

# Think Nature Health Walks Newsletter

Summer 2021



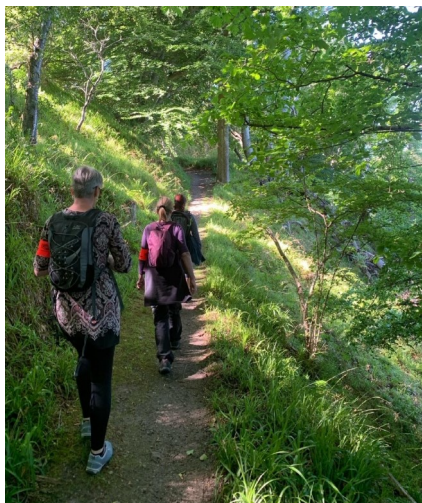
Welcome to the Summer edition of the Think Nature Health Walk's newsletter! I hope you enjoy this issue and are having a lovely summer. With better weather and brighter nights, it's been great to get out and enjoy more walking.

## Health Walks on the go!

Most Health Walk groups have started up again. A big **thank you** to all of the Walk Leaders for their dedication in keeping their groups going, when possible, and for the support they have given their group members. Many groups have enjoyed extra and creative ways of communicating through regular updates and chats, online activities and buddy walks. It's wonderful to see how walking has kept many of us going through recent challenging times. Walking is the way to go!

## Paths for All updated guidance on Health Walks and Covid19

Now that we have moved to Level 0, there is no limit on the numbers taking part in Health Walks. Actual numbers should be decided by the number of volunteers available and the suitability of routes. Hygiene measures should still be followed and it is recommended that 2m physical distancing is maintained before, during and after walks, although this can now be reduced to 1m if the group feels it is appropriate. Post walk socialising can go ahead with 10 people from 4 households in an indoor public place like a café, pub or restaurant with 1m physical distancing, or 15 people from 15 households outdoors, with no physical distancing. For more info see: [www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk)



## The Golspie Bothy

Think Nature Health Walks is delighted to be working with the Golspie Bothy, which is a collaborative project with Cycling UK & Sutherland Outdoor Activity Project.

Their aim is to replace some local journeys made by car with walking and cycling. Not only do they lead weekly health walks, they also lead weekly rides, provide free e-bike loans and do 1:1 bike confidence sessions too.

To find out more contact:

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# Kyle & Lochalsh Health Walks

By Judith

Kyle and Lochalsh Health Walks began in earnest in April. We have three registered leaders, another trained 'in reserve' and one more undertaking training in August. Our walks have been attended by 10 individuals, 8 of these on a regular basis.



As a leader, it is particularly satisfying to offer support people out of doors as this is my 'happy place' too. Reasons for attending range from *'the fit and active but new to the area and want to meet people'* through *'signed off work due to mental ill health and need to keep active'* to *'very unfit and need the incentive to get and about'*. After the isolation felt by many people throughout the lockdowns and restrictions of the last 18 months, being able to meet and socialise in a safe and legal manner is proving vital for our walkers.



Kyle might be on the coast, but all roads and paths out of the village are uphill! After the first few walks, we made the decision to move our starting point from the centre village to the Plock where we can set out on the flat and progress uphill later. Here, we have a wide variety of options, with a short trail on a level surface and numerous more challenging routes through woodland, to the shore and to a fine viewpoint.

It's rewarding to watch folk grow in confidence as we gently encourage them to push their comfort zones a little and see the pleasure they get in reaching places they would not go alone.

For our Midsummer walk, we created postcards as a souvenir of the event. Observing the 'rule of 7' (pass 6 and pick the 7th) and 'pick no orchids' to ensure no rarities were gathered, we collected samples of flowers and grasses and arranged them on double-sided tape on cards. Apart from the creative activity, this was a good excuse to stop for a wee rest every so often!



## Buggy Walks Update

Over the last few months we have been working with Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) to set up 9 new Buggy Walks across the Highlands. Buggy Walks are ideal for parents, carers and grandparents who want to keep active while caring for their babies and children. A team of CALA Family Practitioners completed their Walk Leader training in February and have set up a programme of weekly walks in **Thurso, Dornoch, Black Isle, Inverness, Alness, Kinlochleven, Strontian, Ardgour and Kilmallie**. Each walk involves an activity during or after the walk, with time for a snack as well!

Buggy Walks have become very popular, as during lockdown parents with babies and toddlers weren't able to meet at their usual groups within the community, but meeting outdoors and walking as a group within Covid19 guidelines, has been an ideal way to meet other parents, share experiences, keep active and enjoy the fresh air.

A team of Highland Council Early Years Practitioners have also completed Walk Leader training and are setting up a further 10 Buggy Walks. So there will be plenty of locations across the Highlands where you can join a Buggy Walking group.

For more information on Buggy Walks:  
[www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk)



Eilidh, along with Bookbug, read some stories to the Black Isle Buggy group, after a nursery rhyme trail and walk through the woods



Thurso Buggy group enjoyed a lovely walk around the park and along the riverside, listening to the birds, watching the ducks and spotting wildflowers

## New groups starting soon!

In partnership with Lairg & District Community Initiatives; NHS Highland Community Nurses and Mental Health Teams we are planning on starting up new Health Walk groups in **Lairg, Lochinver and Raasay** in September. The Walk Leaders will be completing their training in August and will be all ready to go, to lead some lovely late summer/autumn walks.

Next online Walk Leader training course:

**Tuesday 24th August, 9.30am - 1pm**

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

# Photo Gallery

Lochaber Hope walking group outside  
Old Inverlochy Castle.



Tongue walking group enjoying the sunshine on the  
Talmine circuit.



Castletown group walking along Battery Road to go round by  
Castlehill. Dunnet Head standing out in the distance.



Some of the Golspie Bothy Walk Leaders on a 'walk &  
talk' meeting.

## 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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