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networkbulletin

SUMMER 2022

FOR TCV SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITY NETWORK



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Welcome to the Summer issue of the Network Bulletin from The Conservation Volunteers in Scotland. We feature some of our own projects and participants, plus groups belonging to TCV's Community Network including recent recipients of the TCV administered Chestnut Fund – providing small grants which can make a big difference.

We are always keen to use these pages to highlight and celebrate the great work being done by Community Network members across the country who are conserving their local habitats and greenspaces. Please get in touch if you would like your group to be featured in a future issue. And if you have a volunteer who makes an exceptional contribution to your group and the environment and whose story you would like to share, please contact [Graham](#)

New course discount for 2022 – Our friends at the Field Studies Council are expanding their natural history course programme in Scotland, covering more course topics at more venues, and FSC are offering a discount to readers of the Bulletin – see [page 28](#) for details.



The Chestnut Fund has helped support keen conservationists of all ages, including this youngster at Gavinburn Primary School – see [page 26](#). EMMA YULE



ALL PHOTOS, INCLUDING FRONT COVER: ELLIE CORSIE



What's in a name?

The area is believed to be the site of the Battle of Luncarty where local Scottish farmers fought a Danish army. The Danish general was killed and buried on site at the standing stone named the King's Stone. Hence Dane-mark-field has become Denmarkfield.

An ambitious ecological restoration project, **Rewilding Denmarkfield**, is under way just north of Perth, helped by local volunteers. Here, the committed rewilders outline their aims, vision and impact so far:

At Rewilding Denmarkfield we want to contribute to halting the current ecological and climate emergency by restoring ecosystem function where possible and increase biodiversity across the entire 91 acres of Denmarkfield Farm, located between the village of Luncarty and the city of Perth. It was purchased in 2016 by Amy and Graham Allen, who are passionate about sustainability and environmental conservation.

The aim of the project is to restore ecosystem function and maximize biodiversity by creating the conditions necessary for the establishment of a mosaic of natural habitats. We would like to see a patchwork of species-rich grassland, scrub, wet habitats and mature trees across the site. Planned interventions include creation of wet habitats and increasing native seed source by planting shrubs and trees and creating native wildflower meadows. We also want to encourage community involvement and ensure community benefits such as access to greenspace and environmental education opportunities.



The project officially started in March 2021 and is being managed by a dedicated Rewilding Manager, Ellie Corsie, and a seasonal part-time intern has also been employed. Community involvement is important to us and the project has been well received by the local community who are generally aware and concerned about the current state of nature. The project is also supported because of plans to build over 3,600 houses locally, which will effectively engulf the rural village of Luncarty into the city of Perth within the next couple of decades. There is vast local opposition to the scale, affordability, sustainability and environmental impact of these developments. This rewilding project will secure greenspace and provide ecosystem services for local people, as well as providing a refuge for wildlife. In addition, we are also scoping out the potential to dedicate an area of land for community use as an allotment and orchard space.

Project impact so far

Crops were harvested on site for the last time in August 2021. One of the fields, known as the House Field, was harvested for the last time one year earlier, so the rewilding process has been in progress

for almost two years, and we have already recorded an increase in biodiversity.

99 plant species have established since the monoculture of barley was harvested in 2020. Weekly bird transects have indicated an increase in bird diversity with 41 species recorded (between March and August 2021) in the House Field compared to 24 and 19 species seen in the two barley fields in crop. Weekly bee transects found the House Field had an average of 42.5 times more bee abundance over the season, compared to that of the 2 barley fields in crop. Weekly butterfly transects found the House Field also had an average increased butterfly abundance of 3.25 times that found in the barley fields in crop. Furthermore, the Small Heath butterfly (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) was observed in the House Field. This is currently a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and has been rapidly declining since 1976.

To catalyze the rewilding process and remove some man-made rewilding barriers we have:

- Removed unnecessary fencing within the field boundaries to minimize impact on wildlife migration.



- Started to manage over 2 acres of south/south-east facing slopes to become species-rich grassland.
- Created landscape relief in one of the fields which has been continuously flattened due to decades of ploughing.
- Sculpted a shallow scrape to enable the establishment of an intermittently wet habitat which are incredibly rare yet crucial to a huge range of flora and fauna.
- We are currently building small, fenced enclosures where shrub species will be planted to speed up the successional process and quickly increase the habitat diversity.

Friends of Denmarkfield

Local volunteers are very welcome to join the rewilding efforts, as **Ellie Corsie**, Rewilding Manager, explains:

The Friends of Denmarkfield community group has been set up to support the rewilding project and currently has 27 local members who meet about twice a week to do practical conservation. During the past few months we have been working hard to manage 2 acres of south-east facing slopes to become species-rich grasslands. This has involved cutting back and raking-

up vegetation, hand turfing and sowing native meadow seed. We have enjoyed the satisfying combination of manual labour, sunshine on our faces and an endless supply of cake!

Some members have also been involved with biological monitoring of the site through camera trapping plus bee, butterfly and bird transects, which allows us to track the impacts of our hard work on biodiversity. Training and support is provided for local volunteers who want to be involved on a more regular basis. We are always looking for new members so if you would like to join, please don't be shy! No prior experience is required.

Join our Facebook group to find out more. And follow Rewilding Denmarkfield:

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)



It's a result for young footie players and the environment



TCV recently welcomed a group of young footballers and staff from **Arsenal Football Club Academy** to take part in a wildflower and tree planting session at Balloch Castle Country Park, on the southern shores of Loch Lomond. The Arsenal under-16s were on a tour of Scotland to play teams from Rangers and Hearts. The aim of the tour, apart from playing matches, was to give the young players experiences and understanding of wider issues in society beyond the world of football.

So, the Arsenal contingent found themselves far from the streets of North London planting hundreds of wildflower

‘plugs’ and tree saplings by the bonnie banks to learn about climate change and how volunteering and other actions can make a difference. The sustainability theme also involved the group using public transport throughout their tour and enjoy locally sourced healthy food, so no fatty chips or fizzy drinks. The teenage Gunners really got into the swing of things and there wasn’t a mobile phone in sight!

Working alongside the enthusiastic Arsenal squad was a group of young TCV trainees who also got stuck into the task at hand. This was just one of many practical conservation activities they have over the



coming months to improve their skills and job prospects. And thanks also to **Mary-Anne Collis**, West Dunbartonshire Council Ranger, for her guidance and support, and **turnip the beet** for the healthy lunch.

This was a real team effort from TCV with captain Josh (Joshie) Thornhill leading the line, alongside Anna Hamilton who was a late substitute for the injured Tim Lewis. Jo Williams and Kevin Fairclough marshalled the Arsenal lads and our trainees who all played a blinder, so thanks to: Ben Stoddart, Ethan Shore, Evyn Hollinger, Logan Bainbridge, Harrison McCarroll, Ross Murphy, Ryan Smith and Logan Robertson.

It's not often a TCV activity features in a football match programme, but we had a mention (sort of) in the Arsenal programme for their home game against Leeds on 8th May. The programme gave an outline of the under-16's visit to Scotland, including:

"After a competitive game against Rangers the squad opted to engage with an environmental charity to help them with some planting projects on the banks of the beautiful Loch Lomond."*

*The Conservation Volunteers!

Building Roots



A successful day constructing bug hotels at Kay Park, Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire.

LAURA SALVAGE

In Ayrshire, newcomers to Scotland are integrating into their new surroundings with the help of the **Building Roots** project, as outlined by TCV Senior Project Officer **Laura Salvage**:

Through Building Roots, TCV works in partnership with **North, South and East Ayrshire councils** and their staff who are promoting English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The project aims to develop the language skills of refugees and asylum seekers, allowing them to form connections with their local

community and to grow their confidence to visit green spaces in their area. We aim to achieve this through enjoyable and informative sessions that allow them to learn about and engage in natural and cultural heritage activities. Sessions are coordinated with ESOL staff so learning inside the classroom is integrated with our outdoor-based activities.

We have been delivering outdoor sessions since January, both online and on-site. These have been organised with the help of our Arabic-speaking Project



Building a raised bed for veg growing at Eglinton Community Gardens.



Craigie Allotments, Ayr.

Assistant Abdulrahman Ali (page 11) and intern Chizzy Chingizorom. We run three sessions a week, one in each council area, at the following locations:

South Ayrshire: Craigie Allotments, Ayr

North Ayrshire: Eglinton Community Gardens, Irvine

East Ayrshire: Kay Park and Howard Park, Kilmarnock

Our activities

In **East Ayrshire** we held a barbecue to celebrate Eid where everyone contributed their own food to mark the end of Ramadan – Islam’s month of prayer and fasting. Recently we organised scavenger hunts, held a mindfulness session, tried our hand at canvas painting and made our own natural dyes from fruit and vegetables. The group also had a family trip to the stunning Dumfries House Estate, by Cumnock. We have also been working with East Ayrshire’s Greener Communities team to help with management activities at Kay Park where we planted our own wildflower seedbed outside the Burns Monument Centre. This will contribute to the John Muir Award which we are hoping to complete with some of our learners in August. Coming up, we have a trip to Troon South beach

planned which we’re very much looking forward to.

In **North Ayrshire** we have assisted the New Scots group to build a polytunnel and raised beds. We have also been growing vegetables and had a family insect safari session. And we have a family trip to Irvine beach coming up in July. When it comes to great beaches to visit, we’re definitely spoiled for choice in Ayrshire!

In **South Ayrshire** we have been making improvements on our allotment site. This has included building and painting our own wooden pallet furniture as well as making a herb garden. We have also made our own herbal teas and improved our woodwork skills by building nest boxes for the blue tits.

As part of the Refugee Festival Scotland, we are holding an Outdoor Cooking & Food Event on June 24th with the Scottish Refugee Council at Eglinton Community Garden. As the title suggests, this will involve outdoor cooking, trying dishes from different countries that some of our learners have prepared, and looking at sustainable gardening methods from around the world. This free event is open to the public and will also be a great opportunity for all our Building Roots groups to get together.



Our participants

Each of our Building Roots groups consist of ESOL learners. We have participants from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, China and Vietnam. We have also recently welcomed some Ukrainians to our East Ayrshire group who enjoyed a session of insect hotel building.

Participants say that to make them happy or to relax they love being out in the sunshine, and the group helps them enjoy each other's company surrounded by nature. The groups enable learners to build friendships outside of the classroom and we have found they are forming friendships naturally this way. Participants have said it can be easy to feel isolated when first moving to Scotland. Coming out to our Building Roots sessions helps them tackle this social isolation and work towards a common goal while also developing their language skills in a practical, informal setting. And Ayrshire's green spaces are benefitting too!

Making bug hotels in Kay Park.

LAURA SALVAGE



Ali with Laura Salvage, Senior Project Officer. JOSH THORNHILL

Nature Stories – **Abdulrahman Ali**

During [Scotland's Year of Stories](#), our colleagues at the Scottish Wildlife Trust are publishing a series of first-hand accounts from people who have faced barriers connecting to nature, including TCV's Abdulrahman Ali (known as Ali for short), who says:

I am originally from the North of Syria, but I had to leave my home because of the civil war. When I first arrived in Ayrshire, I felt overwhelmed by all the new things I had to learn about this beautiful country. This included the language and accent, how to buy food and pay for utilities, where to look for jobs, make friends, and where to find different kinds of government support.

Social workers and other council staff guided us and helped us through these difficulties, but there was no support at all when it came to understanding Scotland's nature, where to find green spaces or places to walk in the countryside. To overcome this, I got involved with TCV's Building Roots project.

Being connected to nature and the local community became especially important to me after Covid-19 lockdowns, where we

had to stay at home and avoid meeting other people. Lockdown made me and other refugee families feel like we were living in a bubble. Building Roots has provided me and other refugees with the opportunity to burst this bubble. We can learn about nature and most importantly about the culture and English language here in Scotland by interacting with others who are feeling isolated. Taking part is a great opportunity to grow their confidence and feel more connected to nature, as well as to the local community.

From personal experience, I believe that language can't be learnt from books or dictionaries. A language needs to be practiced and heard in an environment where there is encouragement and rapport between learners and native speakers. That's why Building Roots project sessions have been a fantastic opportunity for me. They have made me realise how important getting outside and meeting people is when adjusting to life in a new country and a different culture.

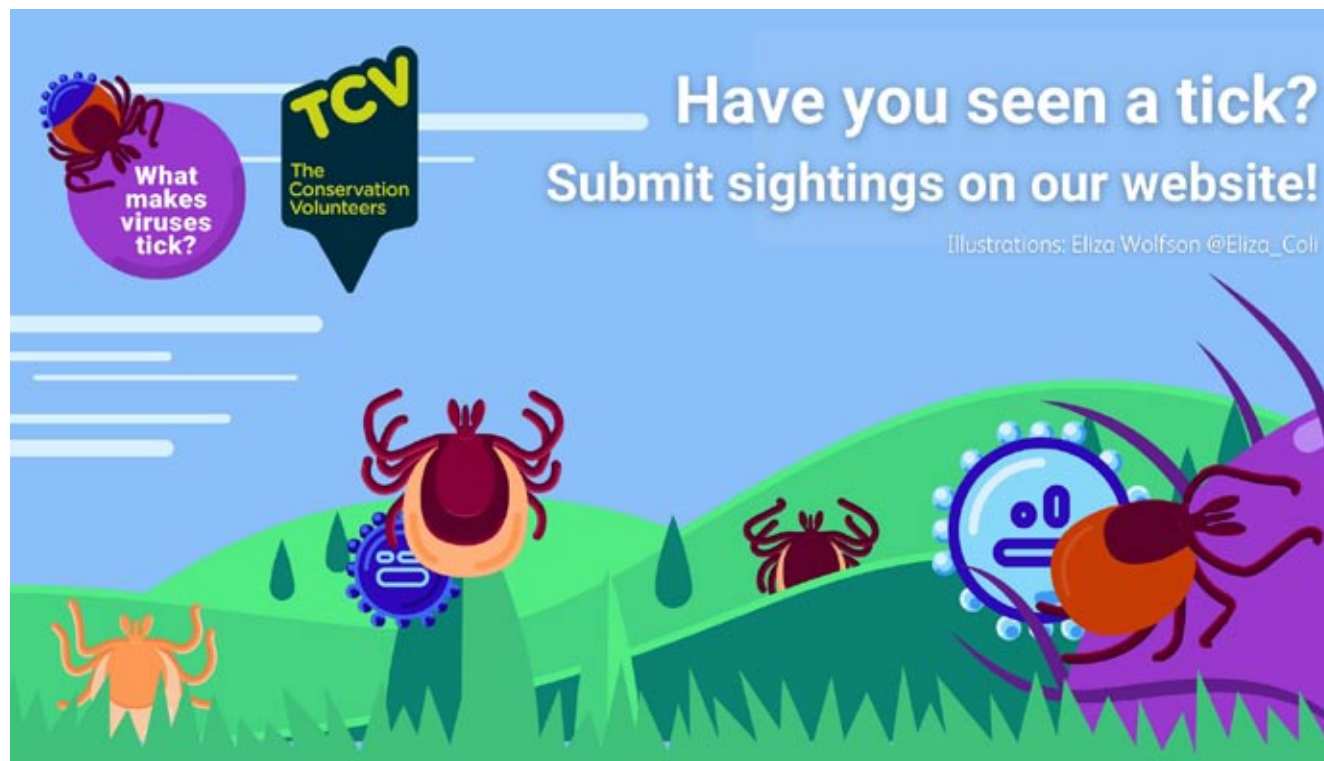
Thanks to Rory Syme and the Scottish Wildlife Trust for sharing Ali's story, which can be read in full [here](#)



To raise tick awareness, TCV and What makes viruses tick? held a Glasgow Science Festival event at Mugdock Country Park, near Milngavie. Our stand was manned by Sam Langford and Kelsey Davies from What makes viruses tick? and TCV's Craig Young and Eilidh Call (who has since become a Ranger with Stirling Council).

Have you seen a tick? TCV and our friends at [What makes viruses tick?](#) want to know, and we've recently launched a handy website and map where you can record your tick sightings and bitings!

According to [NHS Inform](#) - 'Ticks are small, spider-like creatures which feed on the blood of birds and mammals, including humans. They vary in size, usually between 1mm to 1cm long and they have either six or eight legs. They can be found anywhere there is wildlife, usually in woodland and



moorland areas, and are particularly common between March and October. The most common tick in Scotland is the sheep or deer tick. They do not fly or jump but climb on to animals or humans as they brush past.

Tick bites aren't usually painful and sometimes only cause a red lump to develop where you were bitten. However, in some cases they may cause: swelling, itchiness, blistering, bruising. In Scotland, the most common disease ticks transmit

is [Lyme disease](#) (also known as Lyme borreliosis). They also carry other diseases but these mainly affect animals.'

The project is led by the Brennan Lab at the [MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research](#) which aims to raise awareness of ticks and tick-borne diseases across Scotland, and what to look out for whether you're enjoying a walk in the country or taking part in a conservation session. Find out more and record your tick sightings, including on pets [here](#)

Achieving awards in, through and for nature



Taking part in an award scheme can be a great way for children and young people to contribute to, and connect with, nature. A new guide: [Achieving awards in, through and for nature](#) has been produced by the John Muir Trust and partners to help the likes of teachers and youth workers to navigate and connect the diverse nature-based award opportunities available in Scotland. It demonstrates how nature-based awards contribute to national agendas such as building skills for life, learning and work, and inspiring people about the benefits of wild places and nature connection in tackling the climate crisis and reversing biodiversity loss.



New Award will grow foresters of the future

A new [Scottish Junior Forester Award](#) has been launched with the aim of giving children and young people an insight into a career in forestry, equipping them with the knowledge and practical skills so that they can help manage woodlands in their schools or communities. The Award is aimed at 4-14 year olds in school, youth work or community settings in Scotland. It can be delivered by teachers, educators, and community organisations. Participants in the Award complete six sections with practical tasks which will enhance their knowledge of trees, woodlands and forestry. Scottish Forestry has worked in partnership with the Royal Forestry Society and John Muir Trust to develop the Award and show links with the [John Muir Award](#).





Creating Muiredge Park Wee Forest. ►

PAUL BARCLAY

▼ Castlebay Drive Wee Foresters.



During spring, TCV staff and volunteers helped plant two new **Wee Forests** at sites in Glasgow and Fife. A Wee Forest is a tennis court-sized, densely planted and fast-growing biodiverse woodland using the Miyawaki planting method with long term school and community engagement. Wee Forests are part of the global family of Tiny Forests promoted in the UK by [Earthwatch](#).

In Glasgow, over 100 enthusiastic pupils from Miltonbank Primary planted 600 trees to create the Castlebay Drive Wee Forest, supported by the Wheatley Group. The Miltonbank Wee Foresters will help look after the trees and carry out Citizen Science activities

to monitor their growth, plus aspects of climate change. And in Fife, pupils of Levenmouth Academy and volunteers from CLEAR community group dug-in to create Muiredge Park Wee Forest, which is supported by Fife Council. The Castlebay Drive and Muiredge Park sites are part of a network of 20 Wee Forests developed across urban Scotland in 2021/22 by NatureScot in partnership with Earthwatch and others, funded by the Scottish Government. Additionally, Earthwatch planted 7 more Wee Forests in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and throughout the UK, 149 such forests were created in 2021/22 using the Miyawaki method.

More on Wee Forests at [NatureScot](#)

Change in the North



Volunteering opportunities are available in the Inverness area through Land and Deliver.

[Website](#)
[Facebook](#)

Following the closure of our small office in Inverness last year we are exploring new opportunities and partnerships with Highland-based organisations. As part of this change Senior Project Officer **Rob Thomas** has moved on from TCV to start a new venture. We thank Rob for his ten years of dedicated service with TCV during which he played a vital part in our operations in the Highlands, including running Green Gyms and health activities, wood recycling projects, major sand dune restoration and boardwalk construction schemes, and maintaining our long-running partnership with the Friends of Merkinch Local Nature Reserve, in Inverness. Over the years many local volunteers were involved with, and benefitted hugely, from these diverse activities.

However, Rob's extensive experience isn't being lost to the local environmental scene or indeed to TCV. Rob has established his own enterprise 'Land and Deliver' to provide conservation activities and volunteering opportunities in Inverness-shire. To promote his new enterprise Rob has created a Facebook page and website, which he says is a work in progress. Rob welcomes enquiries from potential volunteers, and we are looking at ways to maintain his links with TCV, so best of luck Rob!

Earlston Paths Group seat unveiled

Earlston Paths Group in the Borders were delighted when **The Duke of Gloucester** attended an event at Carolside to unveil the group's Platinum Jubilee seat, celebrating the Queen's seventy years of service to the nation. The short ceremony took place at the front of Carolside House where the hand-crafted heartwood oak seat, inset with the Platinum Jubilee logo and emblems representing the four UK nations was unveiled.

A grant from the Scottish Borders Council Platinum Jubilee Fund enabled the group to commission Ross Ketteridge, a local craftsman working out of Real Wood Studios, Monteviot Nurseries, Ancrum, to make the seat and have the emblems made in Jedburgh by All Awards Ltd. The Paths Group also contributed to the project.

Group Secretary **Ian Gibb** said: *"The landowners Rose and Anthony Foyle have been extremely supportive over the whole project and we are pleased that the seat will be moved to its final location within their estate, at a point overlooking the Leader Water, on the Earlston Circular Walk, where it will provide a welcome resting*

spot for walkers for years to come and perhaps allow them to pause and consider what a lifetime of service to the country means."

Ian added: *"It's important for voluntary groups such as ours to celebrate a key moment in our brief history, before getting back to the day job of cutting grass, clearing fallen trees and doing the everyday repairs to keep our paths in good order."*

If your group has a significant moment you would like to share in this newsletter, please send details to **Graham**



CURTIS WELSH/HELEN PUGH-COOK

Earlston Paths Group members with friends at Carolside, including seated (from the left): The area's Lord-Lieutenant the Duke of Buccleuch, Group Secretary Ian Gibb and The Duke of Gloucester.



Remembering Roger

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing earlier this year of former TCV volunteer Roger Alexander. Roger joined TCV after retiring as Caddiemaster at one of Ayrshire's famous golf clubs, so he was well used to the outdoor life and wanted to remain physically active. Roger took part in TCV activities across Scotland, including the development of many community gardens and school nature areas. Most of Roger's five years with TCV were spent as a Volunteer Officer with our team based at Auchincruive Agricultural College, on the outskirts of Ayr. Here, Roger was involved in a wide variety of tasks from leading volunteer groups, driving the minibus, assisting on training courses, and helping out in the office – all carried out in his typically cheerful and enthusiastic manner. We ceased our activities from Auchincruive when the college campus was closed down, but Roger continued his volunteering with the National Trust for Scotland at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway. Originally from England, Roger is fondly remembered for his time with and contribution to TCV, particularly in his adopted home of Ayrshire.

Graham Burns, Project Officer.





How to talk to young people about climate change

Understanding and discussing climate change can be a complex topic, but it's one that interests **Rosie Strachan**, TCV Senior Project Officer, especially through her work with School Green Gyms:

It is no secret that climate change can be difficult to talk about with others. But, with the effects of it becoming more apparent in our daily lives, the conversation is even harder to avoid. There can be a lot of pressure on these discussions, as they have the potential to be a catalyst for action or the exact opposite of this. So, what can make talks about climate change so easily go either way? There is no one-size-fits-all policy on how best to approach conversations about climate change (1). The same rhetoric may elicit different reactions depending on the group or individual you are talking to. When speaking of the issue to young people and children, who are feeling the looming weight of the issue even more than previous generations, it is important to talk about this difficult subject in the right way. Here are some suggestions on

how to approach the conversation and communicate climate change effectively to children and young people:

BUILDING STEWARDSHIP – One of the most important aspects of communicating climate change effectively to children comes before there is any talk of climate change at all. What can be described as “laying the foundation” (2), this first step is all about encouraging children to spend time in the outdoors and connect with nature and the landscape. When we encourage young people to spend time in the outdoors, and to develop a connection to the places they live in, then many topics relating to climate change will come up naturally. Nurturing a connection to the natural world encourages behaviours such as stewardship and consideration, as well as a general interest in the environment (3). TCV's projects targeting schools and youth groups provide an outlet for just that, to learn about the environment around us through being outdoors, having fun, and building a good relationship with nature. When kids feel responsible for

Original articles and references eg (2) are provided on page 21.



Connecting with nature: Rosie and pupils from St Andrew's Primary in Kilmarnock looking for a hedgehog which one of them had just spotted by their school garden.

the land, they are more inclined to look after it, and take issue with actions which are actively destroying it. Take them to a local park, grow plants and vegetables with them, even watching a nature documentary are all great activities to build a relationship between them and the environment.

MORE THAN JUST SCIENCE - Although it is important to understand the science behind environmental degradation, overly scientific talk can alienate children and make the concept less understandable, or less easy to relate it to their everyday lives (1). Take into consideration the age of the person or group you are talking to and be mindful of what level of the science they will be able to grasp. What is, arguably, more important than communicating complex scientific ideas is communicating the complex interrelationships between the environment and our lives. Showing the numerous ways climate change effects our lives individually, as well as our communities, can foster a closer connection to the environmental cause. This is not to say that science shouldn't be a part of the conversation at all, but that it is important to recognise that it is only one facet of a larger discussion.

AVOIDING THE DOOM AND GLOOM –

There are a lot of bad things that come with climate change: biodiversity loss, extreme weather conditions increasing, displacement, extinction. This being the case, it is easy to spiral into negativity when speaking on the subject. However, this can be a counterproductive endeavour. While following a ‘doomsday narrative’ can be a motivator and instil a sense of urgency, it can also lead to feelings of hopelessness and producing ‘climate anxiety’ among people (4,5). Striking a balance between getting across the severity of the issue, while also leaving room for hope within this conversation can be a tricky spot to find. However, focusing on creating an even balance between discussing the devastation and the potential to stop it, as well as speaking about things we can do ourselves to lessen the crisis, will lead to more fruitful and empowering conversations which strike children with motivation to act (5).

Climate change is tough to talk about with most people, but with young people we face unique challenges when having this discussion. However, knowing how to approach the conversation with your child, or the children you are working with, can shape how the future will look. Successfully

speaking about these issues at a young age will allow this generation to grow into passionate, caring, climate-conscious citizens who can make real improvements and achieve real change in the world they are inheriting.



How do we discuss climate change and its effects without inducing ‘climate anxiety’ in young people?

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- (3) Thompson, C. E. (2021). “This Land is Our Land: A new initiative seeks to improve outdoor access for underrepresented youth”
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JOSH THORNHILL

Gavin Mulgrew – *an EPIC trainee*

Hey, I'm Gavin and I've been a [UK Year of Service](#) trainee at The Conservation Volunteers since November 2021. It was suggested this traineeship would be a good fit for me by my work coach at Fair Start Scotland. I'm prone to quite severe panic attacks which has made it a little difficult for me to find the right fit in a job before this. Since starting at TCV I've been overwhelmed by the kindness of the staff, and how compassionate and outgoing everyone is.

Since commencing with TCV I have been on many project days, but most days I'm out with Josh Thornhill and the EPIC project in Clackmannanshire where we deliver three sessions throughout the week, one of which is a Green Gym which focuses on reducing people's barriers to engagement. TCV supports Nature Scot's Make Space For Nature campaign and I really like that mentality. We must do everything to create greenspaces and to encourage our bees, butterflies and other wildlife.

Although I normally work with the EPIC project, I sometimes get to work on other TCV projects too. I've had lots of fun working with the Green Skills trainees at Kinneil House in Bo'ness and the Stirling Midweek Group. I've also had the chance to work with some other projects where I got to see so many of the different things that we do at TCV.

In my time at TCV I've been fortunate enough to have access to some great training courses Including First Aid at Work and Brushcutters and Trimmers, and hopefully in the next few months I will be going through my Chainsaw course too.

I have enjoyed every second of my traineeship and I'm looking forward to this continuing into the next few months which I hope can be just as good as these last six months, and that I can continue to grow my skills and learn new ones too. In this traineeship I have found a home, a place where I can be myself and work with some of the most capable people who just want to make the world a better place.

make space for nature



The Make Space For Nature campaign from NatureScot encourages everyone to help reverse nature loss and fight climate change. A range of seasonal activities encourage you outdoors to benefit both nature and your own health and wellbeing. Summer tips include mowing less to create a wildflower patch or meadow, and you can encourage your council to do the same at suitable green spaces. Do you have areas of garden paving which can be reduced or where you can place features to attract wildlife? And can you learn to love weeds such as the dandelion, which provide food for pollinators? Discover 14 summer tips to [Make Space For Nature](#)

Dandelions – simply the pest?

It's often said that a weed is just a plant growing in the wrong place. For gardeners who like their lawns trim and tidy the dandelion is up there at the top of the weed hit-list, but is there more to this pesky plant?

The dandelion is one of the world's most successful plants with over 200 micro species in the British Isles alone. The name derives from the French 'dent de lion' or lion's tooth, which the plant's serrated leaves are thought to resemble. In addition to garden lawns the bright yellow dandelion is a common sight throughout much of the year in all kinds of grasslands from roadside verges to traditional meadows.

For centuries dandelions have been used for herbal and medicinal purposes, being rich in vitamins and minerals. And all parts of the dandelion have been used in many types of foodstuffs. The flowers are used for making wine, and dandelion and burdock is a popular soft drink. Young dandelion leaves are used in salads and as an infusion for tea. The roots can also be used to make tea,

or ground and roasted as a substitute coffee – it's all a matter of taste! One particular type of dandelion has found a more unusual use as a natural rubber in the making of bicycle and car tyres – strange but true.

And for nature lovers and crop growers, dandelions are an important early food source for pollinators, providing nectar and pollen for many species of bees, butterflies and other insects. So, the dandelion – maybe more than just a weed.





By **Morag Boyd**, Community Engagement Officer, Scottish Badgers

Get sett with Scottish Badgers



Community Network member **Scottish Badgers** needs help to find out what's happening to Scotland's badger population. Over the next three years we need volunteers to survey 1,000 1km squares, previously surveyed during 2006-2009. The aim is to find out whether the number of badger setts in Scotland is stable, increasing or declining. And to find out changes in habitat - are the original squares still as they were or has development, forestry or agricultural etc noticeably changed the habitats badgers are living within? Have these changes caused setts to become disused, or have badgers adapted?

In order to carry out this survey, Scottish Badgers needs LOTS of help. If you are able to take on a survey commitment, you will receive full training in the survey techniques

needed and a day in the field investigating known setts to increase your knowledge and ability to find signs of badgers in the wild. You do need to commit to surveying (at least) one 1km square to receive the training - this square is pre-set but will be allocated as close to you as possible.

If you are interested, please email me, **Morag** with your name, most importantly your location and whether you have any badger knowledge. I'll send on additional information and add your name to the list. Training will begin in September and be in several locations around Scotland - there should be one within reach. It will comprise a half-day online training session followed up by a day out in the field looking at badger field signs and setts. That is the really fun bit!



▲ *BIO Group volunteers Nancy and Ann planting a donated tree.*

▼ *BIO Group planter.*



The Chestnut Fund

The Chestnut Fund is part of TCV's support to encourage and enable community groups to carry out conservation activities. Chestnut Fund grants fall into two categories – 'Start-up' grants and 'Support' grants:

Start-up grants

These are for groups who have little or no money and are available to groups in their first year of existence. The grant will enable them to begin practical work and will cover administrative expenses, eg publicity, hire of meeting rooms, telephone bills and/or insurance fees. The maximum grant is currently £160.

Support grants

These are for groups who have little or no money for tools, equipment and training. This grant is available to all groups, regardless of how long they have been running. The maximum grant is currently £350.

Groups within their first year can apply for

both the Start-up and Support grants. Whilst the sums available are quite modest, they can be the difference between something happening or not. Chestnut Fund details, eligibility criteria and application form are available on our [website](#).

Over the next few pages several recent recipients of the Chestnut Fund in Scotland give a flavour of how it has helped them:

Langside Sports Club BIO Group (Glasgow)

LSC BIO Group received a Start-up grant which we used mainly on buying tools and some additional purchases for admin stuff, eg ink cartridges, paper, marker pens and the like. Everything has been really useful. The tools are used at our volunteer sessions twice a week and mean that we don't have to cart them from home, and we have enough for everyone. Some of our volunteers don't have gardens or tools so rely on the group being able to provide them. We have achieved a huge number of biodiversity/wildlife habitat projects this year and have many more ongoing projects to keep us busy.



ORCS volunteers on a path survey at the local community woodland. CHARLIE MILLAR



One of Gavinburn Primary School's water-saving butts. EMMA YULE

Oatridge Rangers and Countryside Stewards (West Lothian)

ORCS received funding from the Chestnut Fund to pay for some ecological surveying equipment. As a student-led practical conservation group studying with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), this allowed ORCS to gather habitat data so that we could assess the ecological impact of our practical conservation projects.

Gavinburn Primary School Parent Teacher Council (Old Kilpatrick, West Dunbartonshire)

This grant has directly benefitted the group in various ways through the provision of essential tools and equipment for adult volunteers and children to use. Examples include age and size appropriate shovels and brushes for both adults and children, which makes activities much more enjoyable and easier for the children to participate in. Wheelbarrows help to transport equipment and materials, and water butts collect and provide a water source within remote areas of the grounds.

The equipment purchased has been invaluable in directly contributing to and promoting sustainability, conservation and self-sufficiency, regular essential



Tools and equipment for Gavinburn Primary School. EMMA YULE

maintenance of existing habitats, for example the Forest School area and sensory garden, creating new habitats for pollinators, insects and birds around the grounds, and aiding in the planting of an orchard area, re-purposing existing raised beds, making our own organic compost and building a wormery. Having this equipment also directly supports the abilities of the children in developing their skills and knowledge, and help them become responsible citizens and effective contributors to their wider community environment.



▲ *Tools for the job, purchased by Friends of King's Park through the Chestnut Fund.*

PHOTOS: MEREDITH MUIRHEAD

▼ *Volunteers Elspeth and Karen working on the walled garden pond.*



Friends of King's Park (Glasgow)

We received both a Start-up and Support grant. We are a group of local residents and their families who are focused on the upkeep and maintenance of our beautiful King's Park. We are concerned with controlling the litter as well as maintaining the rose garden, sensory garden and walled garden, established by the previous Friends group and Glasgow City Council. Our activities include litter picks, tree and wildflower planting, maintaining the flower beds and ponds, putting on seasonal events and providing volunteer activities. We used the Start-up grant to provide our first year of insurance cover and the Support grant for gardening tools.

TCV can also help Community Network members identify potential sources of funding through the GrantFinder database, and TCV Scotland produces a **Funding Update** three times annually which lists grants available, large and small, for community and environmental projects. The Summer Update will be issued in early July.

Tranent Wombles (East Lothian)

The money from the Chestnut Fund Start-up grant was used by us to purchase insurance to cover our litter picking activities in and around Tranent. We have a major issue with urban litter which seems to have exploded post-Covid. We organise group litter picks, support individuals to do litter picks and work with groups and schools. And we are working alongside the council to develop a bit of vacant land to make this a bee-friendly garden. The insurance we have in place covers all these activities.



Tranent Wombles with plenty to show after an evening litter pick. SHARON MACLEOD

New Field Studies Council courses in Scotland – with a discount!

In 2022, the Field Studies Council is expanding the number of its one and two day ‘in-person’ natural history courses in Scotland, and readers of the Bulletin are eligible for a 20% discount! The courses are a great way to develop your natural history knowledge and skills with instruction by experts, and with most courses being aimed at beginner or intermediate level.

2022 courses in Scotland:



Millport Field Studies Centre, Isle of Cumbrae.

Millport, Isle of Cumbrae

Identifying Grasses, Sedges and Rushes.....25/26 June
Introduction to Marine Plankton....5 August
Introduction to Spider Survey and Identification..... 4 September
Rocky Shore Ecology and Identification5 September
An Introduction to Lichens1/2 October

Dounans Centre, Aberfoyle

Practical Fungi Field Skills.....24 September
Field Ecology of Woodland Fungi.....25 September
Discovering Wildlife Tracks and Signs..... 12/13 November

Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore

Practical Fungi Field Skills..... 1 October
Field Ecology of Woodland Fungi..... 2 October

Broomlee Centre, West Linton

Practical Fungi Field Skills..... 8 October



Starfish larva.

WWW.OCEANDRIFTERS.ORG

Further course information and booking details are available [here](#)

To claim your 20% discount simply add ‘**TCV20**’ to the ‘Voucher code’ when checking out of course booking.

You may also be interested in the Field Studies Council’s [online courses](#) which cover dozens of topics from ‘Discovering Seabirds’ and ‘Fungi Field Skills’ to ‘Botanical Folklore’. (NB. The TCV discount does not apply to these).

And the Field Studies Council runs a free online course: [Beginners Guide to Terrestrial Invertebrates](#).

In Edinburgh

Spring around Edinburgh has just been launched by TCV to engage with refugees new to Scotland and living in the capital. TCV's Doro Richter and Roba Kherollah will be organising a range of activities including:

- Nature-based sessions for older women
- An outdoor group for teenagers
- Sessions for younger refugee mums
- Outdoor nature-based family events during the summer school holidays

Doro and Roba are very much looking forward to their new project which we'll feature in coming newsletters.



What's your story?

Green Space Stories is bringing together the stories of thousands of people across the UK, sharing their relationship with nature and the landscape, whether hills or mountains, lochs or beaches, woodlands or local parks. Be part of this citizen science project and share your recent memorable experience in the landscape.

Free membership

With support from players of People's Postcode Lottery, TCV's Community Network offers free one year membership to community organisations, large and small, who help care for their local greenspaces. The Community Network has 1,800+ member groups spread throughout the UK, with over 260 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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TCV Scotland's community, health and environmental volunteering activities are supported by organisations and partners including:



Views and opinions expressed in the Network Bulletin do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or of The Conservation Volunteers.

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