



# Arts in Nature

## Project Launch

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November almost 50 people gathered together to celebrate the launch of a brand new project, 'Arts in Nature' at Abriachan Forest. Creative practitioners, environmentalists, nature lovers and colleagues from third sector and public organisations such Think Health Think Nature, Highland Hospice and NHS Highland, enjoyed an inspirational day in the forest taking part in a variety of creative activities. Sessions included creative writing, printing, sketching, photography, natural art and singing, which took place at inspirational settings within Abriachan Woods at the bird hide, forest classroom, treehouse and roundhouse.



Images: Alexander Williamson Photography



Everyone gathered for lunch in the forest classroom and toasted fruit on the fire pit by the wood shed. Throughout the day musicians from Feis Rois entertained us with some lovely fiddle music, which was very enjoyable.

Juliet from South Highland OWL (Outdoor Woodland Learning) group, who attended the launch said: "The project launch of Arts in Nature at Abriachan Forest Trust was an inspirational, uplifting and creative event. I thoroughly enjoyed doing free-art using sticks and ink wash in the woods, mixed with a session on wellbeing. The lunch break was a great opportunity to network plus the food was most welcome, and delicious. The afternoon workshop of singing lifted everyone's spirits even more!"



Highland Third Sector Interface's newest project 'Arts in Nature' has been created as a result of a legacy by Dr Margaret Sommerville, one time Director of Public Health in NHS Highland, who following her retirement was the HTSI Chairperson until shortly before her passing in 2021. The project is aiming to honour Margaret's passion for the positive impacts of outdoors and the environment on our health and the creative arts.

Charlotte Mackenzie, Arts in Nature Manager, said 'the creation of this wonderful project is such an amazing opportunity and it's an honour to take forward Margaret's wishes and lead a project which is dedicated to arts and the environment. Our aim is to support organisations and communities to engage with the outdoors and connect with nature in a creative way, whether that be through visual, literary or performing arts. We will be working directly with groups on creative sessions and also with organisations to help them build skills, resources and confidence in the ongoing delivery of creative activities in outdoor spaces, by creating toolkits, guides and to work with them on a 1-1 basis.'

HTSI Chief Officer Mhairi Wylie said 'As a whole team we are delighted to have this project launch as it feels like it has been a long time in the planning but very much worth the wait. Looking to expand the confidence of community groups and others to engage in the use of the outdoors in a creative way in their work is a key and important aspect of the focus of the project and we know from feedback across different groups that more opportunities to engage in the outdoors but not necessarily about being physically active would be welcome. We are really looking forward to seeing how this grows'.