

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	CPB/6/23



## Highland Community Planning Board – 22 June 2023

### Highland Green Health Partnership Annual Report

**Report by: Cathy Steer, Head of Health Improvement, Public Health, NHS Highland**

**Summary:** Think Health, Think Nature is the work programme of the Highland Green Health Partnership. The partnership is one of four Green Health Partnerships in Scotland and is supported by funding from NatureScot’s ‘Our Natural Health Service’ programme. The attached annual report outlines some of the main areas of work that have been progressed throughout 2021/22, summarises a number of achievements delivered in year 4 of the programme and highlights main priorities for year 5 of the programme.

**Attachment:** Year 4 Annual Report of the Highland Green Health Partnership

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>
1.1	The wide range of benefits of access to green spaces and contact with nature, on our mental and physical health, is well documented. However, not everyone in Highland has the same opportunity to engage with nature and there are barriers to engagement. There is a growing body of evidence that typically shows that greener living environments are associated with reduced levels of socio-economic inequalities across multiple health outcomes. There are also known links between being connected to nature and pro-environmental behaviours, offering co-benefits to achieve our net zero commitments. Green health can help to build resilience at an individual and community level.
1.2	Think Health Think Nature is one of four initiatives in Scotland stemming from Our Natural Health Service which aims to show how Scotland’s natural environment is a resource that can be used to help tackle some of our key health issues and reduce health inequalities. Our vision involves providing opportunities and building on existing resources that can support individuals and communities throughout Highland to improve their health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities, through engaging with the natural environment.  Our Aims: 1. To get more people to use the outdoor environment and more regularly

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To contribute to reducing health inequalities by targeting activity at those who are most in need</li> <li>3. To co-ordinate partnership efforts on use of the outdoor environment for health</li> <li>4. To identify existing assets, make links between them, and identify gaps in provision</li> <li>5. To develop a network of those with an interest in promoting the outdoor environment for health</li> <li>6. To create a shared learning environment</li> </ol> <p>This is being achieved through three pillars of work:</p> <p>Pillar 1. Everyday contact with nature</p> <p>Pillar 2. Nature based health promotion initiatives</p> <p>Pillar 3. Nature based interventions with a defined health or social outcome</p>
1.3	<p>The Think Health Think Nature partnership meets quarterly and is chaired by Cathy Steer, Head of Health Improvement within the NHS Highland Public Health Team. The workplan is coordinated by the Senior Development Officer for Green Health who is employed through NHS Highland. The partnership regularly engages with local Community Partnerships and the Senior Development Officer is a member of the Mental Health Delivery Group, where regular reports on the partnerships work plan and actions are considered. A part-time community engagement officer was also employed through the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) in 2022, to assist with the delivery of the work.</p> <p>The Partnership is made up of the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Highland</li> <li>• NatureScot</li> <li>• High Life Highland</li> <li>• Highland Third Sector Interface</li> <li>• Paths for All</li> <li>• The University of the Highlands and Islands</li> <li>• The Cairngorms National Park Authority</li> <li>• Forestry and Land Scotland</li> <li>• The Highland Council</li> <li>• Highland Environment Forum</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Progress in Year 4</b>
2.1	<p>In year 4 (2021/22) the partnership delivered a varied work plan, furthering success at achieving several aims, this is summarised in the attached Year 4 Annual Report.</p> <p>Pillar 1. Everyday contact with nature</p> <p>We have promoted everyday contact with nature through our website and social media platforms and ran a successful Green Health Week campaign in May 2022, with 46 activities promoted in the Highland region. Our website had 13,103 views in year 4, our social media pages grew to a collective following of 1,900 and our e-newsletter has 91 subscribers.</p>

	<p>Pillar 2. Nature based health promotion initiatives We continued to support and increase capacity through training and delivered £23,000 to community organisations through our <a href="#">Highland Green Health Small Grant fund</a>. Additionally, 19 nature-based mental wellbeing projects were supported through the <a href="#">Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund</a>. 52 new Health Walk Leaders were trained through the Paths for All programme, 32 people attended mental health and nature training and 24 green health activity providers were trained in outdoor first aid.</p> <p>Pillar 3. Nature based interventions with a defined health or social outcome Green Prescription Pilots were set up in <a href="#">Lochaber</a>, <a href="#">Caithness</a>, <a href="#">Kyle of Lochalsh</a> and <a href="#">Aviemore</a> with the aim of developing green health referral pathways. Existing services were mapped, a directory built, networks created, and support and training delivered. Links were made with community link workers and other healthcare professionals and Think Health Think Nature resources and directory shared through several successful networking events.</p> <p>The partnership created an online <a href="#">toolkit</a> where a library of resources can be accessed. These resources can support individuals, health &amp; social care staff, community groups and decision makers to support wellbeing through connection with nature. We produced 3,000 copies of the Almanac, a seasonal guide to encourage connection to nature and the outdoors. This was launched across Highlife Highland Libraries and distributed to health and social care staff, health walk groups and members of the public. It is available to order from the Highland Health Improvement Services (HIRS).</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Priorities &amp; Actions for year 5</b>
3.1	Our priority in 2023 is to focus on integrating Green Health into formal referral pathways; and to promote and raise awareness and use of the suite of tools produced to date. We will link with regional efforts on climate change, biodiversity and workplace health and wellbeing initiatives, and seek mechanisms to embed the work to date and create sustainability through integration with local Community Partnerships and existing networks.
3.2	In May 2023 we awarded £23,000 to 18 community organisations through our Highland Green Health Small Grant Fund which aims to contribute towards sustained green health action across Highland. Projects were awarded up to £1500 and have been summarised <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>4.</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
4.1	<p>This is the final year of the substantive funding support from NatureScot, with the project officially due to conclude in September 2023. Partnership members have confirmed their commitment to the continuation of the partnership and within current budgets we can continue the Senior Development Officer and Community Engagement support until the end March 2024. Potential funding streams are being explored to continue core support for partnership work including dedicated staff resource beyond this time.</p> <p>In May 2023 a showcase &amp; planning event was held. This brought together the public sector, health &amp; social care, and third sector organisations that support and deliver green health projects and activities across Highland. The outputs of this will be used to</p>

develop a long-term sustainability plan and a Highland Green Health Charter in an effort to maintain progress beyond 2023.

Through our pilot work we have identified and established local green health networks in several areas, and have recognised the strong links between climate, nature and health. Networks provide opportunities for joint action, shared learning and skills development as well as generating local solutions to problems that meet community priorities and needs. We have produced a [Nature Climate and Health Guidance](#) which outlines our recommendations for how Community Partnerships in Highland can support and benefit from this approach.

We recommend that local Green Health Networks should link with Community Partnerships to ensure that action delivered through these networks are aligned with the community planning priorities for that area and to allow networks to contribute to the development of future plans and priorities. Community Partnerships can provide a vehicle for regular governance of local climate, nature and health networks. This will help avoid duplication and add value to the work of the Community Partnerships.

The partnership will also be piloting community led pathways to green health activity in Kinlochleven, closely aligned with the Community Action Plan for that area. This is in recognition that there are alternative pathways into green health activity, particularly where there may be challenges developing pathways from statutory services. Our [Stepping Stones Model](#) recognises that there exists a pool of knowledge, within communities about the opportunities available for green health initiatives. By enhancing and supporting community enablers we can help develop alternative pathways that support health improvement and a reduction in health inequalities.

#### **Recommendation:**

The Board is asked to:

- i) Note the progress of the Highland Green Health Partnership and achievements in Year 4 of the programme
- ii) Note the priorities for Year 5 of the programme
- iii) Consider and agree the proposed approach to embed Green Health networks with local Community Partnerships and develop a sustainable approach to green health activity in Highland.

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**Date: 22 June 2023**

**Appendices: Green Health Partnership Annual Report**

# YEAR 4

#thinkhealththinknature

# WORK PLAN REPORT

Think Health Think Nature is the work programme of the Highland Green Health Partnership. The work is coordinated and delivered by the Senior Development Officer for Green Health, at NHS Highland. A part-time Engagement Officer was also employed through Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) in 2022, to assist with the delivery of the work. Below is a summary of progress for the 4th year of the programme 2021/2022.

## 1 Website and Social Media

Our **website** has had 13,103 views in the past 12 months. Our facebook page has 1000 followers (11% increase over previous year) with a reach of 12,894 , Twitter has 567 followers (31% Increase) with 55,120 tweet impressions and 9725 profile visits. Instagram has 353 followers (16% Increase) with a reach of 797. The greatest engagement occurred in May 2022, during Green Health Week.

In June 2022, our **e-newsletter** moved to Mail Chimp and has 91 subscribers with a 55-70% opening rate.

## 2 Green Health Week 2022

In 2022, Green Health Week took place the 14th - 22nd May. We encouraged Green Health activity providers across Highland to put on an event or activity to encourage people to connect with nature for health & wellbeing. 46 activities were promoted across our website and directory, searchable by local area. We launched our Green Health Small Grant Fund for 2022, and ran a social media campaign resulting in 1084 website views and a facebook reach of 7000 - a ten fold increase on the previous year.



## 3 Networking

70 people attended our **Caithness** online Green Health Seminar, introduced by the Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport, Maree Todd MSP. There followed a network lunch for Green Health activity providers and 16 organisations attended and learned about how they can be involved.

**East Ross-shire** hosted Maree Todd MSP, at Evanton Woods in May 2022, to launch the continued funding for Our Natural Health Service to 2023. Trellis Therapy Gardening Network held Green Health activity themed gatherings in East Ross-shire and Aviemore.

In **Lochaber**, Green Health activity providers attended a network lunch and later, offered taster sessions in activities such as e-bikes and health walks as part of the Kinlochleven Be Happy Be Healthy Event in May 22.

Watch the Kinlochleven Be Healthy event film



Watch Caithness the Seminar



Maree Todd MSP



Lochaber Network Lunch in Caol

## 4 Green Health Small Grants 2022

In June 2022, we awarded £23,000 to 14 Highland groups funding through our small grant fund which aims to contribute towards sustained green health action across Highland. Projects were awarded up to £1500 and have been summarised [here](#).



## Highland Community Mental Health Fund



A Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund was administered in 2022, by the Highland Third Sector Interface, as part of the overall Scottish Government's Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan. Of the **102** successful projects, **19** were nature-based mental wellbeing initiatives (18.6%). Read the full report [here](#).

## 5

## 6 Resources

Following the pandemic we have now been able to print resources and offer these through the Health Improvement Resource Service run by NHS Highland. The printed resources were launched in April 2022, and offer free printed materials sent to anywhere in Highland. The available resources can be viewed [here](#):

Our **Hike the Highlands from Home** virtual walking challenge, now has 2 213 participants registered and collectively they have walked 364 million steps across 155 361 miles. That's 6.2 times around the equator!

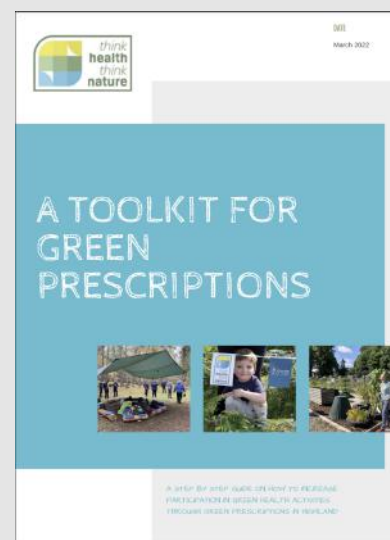


## 7 Guidance for Practitioners

Following the pilot programmes run in years 1-4, we have published a [toolkit](#) for Green Prescriptions aimed at communities.

We have also developed guidance on running Green Health taster events and a suite of associated tool. Click [here](#)

We have presented awareness sessions to GP Practice MAnagers, Community Link Workers, Cancer Support Workers and District Nurses across Highland.



## 8 Think Nature Health Walks

- High Life Highland (HLH) Countryside Rangers joined health walk groups to lead nature themed walks and delivered an online 'Engaging with Nature' training course for walk leaders.
- Creative walks which included nature photography, watercolour painting and family nature crafts.

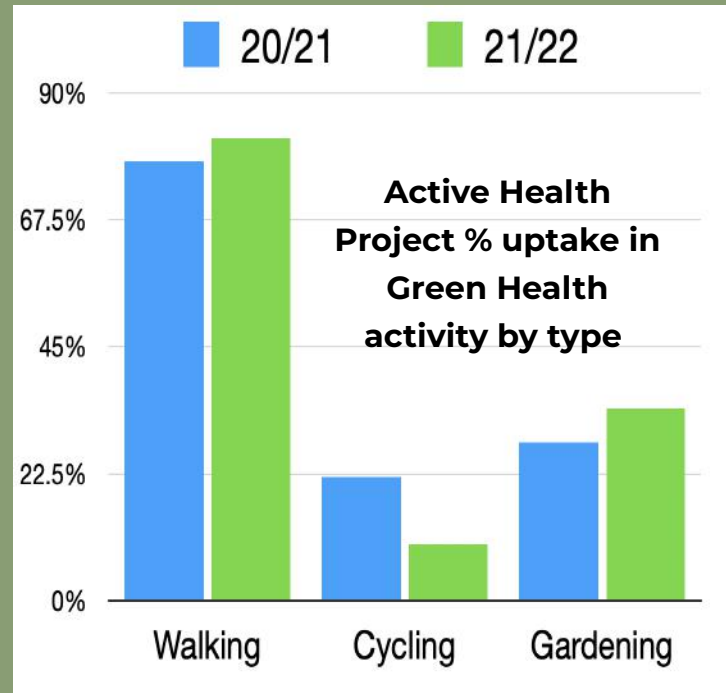


- A bi-lingual Polish speaking buggy group was set up in Alness
- 6 arthritis awareness walks and workshops were delivered across Highland
- Active travel survey delivered to all walking groups and sharing relevant info at events.

## 9 Referral Pathways

In May 2022, Community Link Workers began making referrals in 28 Highland GP practices and have been equipped with the Think Health Think Nature resources and directory. Results will be available in Year 5.

The Velocity [Active Health Project](#) has received 329 referrals in the last year - a 28% increase. (86% are more active as a result of their engagement with the project).



## Training 10

- 52 new Health Walk Leaders trained through Paths for All programme in 2021/2022
- 32 people attended 'Using Nature as a Resource to Support Mental Health'
- 24 Green Health Activity Providers Outdoor First Aid Trained

## 11

### Cairngorms 2030: People and Nature Thriving Together

Inspired by the Gaelic word Dùthchas – meaning the deep-rooted connection between people and nature – Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 is putting the power to tackle the climate and nature crises in the hands of people who live, visit and work in the UK's largest national park.

The programme will put local people at the heart of decision-making; work with land managers to restore and enhance landscapes; make getting around the Park easier, safer and greener; and foster healthier, happier communities with wellbeing at their heart.



Heritage Horizons is an unprecedented partnership of over 45 organisations and is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Highland Green Health Partnership and NHS Highland are supporting work streams around green prescribing.



# 12

## High Life Highland Green Leadersip Award



Launched in 2022, the **Green Leadership** programme is a partnership with the High Life Highland (Leadership/Rangers), Trees for Life, NHS, Highland Adapts and others. It is open to young people aged 12-25 years, and although underpinned by leadership in sport and youth work, the awards can be utilised by young people volunteering in conservation and other health & wellbeing initiatives outdoors. All members of the programme are also encouraged to sign up for Saltire Awards. These national awards are designed to formally recognise the commitment and contribution of youth volunteering.

*To date have integrated Green Health principles in to 21 Highland plans and policies.*

*We continue to support 3rd Year students from the University of Aberdeen Sustainable Medicine course each year.*

# 13 The Year Ahead

Our priority in 2023 will focus on integrating Green Health into formal referral pathways; and to promote and raise awareness and use of the fleet of tools produced to date. We will link with regional efforts on climate change, biodiversity and workplace health and wellbeing initiatives.

A showcase event will take place in May 2023, with a long term sustainability plan developed as an output of this to ensure progress is maintained beyond 2023.

## The Partners

The Highland Green Health Partnership is one of four area-wide partnerships developed in Scotland. It will contribute towards "[Our Natural Health Service](#)", an action programme being led by NatureScot, which aims to encourage more use of the outdoors to tackle physical inactivity, mental health issues and health inequalities. The partnership is made up of representatives from NHS Highland; NatureScot; The Highland Council; The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA); Highlife Highland (HLH); The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), The Highland Environment Forum; The Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI); Paths for All; Forestry and Land Scotland and practitioners in health and social care.

