

www.tcv.org.uk/scotland

networkbulletin

WINTER 2021/22

FOR TCV SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITY NETWORK



In this issue: involving young people

Contents [click to navigate](#)

CJS trainees.....	3
Gaining a Greenstart	5
The VO role.....	6
TCV intern.....	7
Enhancing prospects in West Lothian.....	7
Oatridge Rangers and Countryside Stewards	8
Net Zero ambitions.....	10
Organic Growers of Fairlie – encouraging young people	12
The Green Team	14
“I like being out of the classroom and outside”	16
Outdoor learning in East Ayrshire.....	18
Coming up in Falkirk	19
Winter Wild Ways Well	21
The Lost Woods on film	23
Outside now!.....	23
Pathbuilders	24
And the winners are	25
Update on Scotland’s Outdoor Learning Directory	28
Free membership	28



The major global event of 2021 was undoubtedly COP26 in Glasgow, aiming to secure international agreement to combat climate change by achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050, and limiting the rise in global temperatures to 1.5°.

COP26 gave The Conservation Volunteers the opportunity to highlight what our volunteers and members of the TCV Community Network are doing daily to help tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency. Among other activities, we had a stall in the conference Green Zone and organised a series of practical sessions for COP26 volunteers (above) to make a difference to Glasgow greenspaces.

Reaction to COP26 has been mixed, from ‘good progress made’ to ‘a missed opportunity’, and everything in between. What wasn’t in doubt about COP26 was the importance of the issues to

young people – it’s their future at stake. Thousands of young people made their views known at the conference itself, and through the many marches, events and activities held to coincide with COP26, in Glasgow and across the world.

In the following pages we highlight some of the Community Network groups in Scotland who are involving young people in activities to combat climate change and biodiversity loss. We also feature TCV Scotland projects involving young people in schools and other community settings who are enhancing the local environment, plus their own health and wellbeing into the bargain. And, we are running a number of nature-based programmes to improve the skills and employment prospects of young people, including those who may be ‘hard to reach’ or who face significant barriers in the job market.

TCV Scotland is currently involved in various programmes to enhance the future prospects of young people. Over the next few pages, we highlight these programmes and hear from some of the young people involved.



In at the deep end, Lochlann Kelly.

JOSH THORNHILL

CJS trainees

Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) is an employability programme delivered by SCVO which works with voluntary sector employers like TCV to create job opportunities for unemployed people aged 16 to 29. The programme has a focus on those most disadvantaged in the labour market. We currently have three CJS trainees including **Lochlann Kelly** who is based in our Stirling office with Senior Project Officer Josh Thornhill. Here, 24 year-old Lochlann describes his traineeship so far:

I'm a Project Assistant with Josh and **EPIC - Enabling Projects in Clackmannanshire**.

I was referred to the CJS scheme by my council employability case manager. I have high functioning autism and mental health issues that have been major barriers to me entering work. I wasn't entirely sure what to expect when coming into this traineeship and whether I could handle the workload, but it has been an amazing experience so far. The staff and culture of the TCV Stirling office have been very welcoming and inclusive to my additional needs.

Some of the things I have achieved so far: I've gained confidence in talking to new people and groups, and this has led to a major improvement in my mental health. I've gained new leadership skills 'on the job' and through leadership training.

I've gained my Brushcutter ticket and have undertaken Risk Assessment and Safeguarding training, along with Tool Safety and some tree identification.

I'm staying fit and getting the benefits of being out in green spaces.

I've worked mainly with the EPIC Green Gym and Midweek Group on various tasks:

- Wildflower meadow management, path clearing, tree planting, pond management and invasive species removal.
- Working with the Clackmannanshire Schools' Support Service helping young people engage in conservation activities and learn practical skills such as dead hedging and willow wattling, along with citizen science activities like bug hunts.



Lochlann keeping the footpaths clear.

JOSH THORNHILL

Along with Lochlann, the other CJS trainees are 24 year-old **Rebecca Ramage** and 28 year-old **James Hamilton** who are both based with the **Seven Lochs** project. We'll feature the work of the CJS trio in upcoming social media posts, blogs and future Bulletins.

I've also worked with all the other TCV staff in the Stirling office on different projects:

- I worked with Alice Kenny in West Lothian involving employability groups and college volunteering days.
- I've helped Grant Fleming at Carrongrange High School working with young people with additional support needs, doing things like mammal ID and Hapazome.
- I've worked with Ettie Shattock and with her Stirling Midweek Group who built a ramp to improve accessibility to the green space at Doune Primary School.

In the months ahead I'm looking forward to:

- First Aid training
- Start to confidently lead groups better
- Learn more tree and plant identification

This traineeship has definitely had a major positive impact on me, and I think it's very good for helping people with issues like mine re-engage with society, gain employability opportunities and feel part of something positive and worthwhile. It has given me a great start to working life.

COMING UP New Trainee Rangers

Early in 2022, eight young people aged 16-24 will have the opportunity to become Trainee Rangers in a scheme run by TCV and the **Falkirk Council Employability & Training Unit**. Over the fifteen-month project the Trainee Rangers will work on regeneration and environmental projects based along the John Muir Way and at other locations within the Falkirk Council area, as directed by its Planning & Environment Unit. The project is funded by the **Young Person's Guarantee** and **Employability Fund** and will give the young people plenty of hands-on training and experience to improve their long-term job prospects. And the local environment will benefit too!





Gavin Mulgrew of the EPIC project.

JOSH THORNHILL

Gaining a Greenstart

As part of the [UK Year of Service](#) programme, TCV is hosting sixteen 'Greenstart' trainees in different parts of the country. We've joined **National Citizen Service** (NCS) and **Volunteering Matters** to provide nine-month paid placements to help young people make a positive impact in their community.

The Greenstart 'Conservation and Wellbeing in Nature' trainees based with TCV Scotland are:

Rosemary Fricke (23) is working with our Corporate Team in Edinburgh

Abigail McKay (23) is working with the Seven Lochs project in Glasgow

Luka Coutts (24) is working with our Glasgow Midweek Group

Gavin Mulgrew (20) is working with the EPIC project

Gregor McLeod (22) is working with our Stirling Midweek Group

Kirsty Purves (23) is working with the Seven Lochs project in Glasgow

Over the course of their placements the trainees will take part in, support and help organise a wide range of TCV activities and events. In return they'll gain valuable skills, training, work experience and networking opportunities in the conservation sector. The trainees began their placements in late November, so we'll catch-up with them in future issues of the Network Bulletin, and keep an eye out for them in our blogs and social media too.

"I have always wanted to do more to help the environment and wildlife in my community."

Gavin Mulgrew



VO Joe Churchill using a wacker plate.

DIANE OBST

In addition to Joe Churchill, many thanks to all our current Volunteer Officers for helping keep the TCV show on the road:

Mhairi Campbell, Grangemouth

Ben Sandles, Glasgow

Joshua Maher, Glasgow

Catriona Tedford, Glasgow

Katie O'Neil, Gartnavel

Evelyn Wilson, Stirling

Juliana Radke da Silva, Stirling

Diana Padvelskyte, Edinburgh

Daniela Senatore, Edinburgh

Chris Crawford, West Lothian

The VO role

Volunteer Officers (VOs) help TCV's Project Officers organise our volunteer projects and other activities. They commit to a regular input of their time, typically 1-3 days a week depending on their own circumstances and interests, and the needs of the particular TCV project. VOs help with everything from packing the tea box and maintaining tools, to supervising volunteers and posting on our social media channels. Being a Volunteer Officer can give you new management and leadership skills and help your career prospects. Many TCV staff have themselves come through the VO route. There are no age requirements to becoming a VO, but they often have existing volunteering experience under their belt. The current crop of VOs includes 25 year-old **Joe Churchill** in Edinburgh, who outlines his VO experience so far:

I found out about TCV by searching around for conservation-based charities in Manchester when I finished my MSc in Ecology and Conservation, as I wanted to gain experience with a conservation charity. I volunteered for 10 months with TCV in Manchester. When I moved to Edinburgh I wanted to continue my experience with

TCV, so immediately joined the local team, this time as a Volunteer Officer.

TCV brings together lots of people from different backgrounds with a common purpose and like-minded beliefs. This gives myself and others a great sense of wellbeing, and to be socially active is extremely helpful, especially in these difficult times.

As a VO I have been learning how to manage and lead volunteers in carrying out practical conservation work. The greatest satisfaction I've gained with a project so far has been building the garden at Astley Ainsley Hospital, and the tree planting we did in a primary school's playing fields. I believe this made the biggest difference to the environment and local community and will have long lasting impacts. My VO role has also included conflict resolution between volunteers and how to provide for the needs of differently abled volunteers.

Overall, this has been invaluable experience for me which will undoubtedly make me a better job candidate for conservation jobs in the future.



TCV intern

One of the more unusual roles in The Conservation Volunteers is that of intern. 25 year-old **Chizaram 'Chizzy' Chinguzorom** currently has a two day per week paid internship through the **Minority Ethnic Emerging Leaders Programme** run by the John Smith Centre and funded by the Scottish Government. Glasgow-based Chizzy is looking to gain a broad breadth of experience from volunteering on various TCV projects, through to project management, evaluation and development.

Chizzy says:

“I have a background in sustainable energy and I’m currently completing an MSc in Project Management at the University of the West of Scotland, in Paisley. As an intern at TCV I am supporting projects that aim to bridge the access gap that exists for people who experience barriers and/or limitations to experience nature and to participate in conservation activities. By the end of this internship, I expect to have made a valuable impact by supporting people and communities connect to nature, gained practical skills through volunteering, and have more widespread knowledge on biodiversity conservation.”

Enhancing prospects in West Lothian

The New Year will bring new opportunities for six school leavers in West Lothian who will join TCV on 6 month paid traineeships to develop their skills and experience, and so enhance their employment prospects. Throughout the duration of the project, supported by players of **People’s Postcode Lottery**. The trainees will work with **Joe Williams**, Senior Project Officer, on a range of conservation and environmental works to improve green spaces for communities and nature. They will have the opportunity to gain SQA and LANTRA industry qualifications as well as developing the necessary ‘soft’ skills to improve their chances of gaining employment. Crucially, the trainees will have the opportunity to co-design elements of the programme, the environmental tasks to be undertaken, plus the specific qualifications and training they’d like to attain. The traineeships will be promoted in early 2022 through partner organisations and on our own website and social media.



Facebook @ORCSRangers

Twitter @ORCSRangers



Oatridge Rangers and Countryside Stewards (ORCS) is a student-led organisation, created for the benefit of conservation students at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), as outlined here by ORCS President **Andrew Beverley**:

Needing meaningful experience to gain employment in a competitive sector

and wanting to put our learning into context with some hands-on practical conservation, a group of students got together and worked out the best way for this to happen. Based at the 283 hectare Oatridge Campus, near Broxburn, West Lothian, ORCS has members of all ages, all doing their bit to protect our natural heritage.



Surveying a local site. DAVINA GREY



Hedging. CALUM TEAGUE

What we do

Our vision is to empower students through skill and knowledge exchange, whilst protecting vulnerable ecosystems.

By leading work parties that:

- Provide project planning and management experience for a range of conservation tasks, based on current research and best practice

we are able to:

- Provide practical habitat management that serves to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Scotland's Natural Heritage.

We have a few projects on the go and a few in development, with a view to hand

over from one year to the next. Alongside opportunities with Nature Scot, we are working on development of a Community Woodland and Outdoor Classroom, a Riparian Corridor with pond development and a Community Orchard with Wildflower Garden.

Our Impact

Despite a slow start due to the pandemic, we have already delivered over 200 hours of practical experience for students!

"I joined ORCS as I saw how exciting an opportunity it was to be a part of the first ranger service at SRUC, whilst gaining volunteer experience that is hard to come by. Being a part of ORCS has given me the practical experience I was looking for and enhanced my leadership skills through running work parties"

Increase student skills through:

- Knowledge and experience of habitat management
- Knowledge and application of ecological principles
- Knowledge and experience of project planning and management
- Individual portfolios of evidence

Improve Knowledge Exchange through:

- ORCS Project Media
- Close relationships with Public and Private organisations
- Data collection and sharing
- Contribution to National Databases and current research
- Networking opportunities
- Interpretation and engagement

Protect ecosystems through:

- Delivering habitat management based on current research and guidance
- Establishing baseline data and monitoring schedules
- Maintaining good relationships with Stakeholders and Partners
- Enhancing educational opportunities

Net Zero ambitions

By **Vicki Tierney**, Project Officer, West Lothian College.

The **Net Zero Group** of staff and students at West Lothian College in Livingston, used the recent COP26 conference in Glasgow to highlight our efforts to help the college reach Net Zero emissions by 2040.

We had just under 200 volunteers throughout our COP26 Volunteer & Market Week helping onsite to create new wildflower areas and our second forest classroom. We also helped the rangers at local community parks with some much-needed work enabling biodiversity to continue to flourish.

College students and staff helped create the two new wildflower areas which are currently looking great, and we look forward to seeing these come to life in 2022. There's still some work to be done here but as a starting point it looks fantastic! We've also added a bug hotel made from materials found around the college campus and our construction students got involved by producing bird boxes which were put up in the new areas. The college worked in partnership with

The Mill Garden Centre in Armadale where we purchased the wildflowers and planting equipment. Kathleen and Colin from the garden centre kindly donated their time to come and support us at the start of our Volunteer Week, and they gave us plenty of helpful advice on how these areas should look.

Alice Kenny from TCV ran some amazing activities at Polkemmet Country Park, near Whitburn and Skolie Burn in Addiewell. Feedback from some of the groups who volunteered was really positive and gave them the opportunity to really understand why these types of activities were important within the local area and how this fits in with the bigger picture of reducing our carbon footprint. Working with TCV has been fantastic and we hope to continue supporting local community projects and groups through this indispensable partnership in the long-term.

One key aspect that came from the Volunteer Week was the people volunteering were given a much-needed



VICKI TIERNEY



ANN COCKBURN

Watch the film

A short video highlights some of the activities undertaken by students as part of West Lothian College COP26 Volunteer Week.



COP26 Market Week stallholders.

VICKI TIERNEY

break from the office or classroom, and they really enjoyed being outside. Fortunately, the weather was kind to us as you can see in some of the images from that week. West Lothian College are hoping this is something we can continue doing as it really has some positive outcomes for the people volunteering, but also helps us understand how we can contribute to Net Zero emissions.

College staff organised a brilliant COP26 Market Week with some amazing stalls featuring suppliers such as **Green with Envi** who offer eco-sustainable household cleaning products, and also a home delivery refill service for these items across West Lothian, which is an amazing service. We had a stall by **Neal's Yard Remedies Organics** who supply organic, natural and ethical health and beauty products. A former student at the college now runs her own reusable sanitary wear business **Flocco Period Wear**. One of our staff had a stall to talk about 'climate anxiety' along with **Listening Time 4U** who talked to students about how they feel about the climate crisis and what they can do manage any anxiety this causes them. Other stalls featured **West Lothian Council Fair Trade**

raising awareness of Fairtrade products provided by local suppliers and businesses, and **West Lothian Litter Pickers** who are an enthusiastic group of people (nearly 3,000 members now!) who work tirelessly to keep the community litter-free. They also use their collective voice to raise awareness of this issue, particularly to those in the local authority who can make a difference in how effective the law is in stopping the cycle of litter. Finally, one of our lecturers had a stall showcasing her local **Craft and Kindness** workshops where you can paint your own clay creations!

We had a very successful two weeks of COP26-related activities. Many thanks to everyone who volunteered or took time out to provide something to help the staff and students to understand their part in contributing to Net Zero. Going forward, West Lothian College are looking to organise regular volunteering events within the local community and the college itself to support our Net Zero Plan where we are embedding **Scotland's Colleges** ten key aims to combat climate change into all our activities to become Net Zero by 2040 or earlier.



Boys' Brigade members lifting tatties to be given to members of the community self-isolating.

Organic Growers of Fairlie – encouraging young people

In November 2021, the **Organic Growers of Fairlie** won the RHS Discretionary 'Involving Children and Young People' Award. The RHS Discretionary awards are awarded by Keep Scotland Beautiful and were open to groups taking part in the It's Your Neighbourhood and Beautiful Scotland programmes. Here, **Nancy MacQueen**, Secretary of the Organic Growers of Fairlie, outlines the involvement of young people in their garden.

Organic Growers of Fairlie is a sustainable community garden in North Ayrshire where we grow plants organically. Working with nature and conserving it benefits gardening as well as the environment. We are delighted that we have been able to work with and encourage young people in this way of working and to appreciate nature and its conservation. With climate change happening, this is now more important than ever.

Being outside in nature and working regularly in it benefits health and wellbeing. The confidence of the young

people has soared, and they have become more communicative when working with other age groups. Learning new skills has led to an interest in gardening and the outdoors which will last a lifetime. Some have so much enjoyed and found their experiences so worthwhile that they now volunteer with us while furthering their knowledge. Some of the students have achieved the John Muir Award and the Rural Skills Award working with us in our garden while attending school. Some of them are now developing their own gardens at home, and some are wanting to pursue careers in gardening or another aspect of horticulture.

Besides our main growing area, our garden contains two small woodlands and a woodland walk which have been planted with fruit and native trees. We also have a tree nursery and a tree planting area outwith the garden that we are developing as a community woodland. We also have a small pond which is a great feature for wildlife.



Making a bed for organic mushrooms.



Collecting seaweed

Our young people have been involved in a wide range of activities. They have potted-on small native trees in our tree nursery, and when they were more established planted them in the community woodland. They have taken cuttings of the garden's many willow trees and rooted them for planting as well. They look after young trees and maintain larger trees, and they have also planted some tree seeds. Our soil has been depleted and the young people have added woodchip which is instrumental in building a mulch layer and good soil. They have helped with our composting using organic materials and are developing an area to add spores for edible mushroom growing. They are studying the soil, its fungi and making spore prints where fungi spores leave a pattern on paper. They are also looking at worms and have set up their own wormeries to produce good compost. They help with hotbox composting and collecting and producing natural fertilisers with comfrey grown in the garden.

We are located by the sea and the young folk have collected seaweed to enrich our growing beds with minerals. A few years ago, they took part in a marine survey of the beach looking at the sea life and seaweed, which they recorded. Besides

growing many vegetables organically, including their own tomatoes, they have also grown wildflowers such as viper's bugloss and borage to plant out. They have planted and tended wildflower beds and have collected wildflower and other seeds for next season's planting. Christmas potpourri has been made with materials collected and dried from the garden such as rosehips, mints and rose petals. We have released hedgehogs from [Hessilhead Wildlife Rescue](#) in the garden for whom the young people are creating hedgehog hotels and suitable habitats. Other activities have included a bat watch evening, litter picks, outdoor cooking, and they also feed the birds over the winter.

We have been supported by Keep Scotland Beautiful and the Royal Horticultural Society who gave us an Outstanding with Distinction Award for Gardening, Environmental Responsibility and Community Engagement, as well as our Involving Children and Young People Award which we were delighted with!

Website: www.organicgrowersfairlie.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FairlieGarden

Twitter: [//twitter.com/fairlieorg](https://twitter.com/fairlieorg)



“So much litter and this is just one park.”

The Green Team

The Green Team is a longstanding member of TCV’s Community Network and engages young people in Edinburgh and the Lothians with their local environment. Through a range of different programmes they support practical environmental conservation, outdoor education, positive wellbeing, skills development and lots of play and exploration. There is something for all ages from pre-school to 18, with opportunities to continue to be involved as a volunteer beyond 18.

We featured their Thrive programme in the [Bulletin](#) a few years ago.

Since then the Green Team has continued to grow and organise a wide range of outdoor activity programmes tailored to the needs of young people. In this article we share a little more about another of their programmes - Green Schools - with an overview of a recent project.

Green Schools helps local schools to deliver outdoor education sessions. The programme focusses on schools in areas of deprivation to ensure that all children

have the chance to benefit from positive activities in nature.

Over October and November, the Green Team education officer, Margon, worked over 5 sessions with a class from St. David’s RC Primary School, with a focus on exploring local parks and green spaces using active travel to make the project truly sustainable.

Session 1: The group walked to a local park, where they spotted ducks and swans, learned about the river, put on the wellies for some river-dipping to investigate which small creatures live in the water and got creative with some environmental art.

Session 2: Another walk to another local park. This time the group got stuck into litter picking and planting 200 daffodil bulbs. Data was collated during the litter pick and taken back into the class to calculate totals, averages and produce graphs. Pupils talked about litter during and after the session - where it comes from, how it affects wildlife and what can be done to reduce it.



Session 3: On the third day the pupils played a game of cat and mouse (with a discussion on the predator/prey relationship in nature), set off on a nature-based scavenger hunt and made small homes for cuddly toy animals with pupils describing their home, what materials were used and how climate change might affect the homes and habits of animals.

Session 4: The Sustrans 'I Bike' team were partners in this project and provided scooters for this session so the pupils could travel a little further to explore a local beach on a beautiful, sunny afternoon. Around 25% of the pupils had never seen the sea before. The pupils created beautiful pieces of environmental art on a sea theme – there were several mermaids, octopus, a shipwreck and some new sea creatures never seen before.

Session 5: The final session involved safe fire lighting and one last storytelling session (with the story of 'how robin got his red breast' following previous stories of 'the biggest frog ever' and 'why bears hibernate'). The pupils reviewed their Green Schools experience over hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows.



"I wish we could always do outdoor learning."

Over the course of the five sessions the pupils embraced every aspect of the project – active travel, conservation tasks and discussion of climate change and other issues. They each achieved their John Muir Discovery Awards and demonstrated a strong desire to continue to enjoy and protect their local greenspaces. A number of children have already taken their family to the greenspaces visited during the project and as a class they have agreed to return to see their daffodils in spring, make anti-litter posters and do regular litterpicks.

[Find out more about the Green Team's activities and how to join in.](#)



"Outdoor learning is now my favourite thing."

“I like being out of the classroom and outside”

In recent months, pupils at **St Modan’s High School** in Stirling and **Carrongrange High School** in Grangemouth have been involved in plenty of hands-on activities in their school grounds, with the help of TCV Project Officers **Grant Fleming** and **Karianne Ford-Bruning**. So, what have the pupils been up to?



Painting a planter On the Roof.

GRANT FLEMING



The bench building crew. GRANT FLEMING

St Modan’s

The Ready for Work programme at St Modan’s has enabled S3 and S4 pupils to develop practical skills and increase their confidence in preparation for the workplace, while working towards SQA accredited units. Grant and Karianne have also been working with the school’s Autism Provision pupils to achieve similar goals, and have built benches using recycled wood, created a fire pit for school community use, and are currently working on a willow arch in the school’s Tiny Farm. And through their ‘On the Roof’ project, pupils have been busy maintaining and developing features in the school’s unusual rooftop garden, including a wildflower meadow and vegetable planters.

What did you enjoy about the project?

“I like to work with wood and tools.”

“It was good to learn something new.”

“I liked being out of the classroom and outside.”

“How to work as a team.”

What was the best part of the project?

“When we got to fix things in the garden, because I got an award.”

“The banter.”

“Every part of it.”

“Getting out of the class to do something different.”

Teachers:

“The young people are engaged and motivated and have reported feeling valued in the school as a result. They have been really eager to tell you what they have been working on and are excited that they have been part of improving the school.”

“Observing them every week, it has been really good to see pupils who usually disengage in the classroom, work as part of a team to create a unique space for the rest of the school.”

“They have developed not only their practical skills but soft skills such as confidence and learning to work as part of a team.”

“It has been really good for some of these young people’s self-esteem. Every week the TCV team picked out a “worker of the week” and a praise card was issued to them. Pupils were genuinely happy to receive a praise card, some of whom of whom have never been recognised in such a way. This has given some pupils the opportunity to engage with outdoor learning and work with different people. Having a youth worker lead the project was especially refreshing for the pupils as they got to engage with adults other than teachers, in a work-based environment.”

Parents:

“It was a very positive experience. My daughter has been excited to come home and tell us what she had done that day.”

“She has enjoyed doing something that she’s never even tried before. I think she has enjoyed it much more than she expected to.”

“I’m glad she got this opportunity and gave it a go.”

Carrongrange

Carrongrange High specialises in educating pupils with Additional Support Needs. Here, Grant and some of the pupils have been developing the school’s garden areas, including widening the path in the Green Hub Garden for wheelchair users and building planters for wildflowers and vegetables. These activities enhance the pupils’ practical skills and confidence. And the pupils have also put up trailcams to capture any wildlife visiting the school, particularly during the night. So far, a number of mice and a fox have been recorded (along with some of the local cats!), and they’re hoping to see hedgehogs.



A fox caught by one of the trailcams.

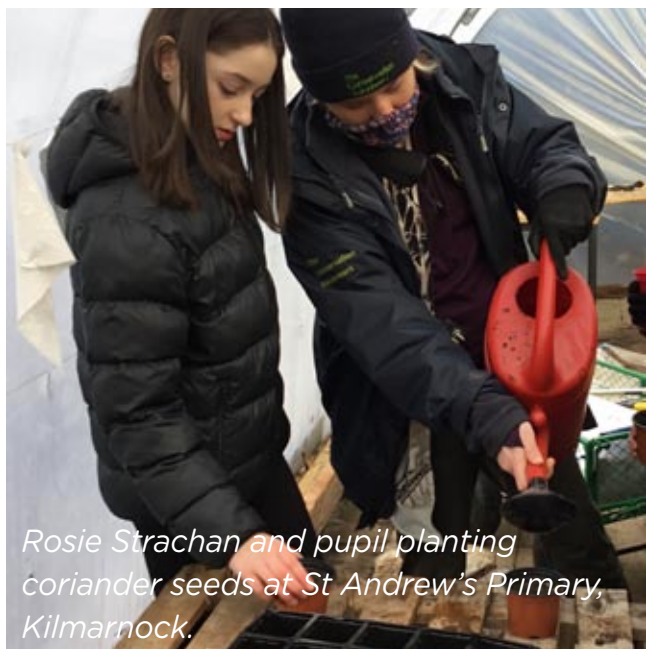


The new path through the Green Hub Garden. GRANT FLEMING

Outdoor learning in East Ayrshire

The outdoors can provide a great learning environment for young people to learn new skills and gain new experiences, especially for those pupils who find classroom-based learning difficult. **Rosie Strachan**, Senior Project Officer, is engaging pupils in East Ayrshire with her Green Gym sessions:

I run two weekly classes with S3 pupils at Robert Burns Academy in Cumnock. I work



Rosie Strachan and pupil planting coriander seeds at St Andrew's Primary, Kilmarnock.

with the Home Economics Department, so I mostly do practical garden work with the pupils, such as growing vegetables like spinach and garlic, plus weeding and other physical activities to improve the school's garden area. And I teach the pupils about the environmental impact of the food industry and linking sessions to learning for sustainability experiences and outcomes. I've also worked with senior and secondary pupils at Hillside School in Cumnock which caters for pupils with Additional Support Needs. Here, I focus on nature connection activities such as creating environmental art, using the outdoor space to improve mental and physical wellbeing, as well as improving biodiversity in the school grounds through practical conservation and gardening activities such as bulb planting.

I'm based at St Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock, with East Ayrshire Council's **Learning Outdoor Support Team (LOST)** which supports and promotes the use of our outdoor spaces for learning. So, in addition to my Green Gym classes I work a lot with LOST, running practical sessions with them and contributing to their monthly newsletter. It's great to have such strong links with the Team and it makes my role that bit easier and more effective.

Through her school sessions, 23 year-old Rosie is engaging young people with the environment, but how did she develop her own interest in the great outdoors?

"I have always loved nature and wildlife, taking interest in environmental issues from a very young age. This carried on into later years of my life, with much of my time spent outdoors in nature, or taking part in environmental activist groups. I studied Politics and Philosophy at undergraduate level at Glasgow University, which led me to a Master's in Environment, Culture and Society at Edinburgh University, which I graduated from this year. These subjects reinforced my interest in nature, the environment and the ways people and varying cultures interact with it. This is what drew me to working for TCV, as they look to connect people and green spaces to deliver lasting outcomes for both, focusing on not only the environment but social justice issues and issues of inequality, and dealing with them in an interconnected way. I believe empowering people to think differently about how they relate to the environment around them is essential in tackling the climate crisis, and I believe TCV's goals and projects work to achieve this."

Find more information about LOST, including their latest newsletter.



Woodworking will be one of the available activities for young people in Camelon.



Emma with a plate sized dahlia!

Coming up in Falkirk

Working with the young people of Camelon is the focus for recent TCV recruit **Emma Griffith**, as she explains:

Hello, I'm the new Senior Project Officer for Camelon, Falkirk. Over the next two years I will be working across the Camelon area with the community and in two local high schools. In particular, I will engage with young people aged 13-25 years, funded by **Young Start**. The work will be primarily focused on developing their connections with their local community and area, aiding the improvement of their health and wellbeing, letting them enjoy the wild outdoors and looking after the local canals.

The young people will be involved in hands-on activities such as: woodwork, joinery, den building, nature walks, using Kelly Kettles and doing canal clean-ups from kayaks and paddle boards. The project will be led by the young people themselves who will continue to choose new activities they want to complete throughout the two years I am working with them. I am really excited about joining TCV and starting this work!

New opportunities for young Gypsy/Travellers

Transforming the life chances of young Gypsy/Travellers is the aim of the '**Deeking to Jan in Falkirk**' project, beginning in early 2022. Twenty four young people at risk of dropping out of school and mainstream society will join TCV and **Article 12** in a programme of community greenspace improvement projects of their choosing. Deeking to Jan (which means 'looking to learn' in Gypsy/Traveller dialect) is supported by **Falkirk Council** and funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**.

Using nature-based activities as a platform, the project will provide the opportunity for the young Gypsy/Travellers to attain Employability in the Outdoors SQA-accredited units, in addition to a range of practical conservation skills such as woodland management and clearing invasive species, plus litter picks, canal-based activities, nature walks and flora & fauna identification. So, the young people involved can look forward to a mix of educational, enjoyable and challenging experiences to discover aspects of their natural and cultural heritage.



make space for nature



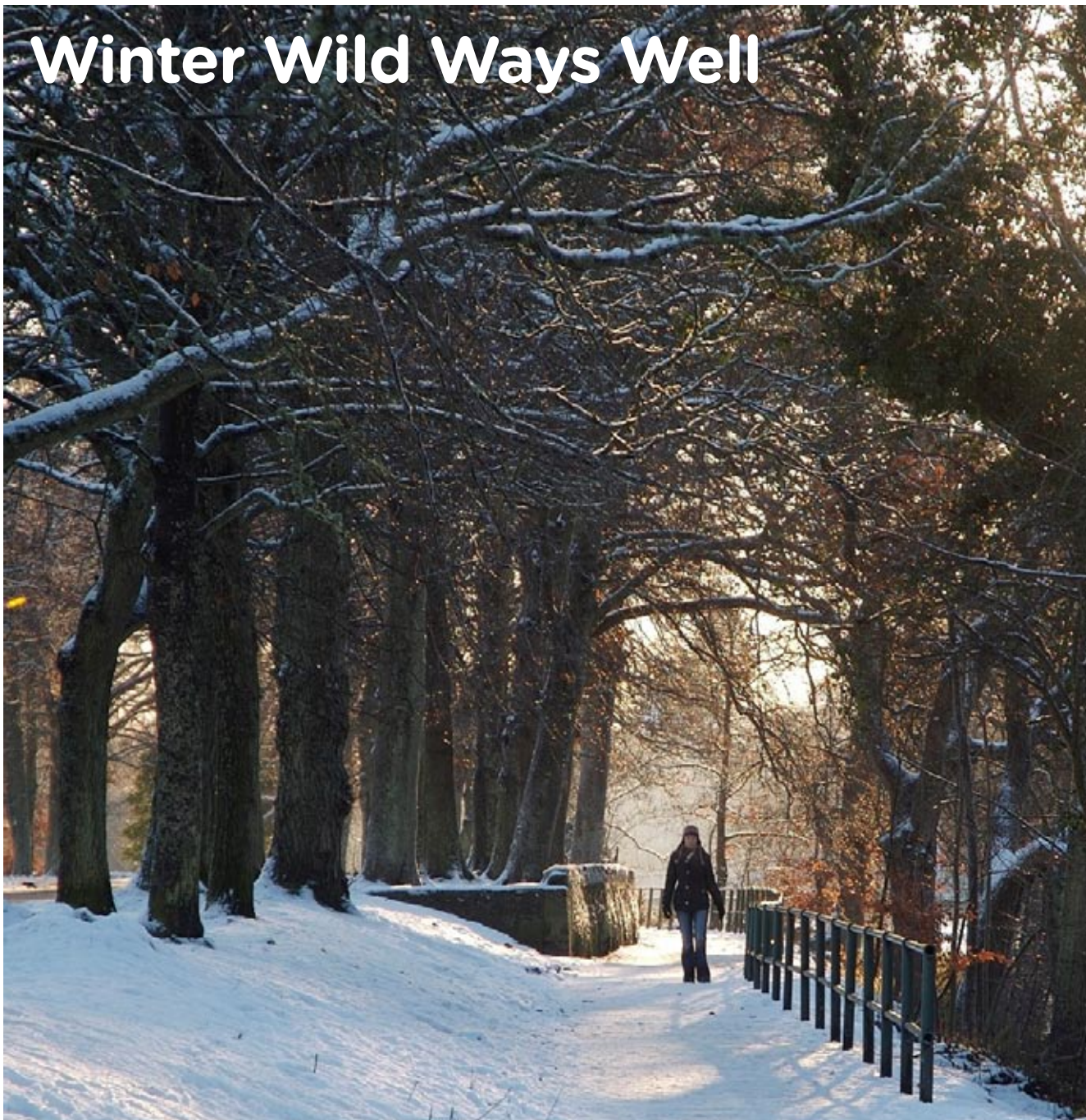
NatureScot's **Make Space For Nature** campaign has simple tips and ideas for everyone to help reverse nature loss and climate change. A range of seasonal activities encourage you outdoors to benefit both nature and yourself. We can all do something during winter to make a difference: provide water for wildlife, feed the birds - fat balls are a favourite, or leave a small corner of dead vegetation and leaf piles in your garden for small mammals and insects to snuggle up in over the winter months.

And why not plant some trees to provide a lasting legacy for wildlife and people. Winter is the main tree planting season and hundreds of schools, community groups and voluntary organisations have been planting trees as part of the **I Dig Trees** campaign run by TCV and OVO Energy. And the trees can contribute to the **Queen's Green Canopy**. The free trees are available in packs of 50 native species, including oak, birch and rowan, with a



maximum of 19 packs per application, with optional protective guards. There are still tree packs available for delivery from mid-February to the end of March (correct at mid-December).

Winter Wild Ways Well



Seasonal tips for winter wellbeing are available in the Wild Ways Well Winter booklet compiled by **Paul Barclay**, Project Officer at **Cumbernauld Living Landscape**. The booklet outlines some of the activities you can do to help beat the winter blues, whether that's a woodland wander with the satisfying crunch of snow underfoot, or one of the many simple citizen science surveys which can help our understanding of the state of nature and the environment. These include TCV's own **Dead Good Deadwood Survey** - discover the surprising amount of wildlife supported by dead wood. As well as discovering the facts about our nature, winter in Scotland also has its traditions and folklore, including the Cailleach Bheur - also known as the Carlin, or Beira, Queen of Winter. The booklet also includes information on how some of our popular wildlife species adapt to the season's harsh conditions. And give the birds a treat by making an apple feeder! Read how [here](#)



Nature notes



Mountain hares adapt their coat for winter.

Many of our wildlife species have to adapt to cope with the harsher winter environment. One of the most dramatic of these adaptations is the change in the mountain hare's coat from grey/brown to white, to blend in with the snow. The iconic mountain hare is native to the Scottish Highlands and is associated with its heather moorlands, although it has been introduced to other parts of the UK. The mountain hare is smaller than the brown hare but larger than rabbits. Unlike rabbits,

mountain hares don't live in burrows but in 'forms' - shallow depressions in the ground or heather. Its winter camouflage is very effective, making it hard to spot in the snowy conditions of the uplands. It is most visible in spring when the snow has largely disappeared, but for a while the mountain hare retains its white coat.

Accurate mountain hare numbers seem open to debate, although population densities are known to fluctuate

periodically, varying at least 10-fold, and reaching a peak every 9 years or so.

According to [Nature Scot](#): 'Mountain hares were traditionally classed as a quarry species and have long been shot for sport, but they are now fully protected in Scotland. They can, however, still be legitimately controlled (under licence) for certain limited purposes including to protect young trees.'

The Lost Woods on film

A short documentary film follows the work of [The Lost Woods](#) as they give every primary school pupil in Glasgow a seed to grow into their own tree and facilitate the creation of the Glasgow Children's Woodland on the southern edge of the city - a brand new wooded area created with Glasgow's primary school children. TCV Glasgow were happy to help out during the project's big planting week in early October.

Watch the film [here](#)



CLAIRE BRADY

Outside now!

The benefits of outdoor learning are shown in a short film made by the Seven Lochs project, which straddles the council boundaries of Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. Over the past few years TCV staff have organised a range of outdoor activities with local primary schools. These sessions provided young pupils with a wide range of experiences and benefits, with teachers particularly noticing a boost in the pupils' confidence. Hear about the programme from Seven Lochs Project Co-ordinator Scott Ferguson plus some of the teachers and pupils involved. [View the film here](#)



Pathbuilders



The TCV team added a series of stone steps to one particularly slippery stretch of path.

Our Glasgow team recently completed a three week project supported by [NatureScot](#) to maintain stretches of paths where [The John Muir Way](#) meets the [Official West Highland Way](#) near the Carbeth Huts, about 10 miles north of Glasgow. The team put in a fantastic shift – literally shifting 15 tonnes of gravel to prevent erosion and make path sections less muddy and more accessible. Thanks also to [Paths for All](#) and [Carbeth Hutters Community Company](#) plus invaluable advice from path expert Angus Turner.

And the winners are ...

Two groups belonging to TCV's Community Network have had their efforts recognised in the 12th annual **Paths for All Volunteer Awards** announced in late November. The Awards celebrate the volunteers caring for our extensive network of paths and trails which provide accessible opportunities for walkers and cyclists to enhance their health and wellbeing, especially important during the pandemic. The Awards had 11 categories including **Community Path Volunteer of the Year** and **Community Path Group of the Year**.

Ian Gibb of **Earlston Paths Group** was named Community Path Volunteer of the Year. Since retiring from Royal Mail in 2001, Ian has been working to develop and keep the path routes in Earlston in the Scottish Borders in top form ensuring they are accessible for locals and visitors to enjoy.

Ian said: "I have always enjoyed walking and when I retired it was important that I kept myself busy. That's why in 2005, I decided to form the group along with my co-founder Jack, who is sadly no longer with us, to develop existing and new

walking routes in the area. There is plenty of banter when we go out to work on the paths and it gives us a chance to meet new people like contractors, the Paths for All team, local walkers and people visiting the area; it's great to build new relationships with these people and hear their story.

The group is made up of ten volunteers, each contributing in their own way. As well as that, when we have larger projects on the go we are fortunate that more people in the community come out and help. During the Covid restrictions, there was a big increase in numbers using our network because walking was one of the few activities people could do to sustain their health and wellbeing.

A lot of the footpaths we maintain became a lifeline. There is a path that goes by my home and it was like a race track from seven in the morning to the night time."

View the Award's short film about Ian [here](#)





Hit Squad members ready for action.

JOHNNY WELLS



Johnny Wells with their Award.

The Hit Squad from the [Water of Leith Conservation Trust](#) was named Community Path Group of the Year.

The Hit Squad volunteer group has been running for many years and before the Covid restrictions regularly attracted 20 members each session to improve the river and 13 miles of walkway. Depending on the season, jobs ranged from trimming back vegetation, raking-up leaves, caring for wildflower meadows, removing invasive species and clearing litter both in and out of the river.

Like most activities, the group came to an abrupt halt when the lockdown first hit to protect the safety of the volunteers. Project Officer **Johnny Wells** said:

“While our volunteers stayed safe, the walkway became the busiest it’s ever been as a vital green space for Edinburgh residents to escape, meet up and exercise in during lockdown.

This huge footfall had an impact on the state of the walkway with erosion of the verges as people socially distanced leading to the walkway becoming muddier, increases in littering, erosion of riverbanks

from dogs and the good summer meant vegetation shot up.

As lockdown restrictions relaxed, the group started working again with staff, at first just two volunteers at a time and then increasing as the months progressed with more tasks happening weekly to allow for smaller groups. Since April 2021 to date, the group has had over 100 sessions equating to over 2,000 hours of practical conservation and teamwork.

Our volunteers’ dedication to being outdoors in all weathers doing something practical for the river and walkway is amazing. Over the last year they’ve accepted and adapted to many changes including us stopping the communal biscuit barrel. Without their effort I’d hate to think of how much harder lockdown would have been for the public without this green space. This award is a brilliant acknowledgement for the volunteers’ hard work and dedication.”

Watch the Award’s film about the Hit Squad [here](#)



the
WATER of LEITH
Conservation Trust



JOHNNY WELLS

The Water of Leith Conservation Trust involves volunteers of all ages, including young people. Project Officer Johnny Wells says:

“With the Water of Leith running through a range of communities it provides us with an amazing greenspace to get young people of diverse backgrounds outdoors and engaged in their local areas. Whether that

be through our educational programme, work placements or community clean-ups, we work with primary age children and upwards. Recently we ran a taster session for ten students (pictured) from Edinburgh University to experience practical conservation and discover a new part of Edinburgh, which they were all very positive about.”

Update on Scotland's Outdoor Learning Directory



Good news for those of you who deliver, support and promote quality outdoor learning, or would like to learn more! Scotland's **Outdoor Learning Directory** has been refreshed and updated. Check out its new look, and an improved search function. Find information on resources, research, events and training. Search news from across the sector to support learning and teaching in and about our environment, and Learning for Sustainability. Your feedback, and suggestions for news items to include are welcomed, via the **contacts** page.

Free membership

With support from players of People's Postcode Lottery, TCV's Community Network offers free one year membership to community organisations who care for their local greenspaces. The Community Network has over 1,700 member groups spread throughout the UK, with some 240 in Scotland.

Find out more and join the Network here



The Network Bulletin is produced quarterly by The Conservation Volunteers in Scotland and features groups belonging to the Community Network, plus news of TCV's own projects and volunteers.

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