

# Think Nature Health Walks Newsletter

Winter 2022



Welcome to the Winter edition of the Think Nature Health Walk's newsletter

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a lovely festive season and enjoyed some refreshing winter walks. Even though the theme of this newsletter is 'winter', more recently it has felt as though spring is on it's way and I have even noticed some snowdrops making an appearance in the garden. Surely that means that spring is just around the corner?!

## Health Walk Updates

January can be such a slow moving month but it's great to get back to walking, which can help us feel ready for the year ahead.

It's fantastic to hear that some groups are welcoming new members. Please can you remember to ask any new walkers to register, either by completing a registration form or by using the online link.

Latest Covid19 government guidance now advises that there are no limits on the number of people or households you can meet at home and in public places. So there are no further changes to health walks. Further information can be found on [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



Evidence shows that there is a positive relationship between a person's connection to nature and their health and wellbeing. Experiencing nature is thought to provide health and wellbeing benefits and research shows that people with a greater connection to nature are more likely to behave positively towards the environment, wildlife and habitats.

Through their Walking with Nature campaign, Paths for All want to help people understand more about the 5 pathways to nature connectedness and how they can be integrated into our regular walks. They will be suggesting activities that people can do, that will tie in with our themes and the 5 pathways to nature connectedness. Each month of the campaign there will be a different theme. In January it will be 'woodlands' and in February it will be 'connecting with nature wherever you are'.

For more information visit: [www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk)

Walking  
with  
nature

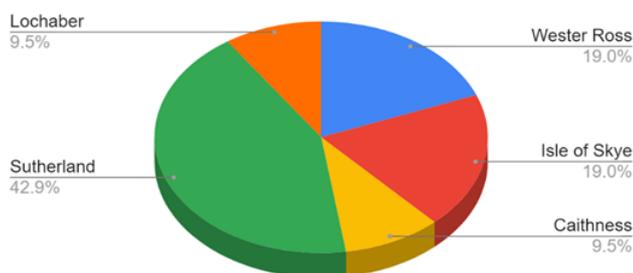
5 pathways to nature connectedness:

Contact Emotion  
Beauty Compassion  
Meaning

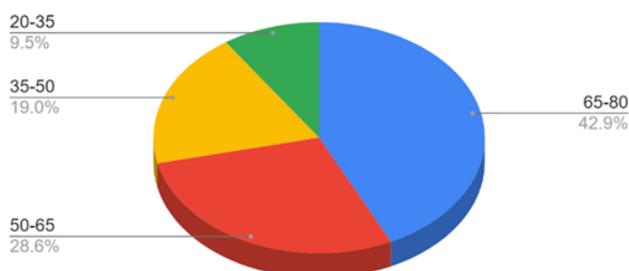
# Think Nature Health Walks Active Travel Survey

During the winter months of 2021, members of Think Nature Health Walking groups completed an online Active Travel Survey. The aim was to find out more about how our walkers actively travelled for everyday journeys. Below are the results along with feedback from our members on what improvements could be made for walking in their area of Highland.

Which area of Highland do you live in?



What age are you?



**90%** lived in a rural location

**95%** said that their health was good/very good

**57%** go for a walk everyday

**3-5km** was the average that people walked

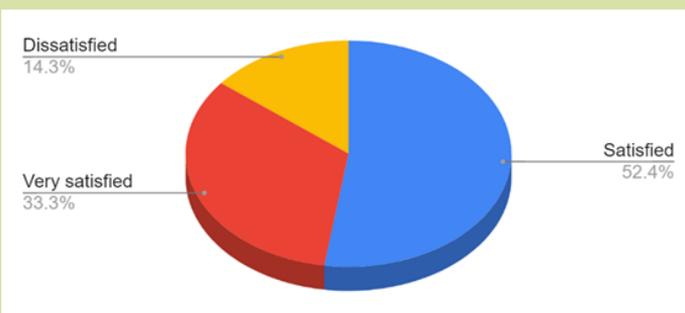
**62%** walked at a fairly brisk pace

**47%** cycled a few times a month

**30%** cycled as a means of transport everyday

**55%** incorporated walking to work, shops/post office, leisure facility, for social visits, health appointments and school drop offs as part of their health walk every week

How satisfied would you say you are with current facilities for walking in your area?



**52.4%** said that changes could be made to improve the areas where they walked and suggested that the most effective changes would be to:

- Provide more pavements or walkways away from busy roads
- Create paths near main roads to avoid walking on the busy roads
- Improve walking and wheeling routes separated from roads
- Provide more pavements along roads linking villages
- Link up some paths to eventually make a route round the outskirts of the town
- Provide more cycle routes
- Improve surface of paths
- Better removal of dog fouling
- Sweep up wet slippery leaves
- Open more toilet facilities
- Increase number of litter bins
- Better lighting for walking at night
- Gritted paths in winter
- More footpath signposts
- Provision of more sheltered benches and resting places along regular routes

*Many thanks to the members of the Think Nature Health Walking groups for their participation in this survey.*

# Walking with Highlife Highland Countryside Rangers

We are delighted to have recently teamed up with the Countryside Rangers to offer visits to some of our walking groups. Local Rangers will attend walks throughout the year to share information of local nature and the environment, i.e. on bird song, nature identification, tracks and signs.

Rangers can also support the group with Citizen Science surveys, for example, recording butterflies for the Butterfly Conservation group. They can also show the group how to record wildlife and plants using various apps. Following on from nature sessions, the walking group can be awarded a nature accreditation.

## Versus Arthritis Walks

Think Nature Health Walks have received some funding from Versus Arthritis and we are planning some themed walks, along with discussions around living with arthritis. Walks and Talks will take place throughout February and March, where we will be sharing experiences and resources during the walks with a chance to get together afterwards for a chat and a cuppa. Walking groups that are taking part will be welcoming people from their local communities to join them.

For more information about our arthritis walks please get in touch: [charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk)

The logo for Versus Arthritis, featuring the words "VERSUS" and "ARTHRITIS" in white, bold, uppercase letters on a purple rectangular background.

## Training opportunities in Lochaber

Think Health Think Nature are offering some free training opportunities as part of the green health pilot programme in the Lochaber area. The courses are for current volunteer walk leaders, but also for those who would like to train to become new walk leaders. Please get in touch if you would like more information. Courses will take place during the Spring and sessions include:

- Volunteer Health Walk Leader Training
- Outdoor First Aid Training
- Using Nature as a Resource to Support Mental Wellbeing
- Health Inequalities Awareness Training NHS
- Dementia Friends Scotland
- MacMillan Move More
- Strength and Balance

For more information email : [charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk)

## Women's Health Festival, Caithness, 30th April 2022

**The Think Nature Health Walk project will be hosting a health walk and information stand on the day and are delighted to be taking part in the festival. I spoke to Kirsteen Campbell of LGOWIT who told me more about the event:**



"I am delighted and really excited to be organising the Women's Health Festival, along with Joan & Zoe from Thurso Development Trust. It is to be held in Thurso on Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The plan is that during the day it will be outdoors with information and awareness stalls, covering all things women's health. There is also going to be some 'come and try' sessions with yin yoga, tai chi and more, as well as food stalls. There will be lots of fun and awareness raising, stamping out stigmas along the way. Maree Todd MSP will open the event in her Ministerial role as Women's Health Minister. Then in the evening we will have guest speakers and a ceilidh. Women's health needs to be normalised to talk about, hopefully the festival will help get this message across".

# EVENTS

Here are a couple of winter events that you may be interested in taking part in. Even though your group doesn't meet on these dates, you could still take part and share your experiences when you meet up to walk.

## Big Garden Birdwatch



During the weekend of 28th-30th January, people across the UK take just one hour of their time to count the birds seen in their gardens and outdoor areas. Over the past 30 years it has generated some interesting results, which then helps provide a valuable insight into the national population of garden birds, highlighting the vulnerability of some of our most popular bird species. To find out more about the Big Garden Birdwatch, and to sign up for the event visit the RSPB website: [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## Time to Talk day

3rd February

The day is about creating supportive communities by having conversations with family, friends, or colleagues about mental health. We all have mental health. By talking about it, we can support ourselves and others. For more information visit: [www.timetotalkday.co.uk](http://www.timetotalkday.co.uk)



If you are hosting any events or are doing any fundraising please let me know and we can share and promote your event. It would also be great to display some of the photos in our newsletter!

# Photo Gallery



Thank you to Amanda at the Golspie Bothy Walking Group for sending in these fabulous photos of their walk at Little Ferry recently.

## 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 next edition of the newsletter. Many thanks,

*Charlotte*

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