

[www.tcv.org.uk/scotland](http://www.tcv.org.uk/scotland)

# networkbulletin

SPRING 2023 FOR TCV SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITY NETWORK



In this issue: **highlighting the health benefits of nature-based activities and volunteering**

# networkbulletin

Welcome to the Spring 2023 Network Bulletin from The Conservation Volunteers in Scotland. In this issue:

## Contents [click to navigate](#)

Encouraging people outside.....	3
Garden life.....	7
Help children enjoy a Wild Day Out....	9
Paul's journey.....	10
Eglington Community Gardens - a growing collaboration.....	12
On course in Scotland.....	15
Developing Wild Ways Well with Neighbourhood Nature.....	16
New beginnings.....	18
Combatting the space invaders.....	20
On placement.....	21
School Green Gym - the outdoor classroom.....	22
Active in Ayr.....	24
Coming up:.....	25
Free membership.....	25

Welcome to the Spring Network Bulletin from The Conservation Volunteers in Scotland. In this issue we look at how volunteering with community greenspace groups not only benefits the environment, but also the health and wellbeing of everyone taking part. We particularly highlight some of the many health and nature-based groups running in Ayrshire, whilst over in Livingston the Neighbourhood Nature project is also organising a range of healthy ways for people to enjoy their local environment.

Helping nature/helping yourself, isn't just for adults - children and young people can benefit too, as shown by School Green Gyms which encourage pupils to take a fresh look at their surroundings and what they can do to help the environment.

Also in this issue: For some people, outdoor volunteering isn't just a useful way to spend some spare time - it's a stepping-stone towards a career in conservation. That's certainly the aim of Paul Archibald from Alloa, who shares his volunteering journey so far.

'2023 Invasive Species Week' runs from 15-21 May. Find out how to take part and help tackle the growing problem of invasive non-native species.

---

*Front cover: EPIC volunteers in Tillicoultry Glen clearing bracken to improve path access and create space for wildflowers to grow.* JOSH THORNHILL

The Field Studies Council has expanded its training course programme in Scotland, and readers of the Bulletin are eligible for 20% course discounts. And how more young people can be engaged in environmental volunteering has been the subject of a student placement with TCV.

Spring has arrived. In Nature notes, TCV's Paul Barclay highlights some of the season's emerging wildlife, whilst NatureScot has ten ways to make space for nature in your life this spring.

And, our spring appeal has been launched to provide hundreds of children with a Wild Day Out - can you contribute towards the appeal?

More information on TCV's approach to health and wellbeing is available on our [website](#).



It's increasingly recognised that engaging with nature and spending time outdoors can improve your health and wellbeing. Evidence suggests such engagement not only motivates us to take more regular physical exercise but also enables us to connect with and care about our local greenspaces and communities, increasing social contact and intergenerational connections, tackling social isolation, and promoting sustainability. The natural environment also has restorative qualities and can help reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance recovery from illness.

North Ayrshire has an abundance of fabulous green and blue spaces across rural and urban environments, coastal communities and islands. Encouraging and supporting more people into the outdoor gems on their doorstep is the aim of North Ayrshire Green Health Partnership (NAGHP), led by NHS Ayrshire & Arran and supported by a range of partnership organisations, including TCV. Spending time in nature or taking part in green health activities can take many forms, such as community growing, walking, cycling, practical conservation, gardening,

PHOTOS: LINDSAY TWILLEY





Stevenston beach with Ailsa Craig in the distance.

bird watching, outdoor learning and play, and many more. NAGHP’s vision can be summed up as – More people, more active, more often!

### Get out and about!

The NAGHP [website](#) is packed with year-round activity ideas, resources and an Events Calendar to get people outdoors and active in North Ayrshire.

NAGHP is one of four such partnerships in Scotland, the others being Dundee, Lanarkshire and Highlands & Islands. NAGHP is part of the Our Natural Health Service Programme, a national initiative led by NatureScot, which aims to create a step change in how the natural environment can be used, valued and protected as a precious resource which supports our health and wellbeing.

*“The North Ayrshire Green Health Partnership’s biggest strength is the passion and enthusiasm of the people across multiple organisations who strive to deliver on our vision and aims. We endeavour to enhance people’s journey into green health or greenspaces by improving access to a variety of activities that will have a positive impact on them*

*and the natural environment. Helping to tackle health inequalities through the power of nature and social interaction by working with our fantastic community assets, local organisations and community groups. Bringing together resources and knowledge around the table to develop new ideas and initiatives for those in need.”*

– **David Meechan**, Green Health Partnership Senior Project Officer



A Lochshore Park volunteer at ‘work’.

REBECCA RAMAGE



## TCV in North Ayrshire

As part of NAGHP, TCV runs weekly activities in the following locations:

### KILWINNING

#### *Kilwinning Green Gym*

Based at Kilwinning Library, the Green Gym volunteers also venture into greenspaces within the community.

#### *Get Moving Health Walk - Ayrshire Central Hospital*

This is a supportive group encouraging those recovering from illness or inactivity to get moving by walking outdoors.

### IRVINE

#### *Castlepark Green Gym*

The Green Gym has fun and FREE outdoor sessions where you will be guided in practical activities such as gardening, sowing wildflowers, healthy walks, educational activities, and environmental art.

For more information on our Kilwinning and Irvine activities, contact [lindsay.twilley@tcv.org.uk](mailto:lindsay.twilley@tcv.org.uk) or 07483 050742.

### KILBIRNIE

#### *Friends of Lochshore Park*

This group of local volunteers undertakes practical conservation around the Lochshore Park. This has included a scything workshop, tree identification, bulb planting and a lot of clearing back vegetation and woodland management.

#### *Wellbeing Walking Group*

The weekly walk around Lochshore Park is a friendly, social activity open to all abilities. To add variety, there are different activities on the walk such as litter picks, breathing exercises, or bird watching.

#### *Nature Arts and Crafts Group*

Do you have an interest in art? Do you like visiting the outdoors? Why not combine both with some like-minded individuals. Each week at Lochshore Park Hub we work on a different project using natural materials.

For more information on our Lochshore activities, contact [rebecca.ramage@tcv.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.ramage@tcv.org.uk) or 07483 050760.

*Details of all TCV Scotland health-based activities and regular volunteer groups are available [on our website](#)*

# Green Health Week

13-19 May 2023

NAGHP is one of many organisations taking part in the annual Green Health Week to celebrate green health and greenspaces. It raises awareness of the health benefits of physical activity outdoors and contact with nature. The campaign is backed by NatureScot, so keep an eye out on its Facebook and Twitter pages, and those of TCV and like-minded organisations for Green Health Week events you can join in. And if you are part of a community greenspace group, why not run your own Green Health Week activity?

NatureScot has more information on [‘Promoting green health’](#)



*Friends of Lochshore Park take a break.* REBECCA RAMAGE

For more information about the work of the North Ayrshire Green Health Partnership, please contact:

David Meechan  
Senior Project Officer  
[d.meechan@tcv.org.uk](mailto:d.meechan@tcv.org.uk)  
07773 200525

And keep up to date on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

NAGHP is funded by NatureScot, Healthier Scotland/Scottish Government and Smarter Choices, Smarter Places/Paths for All.



# Garden life



*Volunteer Jim rolling bark mulch.*

**Girvan Community Garden** is a fantastic example of how a dedicated group of people can turn an underused urban space into a thriving hub of activity and events to involve the local community, and enhance biodiversity. **Julie Campbell**, Community Gardener, explains:

Girvan Community Garden has now existed for 14 years, created in a derelict, former plant nursery in the harbour area of the South Ayrshire town. The garden has been through plenty of changes over the years and continues to reshape itself as the needs

of local people and visitors change with the times. The garden had been a welcome respite for the older generation during the pandemic. Friends were able to meet up with each other in the safety of being in the fresh air and nature. Today, those same people have continued to meet in the garden every week to connect with each other. They have grown in numbers and the garden has also attracted a small group of musicians who play regularly for fun. The garden also attracts its fair share of wildlife – birds, butterflies, bees and other insects, as well as resident frogs and other pondlife.

## An eventful place!

In addition to the regular volunteer sessions, there is a calendar of events in the garden for local people to come together and celebrate the changing seasons. Coming up this year:

Easter Fayre	8 April
Easter Egg Hunt	10 April
Folk in the Garden	29&30 April
Afternoon Tea	7 May
Girvan Arts Festival	3&4 June
Tattie Fest	17 June
Strawberry Teas	6 August
Health and Wellbeing Day	19 August
Harvest Festival	26 August
Christmas Fayre	25 November
Hogmanay Gathering	31 December

Find out more on the garden's [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page

Throughout all the changes and twists and turns down the years, our volunteer Green Gym sessions have continued – the backbone and a crucial part of Girvan Community Garden. The garden needs to be maintained and without the help from volunteers during these sessions it would certainly suffer.

We have seen many volunteers pass through our gates, some being long term ‘regulars’, while others have moved on to pastures new. One of our newer volunteers, Jim, has told us coming to the Green Gym sessions has; *“certainly improved my mental health and physical well being.”* Jim is pictured pulling a very heavy roller over our newly barked area. Jim says he has learned a few new skills while he has been with us, like repointing some paving slabs.



One of the local residents.

Jim also likes the company and enjoys a good few conversations over a cup of tea!

New faces are always very welcome at the Green Gym, every Tuesday from 10am – 2pm. No experience necessary and it’s a great opportunity to get some fresh air, exercise and a chance to meet new people. And it’s a great way to learn new skills too. If you’re interested in joining us, please pop in for a chat or contact

[julie@girvancommunitygarden.com](mailto:julie@girvancommunitygarden.com)





# Help children enjoy a Wild Day Out



**TCV's spring appeal is raising money to send children on a Wild Day Out.**

During 2023, we want to run 52 events in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and involve around 1,500 youngsters. These events are aimed at primary school children who are growing up in urban, built-up neighbourhoods that are amongst the most deprived of green spaces in the UK. Research shows that children from lower income families spend less time outdoors engaging with nature, which can sometimes appear strange and unwelcoming. The days out are aimed at helping children to build a connection with nature and wildlife, and inspire them to care about the environment.



During a Wild Day Out, the children will take part in a range of activities such as bug hunting, den building, campfire cooking, pond dipping, bird spotting, and nature-based crafts and games. Our staff and volunteers see the impact spending time in nature has on children, as they gain confidence, become more curious and shed their concerns.

We are asking people to donate £10 to send a child on a Wild Day Out. Find out more and donate [here](#).

*"I really enjoyed my day out because the people that worked with us made it really fun! We built a hedge, and we also made a fire and we boiled water then had hot chocolate and marshmallows. My favourite part was when we cleared the mound because I love tidying and sweeping." - Ariela*



# Paul's journey

For **Paul Archibald** from Alloa, conservation volunteering has enhanced both his health and career prospects, as he explains:

I started volunteering with TCV in 2019. At the time I was very withdrawn and in treatment for depression and anxiety. It was suggested I do something to push myself out of my comfort zone, and TCV was one option. Since that first day with

TCV I've been through many changes and have found excitement for life again.

I joined EPIC (Enabling Projects in Clackmannanshire) which carries out access, biodiversity and community projects around Clackmannanshire. Here, I've learned about wildflower meadows, something I've become passionate about, and it's always fun sweeping a big scythe pretending you're the Grim Reaper! We

also do path repairs in the Ochil Hills, which can be quite remote and a long walk to carry the equipment, but it feels good to be helping walkers and cyclists alike.

During my time volunteering, it became clear I had found something I really enjoyed and was passionate about, and it was suggested something I could take further. I took this advice and I'm currently a third-year horticulture student

at Glasgow Clyde College. Many of the skills learned with TCV have come in handy at college. And volunteering helped me gain confidence and come out of my shell. Anxiety can be quite crippling, and I've worked hard to deal with it. However, having great support from family, friends and those at TCV, makes it all easier.

In 2022, I became a Volunteer Officer (VO), supporting the EPIC Senior Project Officer Josh Thornhill, who now has a new role within TCV and has been succeeded by Clare Johnstone. As a VO there are more responsibilities, and even more opportunities for training and development. This role allows me to use many of the things I'm learning at college, to teach others and keep my own skills fresh. I've also attended partner meetings which has been interesting to see the amount of work behind the scenes that goes into planning a TCV project - something I don't experience in a classroom.

I recently had the opportunity to support a pre-employability project for people learning practical conservation and soft skills to help them gain employment. Here, I took more of a leadership position, and every week provided new learning for

me. I saw the group's confidence and skill levels grow and some went straight into employment.

When I started studying, I always told people I wanted to work in conservation, but this was very vague and not well thought through. In my second year I attended a class unit on horticulture therapy, Glasgow Clyde College being one of only two places in Scotland that offers the unit. Horticultural therapy takes many forms, from sitting in a hospital garden just having a chat or walking through woodlands, to planting up raised beds or woodland management. It's not so different to much of what TCV does - giving people confidence and skills to feel good about themselves while helping nature and the community.

I feel my journey with TCV has been a form of horticulture therapy, helping me deal with my own issues and it's something I'd like to help others with. Continuing as a VO will give me more opportunities to do this, and once I graduate this is the career path I'd like to take. Who knows, maybe even as part of TCV's staff.



PHOTO: JOSH THORNHILL



# Eglinton Community Gardens - a gROWing collaboration

**Eglinton Community Gardens** is a collaborative project embracing horticulture and nature-based activities to improve the health and wellbeing and social inclusion of members of the local community, alongside the specific clients and volunteers of each member organisation of the collaborative. The gardens are located at Eglinton Country Park, between Kilwinning and Irvine, in North Ayrshire. Here, **Linda Tedford**, NAC Ranger Service and Community Garden Co-ordinator, outlines the main organisations within the collaborative, and the benefits for their participants:



**North Ayrshire Countryside Ranger Service** is the lead partner, whose main remit is two-fold: to co-ordinate the partner organisations towards achieving the vision of the gardens for the benefit of local communities, to provide a safe and welcoming environment for people to come together and enjoy, and to provide fresh fruit and vegetables to support the North Ayrshire Council Fair

for All Food Strategy. And to promote the understanding, appreciation, and recreational use of the natural environment by providing activities for all ages that connect people to outdoor space within the garden.

The Ranger Service host several groups on site, including: a social and therapeutic horticultural service called **Breaking Ground** offering support, training and recovery for individuals experiencing various mental or physical health issues; a mid-week **Wednesday Volunteer Group** for those who want to learn about gardening, get outdoors and physically active in a social space; and **Ground Force**, an Armed Forces group on Thursdays as part of the NAC Covenant Pledge to our serving, ex-serving and military families to ease their inclusion and integration within the local community.

**The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT)** has a main aim to deliver programmes and projects that make a difference to people's





lives by encouraging and promoting community action, supporting individuals into volunteering placements whilst assisting other organisations find quality volunteers.

**Turning Point Scotland** is a leading social care developer and provider working through partnership to transform lives and aspirations by supporting people to build a sense of community and be active citizens within it. They specialise in supporting people facing the most complex and challenging situations.



**H&SC Learning Disabilities Team** aims towards ensuring all people who live in North Ayrshire are able to have a safe, healthy and active life by tackling inequalities, engaging communities, bringing services together, prevention and early intervention, and improving mental health and wellbeing.



**North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership** collaborates with key agencies and stakeholders to work together to tackle the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs in our community. They provide recovery and treatment focused interventions to meet the needs of people across North Ayrshire, linking with national

and local organisations to coordinate prevention and education initiatives to the wider community.

Together, this collaborative has the potential to reach and work with so many community demographics within North Ayrshire, helping to improve local life and community wellbeing, linking people up, promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and healthy and active communities, and reducing inequalities.

**Equal Supported Employment** is an employability group where individuals learn about Horticulture and woodwork skills. They provide opportunities for those who would like to complete an SQA Qualification in Horticulture which can assist them into employment.

And lastly, **New Scots**, who support resettled family members from abroad to socialise and become comfortable within their local community. Gardening allows them to grow their own produce, be self-sustaining, integrate with other groups, and volunteer where they can have opportunity to share from their own culture and have meaningful contact with the wider society to help build bridges.



The health benefits of gardening are well documented. We try to provide that opportunity to all.

*“I think Breaking Ground with Linda is great for good company and I’ve learned a lot too.” - Lee Haddow*

*“Attending the gardens gives me a sense of purpose but the tea, biscuits and company are an added bonus!” - Ian Mitchell*

*“I’ve been attending for some time now. I feel inspired each time I attend as we often take part in activities I’ve never tried before - especially if it’s bad weather, Linda tries out lots of different activities we can do undercover. It’s always fun and often educational.” - John Harvey*

*“I really enjoy the group. I have learned so much about plants and find the activities very therapeutic.” - Myraid Wood*

And participant Linda says; *“Volunteering in the gardens always makes me feel good. The people and the nature lifts your spirits.”*

Linda Tedford adds: The community gardens project provides safe and welcoming opportunities for people

to come together, to be sociable, to feel connected and part of the wider community. It’s a great chance to be more active, at a level that’s appropriate for each individual, and to build up strength and resilience of body and mind. And through the gardening activities of sowing, growing and harvesting, participants are encouraged to take home nutritional fruit and vegetables whilst also being part of cooking and eating events on site. I’ve witnessed the benefit that taking part in any of the groups at the gardens can have on a person’s self-esteem and sense of worth. It’s a great asset to our natural health service through our green prescription pathways, and definitely something we should be encouraging.

Keep up to date with Eglinton Community Gardens on [Facebook](#)

Eglinton Country Park is also the location of [Eglinton Growers](#) - an allotment society for Irvine, Kilwinning and surrounding villages.

# On course in Scotland

In 2023, 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, with most courses being aimed at Beginner or Early Intermediate level.

## 2023 courses

### Working with Natterjack Toads

27 April *WWT Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire*

Level: Beginner. £110

### Bird Songs and Calls

6 & 7 May *Dounans Centre, Aberfoyle*

Level: Beginner to Early Intermediate. £150

### Introduction to Marine Biology

May 13 & 14 *FSC Millport, Isle of Cumbrae*

Level: Beginner. £265

### Discovering Wildlife Tracks and Signs

3 June *Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore*

Level: Beginner. £65

### Practical Bird Field Skills

4 June *Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore*

Level: Beginner. £60

### Discovering Wildlife Tracks and Signs

1 & 2 July *Dounans Centre, Aberfoyle*

Level: Beginner. £125

### Scottish Island Birds

29 & 30 July *FSC Millport, Isle of Cumbrae*

Level: Beginner to Early Intermediate. £194

### Exploring Rocky Shores

5 & 6 August *FSC Millport, Isle of Cumbrae*

Level: Beginner. £130

### Lichens of Birch and Pine Woodlands

26 & 27 August *Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore*

Level: Beginner to Early Intermediate. £150

### Intertidal Ecology: Exploring a Scottish Island Rocky Shore

2 September *FSC Millport, Isle of Cumbrae*

Level: Beginner to Early Intermediate. £87.50

### Practical Fungi Field Skills

9 September *Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore*

Level: Beginner. £60

### Fungi: Beginner Identification to Genus

10 September *Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore*

Level: Beginner. £60



### Practical Fungi Skills

23 September *Broomlee Centre, W. Linton*

Level: Beginner. £60

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

The prices quoted above are without the discount. 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 a wide range of topics from 'Discovering UK Otters' and 'Bee Conservation' to 'Identifying Wildflower Families'. (NB. The TCV discount does not apply to these online events).

# Developing Wild Ways Well with Neighbourhood Nature

Residents in Livingston's Howden and Ladywell areas are benefiting from the innovative **Neighbourhood Nature** health and wellbeing project, as outlined by TCV's **Paul Barclay**:

Neighbourhood Nature is run by TCV in partnership with Ladywell Neighbourhood Network and St John's Hospital and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and the NHS Lothian Charity. It aims to demonstrate what most of us already know instinctively - spending time outdoors, amongst nature, makes people feel better about themselves and their lives.

Regular exposure to the outdoors can be especially helpful for issues such as depression, anxiety, low confidence and social isolation, but it can help anyone to live a happier, healthier life. Mental health issues can affect anyone and we should all take steps to look after our mental health as part of our daily routine.

As part of Neighbourhood Nature, we offer people the chance to take part in free Wild Ways Well sessions to help people to get out into their local greenspaces to

experience all the amazing things that can be found right on their doorstep. Whilst out amongst the trees and parks participants get a chance to slow down, relax, enjoy being in the company of other like-minded people, and participate in a variety of environmental and conservation related activities.

Wild Ways Well is structured around the Five Ways to Wellbeing, a proven framework for promoting good mental health in use by organisations all over the world, including the NHS and the major UK mental health charities. The Five Ways to Wellbeing are a simple way of thinking about our mental health, and suggest five easy actions - Be Active, Take Notice, Connect, Keep Learning and Give - which we can all take to improve our happiness in our daily lives.

Wild Ways Well takes the Five Ways and adapts them to an outdoor environment.





# Five Ways to Wellbeing



**BE ACTIVE** – Take part in health walks and practical outdoor activities. Explore your local paths, woods and greenspaces.

**CONNECT** – Meet new people. Connect with the people, the wildlife and the nature that’s all around us.



**GIVE** – Your time to be in nature. Give something back by sharing experiences and undertaking conservation tasks.

**TAKE NOTICE** – Note the changing cycles of life. Use your senses. Listen to birds, smell the flowers, live in the moment.



**LEARN** – Identify plants and wildlife, try new crafts, learn new skills. Discover things about nature and about yourself.

Example activities might include learning about trees, plants and wildlife; practicing traditional outdoor skills; taking part in conservation activities like wildflower planting or invasive species removal; getting creative with photography, drawing, sculpting or storytelling; taking part in citizen science activities like wildlife recording – and simply enjoying being outdoors in natural spaces with good company.

Wild Ways Well is not a replacement for more formal forms of therapy or medication but instead should be seen as a complement to a healthy lifestyle that could benefit anyone. You don’t need any special equipment or knowledge to join us, just a willingness to step outdoors and see where the path leads you. And we’ll do it all with a hot cuppa!

If you’d like to find out more, or join some of our sessions, please contact Paul Barclay at [p.barclay@tcv.org.uk](mailto:p.barclay@tcv.org.uk) or call 07795 800 970.



PAUL BARCLAY

# Nature notes

## New beginnings

by **Paul Barclay**

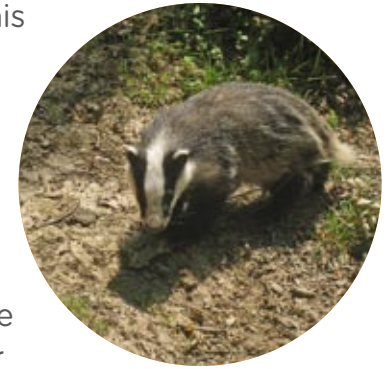
Spring is the time for renewal and new life. Many wildlife species have evolved to give birth in spring to allow their young the longest possible spell of good weather and plentiful food to grow and develop before the difficulties of winter.

**Fox** cubs are generally born in March and April. The female, called a vixen, will give birth to 4 or 5 blind and deaf cubs in an underground den. The male fox will bring food while the female looks after the young which won't venture above ground until late April. The cubs will stay with the vixen until autumn. Sometimes daughters and sisters will even stay to help with the family duties next year.



Although **badgers** mate all year round a special adaptation called 'delayed implantation' means fertilised eggs do not begin to develop until December. There

is a theory that this implantation is triggered by daylength, meaning that all the badgers in a certain area will implant on the same day. Badger gestation is around 8 weeks, so in February it is entirely possible that all the badger cubs in local areas will be born on the same day. A normal litter size is 2-3 cubs, and they will explore the underground tunnels for the first weeks of their life, emerging for the first time on warm evenings in April. Badger cubs are very playful and grow quickly, and by autumn the male cubs will disperse to find new territories, though females might stay with the family, known as a clan.



**Red squirrels** have a litter of three to four babies in a nest or 'drey', in March. The kittens are totally helpless at birth and are completely dependent on their



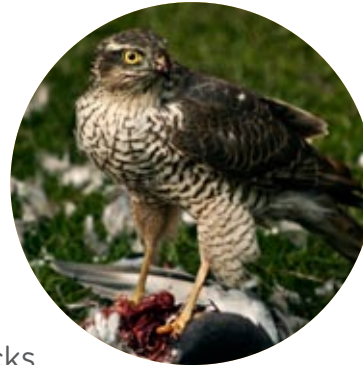
# Nature notes

mother. They are usually weaned by 10 weeks old and quickly begin to fend for themselves. Food can be scarce for squirrels in spring, and they will extend their usual seed-based diet to include plants, bulbs, and even bird eggs.

## Sparrowhawks

build sturdy nests made from twigs and lined with bark in a concealed spot close into the trunk of a tree.

Sparrowhawk chicks don't hatch until late on in spring, their emergence timed so that it is after the majority of prey species like blue tits have already been born and are plentiful and easy targets. The eggs are laid over several days so that when all are born the chicks are different sizes. The female will look after the eggs and stay in the nest with the chicks while the male brings food until the chicks are fledged and learn to hunt for themselves.



**Lesser Celandine**, beloved of poets, brings a much-needed splash of early colour in spring. It has bright yellow, star shaped flowers, each around 3cm across, with 8-12

petals. Glossy green heart shaped leaves grow on long stalks. Found in damp, shady places, woodlands, hedgerows, meadows and riverbanks, its golden

flowers can cover the ground like a blanket. They open in sunlight, giving it a reputation as a sunlover. In fact, people believed you could use it to predict the weather! William Wordsworth loved lesser celandines so much he asked for one to be carved onto his gravestone. Unfortunately, the stonemason got a bit confused and carved a greater celandine, a completely unrelated plant, instead!



*“There’s a flower that shall be mine,  
‘Tis the little Celandine.”*

William Wordsworth



*A familiar sight for many conservation volunteers – Rhodie clearing!*

# Combating the space invaders

If you're a regular TCV volunteer or belong to a local greenspace group, the chances are high that you have been, or in future may be, involved in efforts to control invasive non-native species, especially plants. Rhododendron ponticum, Himalayan balsam (right), Japanese knotweed and Giant hogweed are all high on the hit list of conservation groups as they try to control these and other species, which if left unchecked can 'out-muscle' our native plants. Over 2,000 plants and animals have been introduced to Britain from all over the world. Most are harmless but around 10-15% become invasive non-native species which spread and have a harmful impact on wildlife, the environment and wider society.



## Invasive Species Week 15 - 21 May 2023

Invasive Species Week is an annual national event to raise awareness of the impacts of invasive non-native species, the simple things that everyone can do to prevent their spread, and some of the fantastic work taking place across the UK, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man to protect the environment and reduce their impacts. Find out how to join in [here](#) and on [Twitter](#)

### Discover more

Various organisations are involved in combating non-native invasive species, and they have a wealth of information on the subject, including appropriate and safe methods of INNS control.

NATURESCOT: [NatureScot](#) is the lead organisation for non-native species on land in Scotland.

NNSS: The [GB Non-native Species Secretariat \(NNSS\)](#) has responsibility for helping to coordinate the approach to invasive non-native species in Great Britain. The NNSS website is designed to help anyone interested in finding out more about non-native species, and facilitate those working on this subject in Britain.

SISI: The [Scottish Invasive Species Initiative \(SISI\)](#) is an ambitious partnership set up to tackle invasive non-native species alongside the rivers and watercourses in northern Scotland.

## On placement

**Daniel Harris**, a 20 year old Geography and Politics student at Dundee University, recently completed a placement with TCV to look at ways we might engage with more university and college students like himself. Here, Daniel summarises his placement:

I had a great time working with TCV. This included joining the Glasgow based volunteers for a day at ScotRail's Gartcosh Station. Here, we did a big litter pick and removed alder saplings which were encroaching onto the station's nature area. The trees were later replanted by local volunteers at another, more suitable location. The work was very rewarding, and I gained valuable experience working on-site. I highly recommend joining a TCV project for the important environmental benefits, as well as the social aspect of meeting new people.

I also did some home and college based work for TCV. I created a survey for fellow Dundee University students, focussing on their attitudes to work experience placements like my own, and to more practical conservation activities such as



tree planting. The aim was to help TCV understand whether students would be interested in such opportunities, and if so the best ways to interact with them. I also worked on TCV's social media pages by creating posts to advertise its projects around Central Scotland, to hopefully attract some new volunteers. These posts included a personal account of my visit to Glasgow. Based on my own experience I think the organisation is superb, and the staff and volunteers are very friendly. I enjoyed my time with TCV a lot and it's something I would definitely do again.

Daniel's Dundee University survey will be used as a template to engage TCV with students at other Scottish universities and colleges.

Daniel on-site at Gartcosh Station with the Glasgow volunteers.



## School Green Gym - the outdoor classroom

As well as running outdoor Green Gyms for adults, TCV's School Green Gym programme has been delivered in a number of locations throughout Scotland. TCV Scotland recently delivered a 5 year project in West Lothian with primary, secondary and ASN schools. Feedback has been very positive, with schools receiving Green Gym licences allowing them to continue running their own Green Gyms. Many of the West Lothian pupils achieved John Muir Awards through their Green Gyms, and schools were able to add the Green Gym to their timetables, allowing children to have regular access to outdoor spaces.

School Green Gyms are co-designed with school staff and are a great way to link practical real-life experiences to the Curriculum for Excellence. And the School Green Gym encourages learning for sustainability and can be a great way to kickstart your school's outdoor learning programme.

For further information about TCV's School Green Gym, please contact Alice Kenny, Senior Project Officer, at [alice.kenny@tcv.org.uk](mailto:alice.kenny@tcv.org.uk)



PHOTOS: LORRAINE LAWRIE, CLASS TEACHER, PATNA PRIMARY.

The **East Ayrshire School Green Gym Project** began delivering sessions in January 2023 in partnership with the Coalfields Community Landscape Partnership. Senior Project Officer **Laura Salvage** and Project Assistant **Abdulrahman Ali** have been working with pupils from Patna, Dalmellington, Auchinleck and Lochnorris Primary Schools, plus Robert Burns Academy in Cumnock.

The School Green Gym programme

consists of outdoor sessions designed to provide an opportunity for pupils to be active, learn about nature and the environment, and take part in practical gardening, conservation, and environmental activities. The Green Gym model supports pupils in learning new skills and building self-esteem while also playing a part in developing green spaces within school grounds. The overall aim is to promote mental and physical health and encourage an interest and respect for the environment.

Primary 4 and 5 pupils at Patna Primary School said:

*“I have learnt about different animals and habitats. I enjoyed doing a scavenger hunt where we had to free our teacher from a badger by collecting nature things.”*

*“I learnt about what animals live in Scotland and what animals don’t. I also loved making bird feeders out of apples and hanging them from trees in the garden.”*

*“I have learnt about cool nature stuff, and we got to touch an antler from a deer.”*



*Robert Walsh with some of his volunteers*

# Active in Ayr

By **Robert Walsh**, Senior Project Officer.



**University Hospital Ayr & Ailsa** is home to some wonderful greenspaces within the extensive grounds and where TCV Green Gyms are run to improve the health and wellbeing of patients, staff and the local community. With a variety of different tasks going on, from DIY activities to citizen science surveys, we have a person-centred approach designed to further improve your health and wellbeing by providing tasks that are within your comfort zone, but allow you to challenge yourself that little bit further each time.

The group caters for a variety of additional physiotherapy-related conditions, such as Cardiac/HARP/Pulmonary and Musculoskeletal, and we provide a friendly and supportive atmosphere for anyone coming along. Individuals can improve their mental health and some participants have become less anxious about social situations by attending the class.

For further information, please contact me on 07483 050748 or by email at [robert.walsh@tcv.org.uk](mailto:robert.walsh@tcv.org.uk)



# make space for nature



With a range of seasonal activities, NatureScot is encouraging us all to help reverse nature loss and combat climate change. Discover ten ways to **Make Space for Nature** in your life this spring.



## Coming up:

**27 April: Tick Awareness Webinar**

**2 May: Online HogWatch Talk**

**13 May: Spring Foraging Walk**

Details of these and other upcoming TCV Scotland events are available on **Eventbrite**

## 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 2,000+ member groups spread throughout the UK, with over 280 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.



[youtube.com/tcvfilms](https://youtube.com/tcvfilms)



[twitter.com/tcvscotland](https://twitter.com/tcvscotland)



[facebook.com/tcvscotland](https://facebook.com/tcvscotland)



[instagram.com/tcvscotland](https://instagram.com/tcvscotland)

[www.tcv.org.uk/scotland](http://www.tcv.org.uk/scotland)

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.

Editor Graham Burns E [g.burns@tcv.org.uk](mailto:g.burns@tcv.org.uk)

©The Conservation Volunteers 2023. Charity registered in Scotland SC039302, and England 261009. ™ The Green Gym programme is registered and protected across the UK and the EU.