site as a wildflower meadow in accordance with the advice given above.

Funding Opportunities

The site lies within the priority area for Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) funding through the Forestry Commission Scotland's Forestry Grant Scheme (see https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/woodland-improvement-grant/woods-in-and-around-towns/). Should The Children's Wood Committee be successful in its bid to formally take on the management of the site, it is strongly advised that the funding opportunities available through WIAT are explored with the FCS Woodland Officer (based in the Central Scotland Conservancy Office centralscotland.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) for the area. WIAT funds a variety of works including footpath creation, repair and maintenance, installation of interpretation boards, litter bins and outdoor furniture etc. as well as woodland creation and management.

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