

# Think Nature Health Walks Newsletter



Summer 2022

**Welcome to the Summer edition of the Think Nature Health Walk's newsletter!**

**It's been a busy summer with some spells of great weather, wonderful walks and lots of activities and events going on too. Read on to find out more....!**

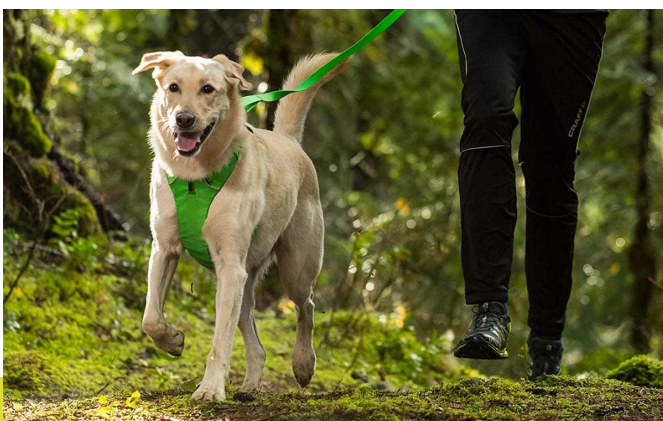
## Health Walks Update

Recent guidelines advise that there is no limit on the numbers participating in Health Walks and Buggy Walks, and that walker numbers should be determined by the number of Walk Leaders available and the suitability of walking routes. Shorter or gentler walks could be considered for those that have not attended for some time or are new to walking. Please use all standard pre-covid paperwork, as the adapted versions are no longer required.

## Dogs and Health Walks

Health Walk guidelines suggest that trained assistance dogs and their owners should always be welcomed. It is not normally advised to encourage pet dogs on standard Health Walks but there is growing evidence of demand for dog owners to increase their activity levels and to be able to make social connections through groups. So it is up to each Health Walk group to decide what's best for their members.

Please get in touch if you would like more information on this.



## Training for Walk Leaders

Online Walk Leader training is available on the following dates:

**30 September, 28 October, 24 November**

Paths for All are offering Strength and Balance Workshops for Walk Leaders that you can join free of charge. Courses are online and last for 3.5 hours. The dates are:

**Thursday 6 October, 1.30pm**

**Wednesday 9 November, 9.30am**

**Thursday 8 December, 1.30m**

**Thursday 2 February, 9.30am**

If you would like more information or to book a place, or if you have any other training needs, such as Dementia Friendly Walk Leader Training or First Aid, please get in touch:

**[charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk)**

# Creative Walks

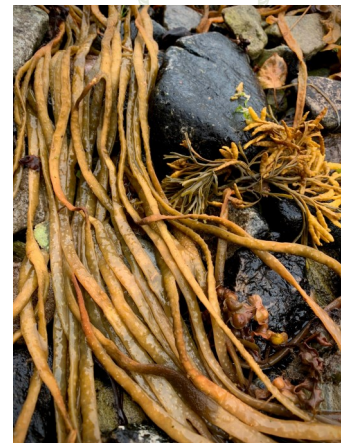
Some of our walking groups have been getting creative over the summer. I have had the pleasure of joining groups to lead creative sessions including photography, natural art, watercolour painting and sketching in nature. Our focus has been the wonderful nature that we discover on our walks, such as wildflowers, wildlife and landscapes. Photos below were taken during a Family Art Walk in Kinlochleven and a photography session at the Plock in Kyle. This month there will be a photography session with the Tongue Walking Group on the 7th and watercolour painting with the Lairg group on the 20th, with more to follow!

## How to book:

All sessions are free and materials are supplied. The creative walk includes time to walk, talk, be creative and enjoy a chat and cuppa afterwards. If you would like to book a session please get in touch: [charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk)



One of our new groups, Kinlochleven Health Walk Group, which is in partnership with the Kinlochleven Community Trust, invited everyone to join them for a Family Art Walk. Donna and Stephen led the walk and shared some interesting facts about local nature and the environmental work that the trust are doing. Along the way we collected items to draw in our sketch books and create some natural art pieces, which were presented on log slices. At the end of the session we enjoyed a lovely picnic down by the riverside. Thank you to everyone involved.

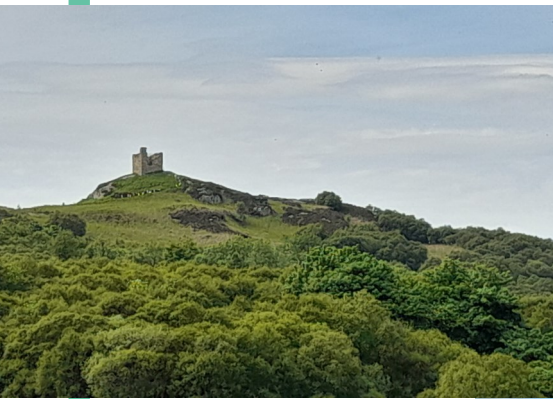


Kyle & Lochalsh Walking Group, in partnership with Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust, enjoyed a wonderful photography walk at the Plock. After sharing some hints and tips on creative outdoor photography we walked through the meadow and birch woodland to the shore and came across vibrant wildflowers, ferns and berries and discovered many different types of seaweed, shells, crabs and even seals basking on the rocks! These all made brilliant subjects for our photography. Many thanks to walk leaders Judith, Nic and Maggie, who shared some very interesting nature and history facts on our walk.

**The Big Fit Walk** is a national event which usually takes place every year in June and aims to inspire communities to come together and walk to celebrate all the benefits that walking brings.

The Tongue walking group held a very popular Big Fit Walk event which attracted over 30 walkers, including the children from the local school. The walk started off with a song from the children and everyone then walked from the Kyle Centre down the hill and along by the river before climbing up to Castle Varrich.

After a lovely walk in the sunshine and with a great sense of achievement, the group headed back to the Kyle Centre for well earned refreshments.



## Walking Groups and Engaging with Nature

Highlife Highland Senior Countryside Rangers Andy and Eilidh-Ann hosted a fantastic online session for walk leaders a couple of weeks ago. Andy shared with us some valuable information about wildlife recording, equipment needed, Scottish Outdoor Access Code, safety outdoors, as well as the benefits of spending time in nature and how to get more involved. Here are some top tips:

**Recording Nature** - there are many free apps available such as **iNaturalist** or use a notebook to record details

**Websites** - to find out more about recording local nature visit **www.hbrg.org.uk**, Highland Biological Recording Group or look up **iSpot** which helps to identify wildlife and share nature

**HLH Library Resources** - you can hire out useful nature resources from libraries across Highland

**Get Involved** - there are many community nature restoration projects taking place such as wildflower seed planting.

# Nature Walks



Highlife Highland Countryside Rangers have been visiting our Health Walk and Buggy Walk groups during spring and summer this year and have shared their amazing knowledge on local wildlife, plant life and habitats. Many thanks to the Countryside Ranger Team for joining our walking groups and making them so enjoyable and very interesting.



Rangers Paul and Roz visited Castletown and Wick Walking groups who enjoyed finding out more about nature in local woodland and riverside areas. The Wick group also planted wildflower seeds before their walk along the river. They look stunning!



Ranger Marcia visited the Dornoch and Black Isle Buggy Walk groups and led some nature scavenger hunts where everyone learnt more about the flowers, plants and beasts that they came across. They also collected items along the way to make some natural art.



## Autumn Nature Walks

If you would like to book a nature walk during the next couple of months, please let me know and we can arrange a date and time for the HLH Ranger in your area to visit.

Email: [charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk)

Talented walk leader Jen made nature crowns with the Dornoch Buggy group in Camore Woods.



The Tongue walking group travelled to Tain and walked at Aldie Burn a few weeks ago. Along the trail they saw frogs, newts, tadpoles, a kite and lots of beautiful wild orchids. They also met members of the Tain walking group, who just happened to be there at the same time. (photo below of both groups together) Contact details were exchanged and they are planning a joint walk in future.



## Photo Gallery



The U3A/SIU walking group recently enjoyed one of their regular Friday walks with stunning views of the Quiraing and Trotternish Ridge. Walk Leader Charlie co-ordinates the most amazing walks, taking in the breath taking landscapes on Skye.



During Lairg's celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee back in June, Lairg and District Community Initiatives led a well supported Health Walk and Jubilee Tea picnic, along with several other community events.



Photos by Ian Burn

Many thanks to all that send photos in. Keep them coming!...

## CONTACT

Please get in touch if you would like any further information or support, or if you would like to feature an article or photo in the summer edition of the newsletter (please email them to me by the end of October). Many thanks,

*Charlotte*

**Charlotte Mackenzie, Project Manager, Think Nature Health Walks**  
**Email: [charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk) Mobile: 07385 380756**

