

STAY HOME, STAY WILD COMMUNITY PARK WALK AND ACTIVITY PACK



Photo © Grant Fleming

How to get there: Start your walk at the car park between the mosque and the church on Craighalbert Way, G68 0LS

Description: This walk is a bit of a workout and involves going up and down some steep hills. It is definitely worth taking slowly and carefully. It is around 4km long (about 6000 steps).

What to see : a good contrast between open areas, new and old woodland. Ancient farmland and the birds and mammals which love these habitats. Bats, owls, deer, foxes and badgers are all possible as well as the chance of a pine marten!

Partners



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Start your walk in the car park between the church and the mosque on Craighalbert Way. We're going to walk roughly northeast, following the path which winds between the high evergreen hedge of the mosque grounds on one side and a patch of woodland on the other.

Cumbernauld Living Landscape has occasionally used this little patch of woods for forest skills activities and it is a nice area to explore. There are various informal paths leading into the trees and it is worth following one to get the experience of being under the trees. There are occasional signs of mammals like badgers and deer in here but they are not so numerous this close to the busy human buildings. There is lots of dead wood around so make sure to have a look around for fungi growing in the green tinted light filtering through the trees. On previous sessions we have found lots of different species in here, including the awesomely-named common stinkhorn *Phallus impudicus*. Its common name refers to the terrible odour of rotting carrion which surrounds it. The smell is part of its spore dispersal system – the scent of rotten meat attracts flies which land on the sticky tip of the fruiting body and are covered in spores, which they then transport to other places. The scientific name is a reference to its shape, and probably because of this it was once widely used in love potions - though care should be taken around it as it is toxic, particularly to dogs.

Come back out of the woods and follow the path until it forks. Keep left here on the main surfaced path which will soon curve round to the right and split again. Stay left on the main path throughout.

On your right the ground is relatively open with some rough grass bordering a football pitch. There are plans to convert some of these areas of rough grass into wildflower meadows as part of a town-wide 'nectar network' of sites beneficial to pollinators like bees and butterflies.

To your left you should spot a line of trees running parallel to the path. This actually marks the route of a very old path which is shown on even the earliest maps of this area. It is probable that people have been walking along this route for a very, very long time, maybe even as far back as the Roman occupation of this part of Scotland.



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Not far from here, to the north, the Roman Antonine Wall ran through Dullatur, and this path might mark the route of one of the military or service roads which ran on its southern side to allow people to safely move through the area. The wall would have had a huge influence on the lives of the people living here and, although it was only in use for a relatively short time, its surrounding infrastructure long outlasted its service life and still affects us today. Just past the school our Nature Ninja volunteers discovered a natural spring while trying to improve the drainage of the path. It is fascinating to think that this spring might have been here since ancient times and might even be one of the reasons the path passed by. Reliable water sources would have been vital to our ancestors, especially on journeys outwith their local area.

Keep going until you come to a T junction on your right. Our guided walk is going to turn right here – but you can take an optional detour and walk straight ahead for about 500m until you come to the site of the Carrickstone for which much of this area is named.

The Carrickstone is believed to be the remains of a Roman altar. These were commonly built alongside military roads and were dedicated to various gods to bring good fortune to the builders. The stone itself is unusually shaped for a Roman altar and a lot of mystery surrounds it. On its surface it has several holes worn into it which local legend says were sockets used to hold the standards of Robert the Bruce, who supposedly camped here with a Scottish army. It's certainly possible – though it should be noted that lots of towns in Scotland have similar stories. Robert the Bruce must have got about a bit! Another local story says that this stone isn't even the original 'Carrick' stone at all. That one stood a bit further north. The great thing about folk history like this is that you can feel free to believe whatever you like!

But back to our walk! Turn right off the main path and onto a dirt track which leads off gently downhill. You are now walking down what was once the access track to Airdriehead Farm. The farm buildings would have stood just to your right through the thin line of trees. In 1853 the Ordnance Survey described this as *"A large & Superior Farm Steading on Cumbernauld Estate, the property of Colonel Fleming."*

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Keep going until you come to a crossroads with a memorial stone for the Jubilee Wood. These woods were planted in 2012 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, marking 60 years since her accession. You can see the wood to your left, behind a deer fence. The trees have been densely planted and will soon require a bit of maintenance. When planting a new woodland it is common practice to put in many more trees than the area can actually support, with the knowledge that lots will inevitably be lost to disease or be eaten by deer. This means that after a while it is necessary to come back and 'thin' the woods, selectively removing many of the trees so that those that are left can grow stronger and healthier.

Keep walking downhill towards the line of mature hawthorn trees. Take a look around you as you walk. This large open field is the sort of terrain that is favoured by many bird species, and it's worth checking out the local corvid and pigeon species. We're used to seeing these animals and can be a bit dismissive of them but crows and pigeons are extremely intelligent, adaptable creatures. Some studies have suggested crows might be among the most intelligent non-human species on the planet! This rough ground is also great for predatory birds like kestrels so watch out for them hunting. As you cast your eyes around you should notice regular lines of trees at the boundary of this area. These are ancient tree lines themselves and mark the boundaries of the former farm fields. Human boundaries like these are some of the longest lasting things that people make. It is likely these boundaries have been here for hundreds of years and will hopefully be here for hundreds to come!

Farm fields like the ones that used to exist here were once vital resources for all sorts of wildlife, birds in particular. As time has passed however changing farming practices and changes in land use (like what has happened here) have meant that many species which rely on farmland are really struggling. Statistics show that farmland bird numbers have more than halved since the 1970s. Over the next couple of years Cumbernauld Living Landscape will work with North Lanarkshire Council and the Friends of Cumbernauld Community Park to plant a field of traditional oats in this area. These oats won't be harvested however. They'll be left for the wildlife to enjoy and hopefully will result in a bumper crop of birds like yellowhammers, skylarks and fieldfares.

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Keep walking and pass through the hawthorn hedge at the bottom of the field. Take notice of the twisted, gnarled trunks of this amazing tree as you do. Mature hawthorn hedges like these are an increasingly rare sight but once they would have been found all over Scotland. Before modern inventions like barbed wire, spiny trees like hawthorn and blackthorn were traditionally used to mark field boundaries and to prevent animals – and people – from trespassing into crop fields.

Hawthorn was a well known plant to our ancestors. It was known by many names, 'Bread and Cheese' refers to the young leaves which can be tasty, with a sort of nutty flavour, and to the berries which can be used to make jelly (though care should be taken not to eat the seeds which are poisonous to humans). Another common name is the 'Mayflower', which refers to the timing of the arrival of its pretty white flowers. These were traditionally associated with May Day and the famous old saying 'ne-er cast a clout til May is out' (Don't get rid of your winter jacket until May is out) refers to the flowers of the tree and not the month! It was considered very bad luck to bring the flowers indoors – other names link it with plague and death as it was thought to the sensitive noses of our ancestors that the flowers smelled like decaying corpses!

Hawthorns are one of the great harbingers of spring and are a vital plant for wildlife, supporting hundreds of species of insects and providing food and shelter for loads of small mammals and birds. If the flowers are out feel free to take off your jacket (and maybe hold your nose) as you walk through the hedgeline. The path will fork again. Keep going straight ahead towards the tree line, with the new growth of the Jubilee Wood around you.

Once you reach the treeline turn left and follow the path through the woods. A long straight path through woods like this is often called a 'ride' and it is a brilliant place to see birds, which love these narrow gaps through the trees. Another family of animals which love it here are bats and we bring groups here most years to survey for these amazing mammals. Armed with bat detectors we walk through the trees and listen to the ultrasonic songs of pipistrelles and noctules as they fly up and down the path catching insects.

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A pipistrelle can eat as many as 3000 midges in a single night so we should be grateful for their presence! We should also perhaps be grateful we can't hear the high frequencies they call at – if we could they would be as loud as the music in a nightclub! Bats need mature trees like these to live in. A tree is really no use to a bat until it is fully grown and can provide a range of crevices and holes for them to live in and perch on.

Follow the path until it turns to your right and goes steeply downhill. Follow it down here – this is an area where badgers have lived, probably for hundreds of years. Badger setts (the underground tunnels they live in) are traditional and the same badger families that live in them now may have been there since Roman times themselves! Their family trees are matrilinear, meaning they follow the female line. A family of badgers will typically consist of a dominant male and female along with the females' sisters, aunts and daughters – young males generally leave and search out a new family as they become mature. Generally only the dominant pair will breed, though there are exceptions to this, and the family will have a large territory containing several setts which they use at different times of the year. They love to live in woodland but the best foraging sites for them are often damp meadows where their favourite food – earthworms – can be easily found.

A badger can eat hundreds of earthworms in a single night. Their superb senses mean they can actually hear and smell worms underground, and a favourite trick is to jam their noses into the wet earth to grab hold of an earthworm and then suck it up like spaghetti! Look out for the distinctive triangular 'snuffle holes' left in the ground by this hunting technique. You'll be very lucky to actually see a badger. They are nocturnal and very good at staying out of people's way, but you'll often see signs like this showing they are around. Look also for the paths that they have bulldozed through the undergrowth, and the D-shaped holes which show the entrance to their setts (remember always that their paths and setts are fully protected by law and it is illegal to disturb or damage them). Badgers are very clean animals (the old saying 'as dirty as a badger' is a terrible slur) and they regularly change the bedding in their setts. You'll sometimes see little piles of soft material like moss or grass around their paths where they have dropped it while trying to bring it back to their bed.

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BADGER SIGNS



A badger sett with spoilheap and D shaped holes



Scratch marks on a log where badgers have been passing or sharpening their claws



Bare patch on a log in the middle of a path where a badger has worn it smooth

‘Snuffle hole’ where a badger has caught a worm





Our ancestors believed that badgers could bring bad luck – if you heard one call in the night, followed by the call of an owl, you might as well prepare your coffin. They also believed that badgers could grow as large as a horse and that their legs were shorter on one side of the body than the other, to help them run round hills. I guess you had to come up with your own entertainment in those days.

Walk downhill and you'll emerge out from among the trees and come to a fork in the path. Take the right hand one which leads up to a small hill with a bench at the top. Take a break here and survey the land in front of you. The land is wet and there is a pond over which we have recorded Daubenton's bats feeding. These uncommon bats are known for feeding over water, scooping up insects with their tails. It is possible that otters also use this area. There are wildlife tunnels nearby which were built to allow species like otters to cross safely under the M80.

When you're ready walk on downhill and follow the path as it curves back through another treeline and across a small bridge. When the path forks turn left and head towards Arria – the large metal sculpture which looks down over the motorway. Arria was created by Scottish artist Andy Scott and takes the form of a female figure with four outstretched arms. She was named for the Emperor Antonius' mother and her sweeping arms are supposed to represent the 'meeting of the waters' which some people believe gave Cumbernauld its original Gaelic name (Comar nan Allt).

Head over to her and take a look. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and everyone has a different opinion on art, but there is no doubt she makes an impact on the landscape.

Follow the path west. Eastfield cemetery is on your right hand side. Keep walking on past it until you reach a tree line. A path stretches through here to Craighalbert Road. These trees are ancient survivors. You can tell as you enter the area that they have been here a very long time. Once you reach Craighalbert Road turn right and walk along it. Be very careful, there is no pavement here and though this is a quiet road, it is still a road! This is another route that has been here a long time and it shown on the earliest maps.

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As you walk take in the surrounding woods, and the feelings of permanence, strength, and peace that emanate from the trees. Listen to the birds and the gentle noises of the water that flows along beside the road. Check the cracks in the boundary wall for signs of small mammals like stoats and weasels and look for the fallen areas where larger ones like foxes and badgers cross, or the paths up the slope where deer scramble their way uphill. This is another great stretch for bats, which probably quietly live in hidden spaces in the trees and surrounding houses. Many bats peacefully share our homes without us ever knowing. But one of their problems is that modern houses are often too well sealed for them to find places to live. You can help with this by installing bat boxes or bat bricks in your house or garden. Owls also live along this stretch and can be heard calling most of the year round.

Keep following the road. Ignore the first couple of paths on your right, which lead back into the woods. You can explore these another day. Eventually you'll come to a fork in the road. Cars turn off to the left here but you are going to take the right hand fork, down a quiet track that looks wide enough for cars but is quite disused. Follow this path along and note the changes in the landscape. It becomes much more rocky along here and the trees are younger. You'll come to a junction in the path. Turn right and head up into a grassy area with scattered boulders. This is the former site of Craighalbert Quarry which is all that remains of Craighalbert itself. It would once have been a rocky outcrop or cliff before it was quarried for whinstone.

The origins of the name Craighalbert are uncertain, but it may have related to the landscape, 'craig' meaning cliff and 'halburt' being an old word for a spear. It has been suggested that perhaps the cliff was spear-shaped or maybe the crystals in the rock glittered in the sun like a line of spears on a battlefield. Another possibility is that it could have meant something like 'place of the echoes' – or maybe someone called Albert just lived here. Perhaps you could make up your own answer? No one can prove it either way!

When you come to a crossroads, past a clump of boulders, turn right. We're heading back up to our starting point now but it's still worth keeping your eyes open as you walk. Pine martens have been reported in this area, and while it is unlikely you'll see one of these elusive mammals... you never know!

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Pine martens became associated with wild, isolated places like the Highlands as persecution drove them almost to extinction in most of Scotland. But they are now protected, and gradually spreading further south again. We are incredibly lucky to have them in Cumbernauld now, and it shows how you should never underestimate a location!

Keep following the path. Ignore any turn offs until you come to a T junction in among some trees. Turn left here and then soon after sharp right, just below the Craighalbert Centre. When the path forks left up ahead follow it uphill. This is an area our Nature Ninja volunteers have worked in, removing invasive species like dogwood and Himalayan balsam and keeping the paths open and clear. You can read more about them later in this pack.

Cross a small stream and turn left and follow the path quite steeply uphill. Keep your eye to the sloping ground to the right. This is a very reliable spot to see roe deer, who will often pick their way through the fields alongside the path. Soon though you'll find yourself at the top of the hill. Turn left here and head back to the car park where our walk began.

Thank you for joining us on our Wild Walk through this incredible landscape. Please try out some of the other activities in this pack. It is now well known that walking among and engaging with nature in this way is incredibly good for our mental and physical wellbeing. It is vital that we continue to experience nature like this and learn to value the lessons that nature has to teach us.

If you've enjoyed this walk why not let us know on our Facebook page (Cumbernauld Living Landscape) or our twitter and Instagram pages (@WildCumbernauld). Don't forget you can also check our website www.CumbernauldLivingLandscape for more walks and activities or to join our volunteer, schools and wellbeing groups.



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CUMBERNAULD COMMUNITY PARK TREASURE TRAIL



How many of the following things can you spot on your walk?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| • Arria | 1 point |
| • One of the plough sculptures | 1 point |
| • A stream | 2 points |
| • A view of the whole town | 10 points |
| • The Carrick Stone | 1 point |
| • A bird of prey | 10 points |
| • A deer | 10 points |
| • Fungi | 5 points |
| • A yellow flower | 2 points |
| • The water tower | 1 point |
| • A butterfly | 5 points |
| • A plant or tree with thorns | 2 points |

Total



Arria



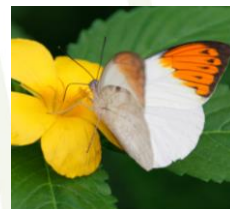
The Carrick
Stone



Buzzard (bird of
prey)



Roe deer



Orange tip
butterfly

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SPECIES SPOTTER

Common sights to see now?

Kestrel

January- December

Seen perched or hovering in the air looking for prey. Look out for their pointed wings and tail.



Rook

January- December

Sociable birds that are unlikely to be spotted alone. Distinctive pale, bare beak that's thinner than most other corvids.

Rooks don't like crowds so aren't often seen in cities and prefer open spaces like fields.



Grey partridge

January- December

Also just called the partridge. These birds pair up early and will stay together through till autumn. Partridges lay one of the biggest clutches of any UK bird with 14-15 eggs that only the female will keep warm, but both sexes will protect.



Greenfinch

January- December

Stocky, bright yellowy green little bird with a distinct forked tail and thick beaks used to pry open seeds. Very sociable birds but can be seen bickering with others at the bird feeder.



Skylark

January- December

Brown-streaked body with white-tipped wings only seen in flight. Well known for their fluttering flight patterns accompanied with their long songs. When perched you will be able to see their specked crest atop their heads.



Linnet

January- December

Named for their love of seeds in the linen family, like flax seeds. Females are a bit less colourful than males, who stand proud with a bold red forehead.



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SPECIES SPOTTER

Others to spot



Reed bunting

January- December

☐

Starlings

January - December

☐

Yellowhammer

January - December

☐

What else do you see (make a note):

What to look for at a later date:

Wildflowers

Teasel

July - August



Birds

Whitethroat

June - October



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SPECIES OF THE WEEK



Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

This bird of prey is relatively small compared to others of this category. Like most birds of prey **females** are slightly **larger than males**, weighing up to 220g.

Although many don't live past their first two years, kestrels can **live** up to **16 years** or more!

Only 30-40% of kestrels survive their first year of life, mainly due to starvation.



Hunting

Kestrels will hunt either by **perching** to survey their surroundings or **hovering** over an area in search of prey. Hovering is a more effective technique but uses up a lot of energy. This is why during harsher conditions, like winter, you are more likely to see them perched to hunt.



Kestrels' normal food of choice is mainly small rodents like voles, but in cities they tend to hunt sparrows.

DID YOU KNOW?

Kestrels have amazing eyesight that lets them hunt almost till dark.



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BADGERS



Badgers are native to the UK – old names for them were ‘broc’ or ‘grey’ and this still exists in many placenames.

They are our largest land predator by weight – though they are actually very omnivorous, adapting their diet to habitat and season.

They are nocturnal, spending their days underground. Any hole which a badger inhabits is called a ‘sett’. Some setts can be very large with networks of tunnels and entrances. Their stripy, black and white faces might help them to identify each other at night, and their low slung, powerful bodies and sharp claws mean they can dig quickly and efficiently.

Contrary to popular belief their favourite food is not mashed potato. They prefer earthworms which make up to 80% of their diet. They are able to eat several hundred a night, sometimes sucking them up out of the ground like spaghetti!

They live in small family groups called a ‘clan’ and are active throughout the year. They don’t hibernate but do slow down in winter, sleeping and resting more to conserve energy. They are territorial and each clan will maintain several setts across their territory which they will defend against other badger families.

They are found across the Lowlands but are absent from large parts of the Highlands. A large number are killed on the road each year. Another primary cause of death is starvation in dry weather.

BADGER FACTOIDS

- Length - 75-100cm
- Weight - 8-12kg
- Lifespan - Five years in the wild, up to 14 in captivity
- Diet – Omnivore



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THE BADGER YEAR



January

Badgers spend a lot of time underground

February

Peak time for badger cub births

March

Badgers very active, collecting bedding, foraging, many road deaths

April

Badger cubs exploring setts. May venture out on warm nights

May

Badger cubs exploring around sett

June

Badgers sometimes seen in daylight

July

Droughts can cause badgers to travel long distances

August

Badgers eating cereals and fruits

September

Badgers gathering bedding material

October

Badgers prioritise feeding

November

Badgers begin their winter slowdown

December

Badgers spend a lot of time underground. Female badgers become pregnant (badgers are capable of delayed implantation. They mate all year round but fertilised eggs are stored and do not implant in the uterus until December.)

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

Can you snap a photo of a kestrel?
Or try sketching one.



Send us your image, drawing or photo by **Wednesday 17th March**,
for a chance of being featured.



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STORY STONES



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What are story stones?

These stones have a drawing on one or both sides that can be used to create a group of continuous sentences which then create a story.

How to make them?

Go for a walk in nature and look for flattish stones with a smooth surface. Make sure they are safe to pick up and take home. Once home give them a wash and don't forget to wash your hands too! You might need about six stones to get your story going. Leave to dry.

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STORY STONES



Painting

This is your time to get creative. Paint something on the stones, leave to dry and then paint another image on the other side. Some ideas could include animals, weather symbols, smiley faces. Hint: make more than one story stone, in fact make quite a few. You can seal them by painting them over with a mix of water and PVA glue, or use acrylic paints.



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Somewhere to store them

Find a small bag or tub that can hold the stones without you being able to see what is on them.



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STORY STONES



Get the family involved

Get everyone in the house involved. Each person picks a stone from the bag/tub. Choose what side you want to make a sentence about, or if you are adventurous pick both sides and then make up a sentence about your pictures on the stone.

The next person then makes up a following sentence using the pictures on their stone.

Create your story

Get someone to take note of each sentence and put the story together. You have made your first story.



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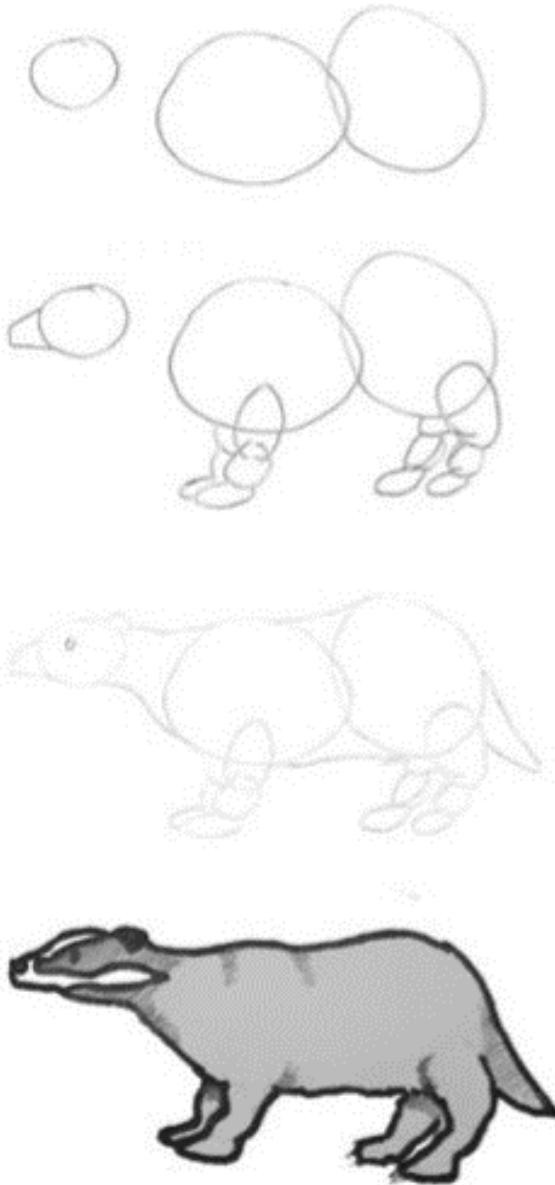
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GET CREATIVE



Art can be really therapeutic – and you don't have to be a brilliant artist to have a go at drawing! Why not try this simple badger. All you need to do to start is draw three circles with a pencil.

Draw an oval for the snout and add a few more to make up the legs and feet.

Now draw some curved lines to connect all the circles together. Add a tail, eyes and ears.

You're almost done... Rub out the parts of the circles that you no longer need and go over the rest in pen or heavy pencil. Shade the body in with grey and black – remember to leave some white stripes on the face!

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THE CAMPING GAME



Number of people: Two or more

Where to play: Play while you walk

Materials needed: None

How to play:

- One person starts by saying the sentence “I’m going camping and I’m bringing ...”
- The person starting must name an item that they are bringing eg “I’m going camping and I’m bringing a tent.”
- It is then the next person’s turn. They must repeat back what the first player said then add something else to the list eg “I’m going camping and I’m bringing a tent and a sleeping bag, and so on.
- Players are eliminated if they miss something from the list or say them in the wrong order.

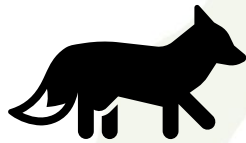
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HUNGRY FOX



Number of people: Two or more

Where to play: The community park is full of wide open space for this game to be played.

Materials needed: None

How to play:

- One player is chosen to be hungry fox. Hungry fox stands at least twenty steps away from the other players, facing away from them.
- All players except for Hungry Fox chant "What's the time, Hungry Fox?", and Hungry Fox will answer in one of the two ways:
- Hungry Fox may call a clock time (eg "3 o'clock"). The other players will then take that many steps closer to the fox, counting them aloud as they go ("One, two, three"). Then they ask the question again.
- Hungry Fox may call "Dinner time!" then Hungry Fox will turn around and chase the other players. If Hungry Fox tags a player, that player becomes the new Hungry Fox.

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COMMUNITY PARK WORK



The community park is a fantastic place for wildlife and views. From the top you get tremendous views across the whole of Cumbernauld. It is also home to amazing woodlands, cracking wildflower meadows and historic structures.

Our volunteers have been busy bees in this park! We have been working to tidy up the wild “breathing place” garden at the top end of the area. Within this park we have worked to improve access along paths – cutting back overgrown trees and scraping paths. This will allow the local schools to get out and use these areas more easily. We hope to preserve the pond at the centre of the reserve, so we have cut back tree saplings that have been drying the pond out. We hope that in the next few years we will be able to clean these ponds out to revitalise them as havens for wildlife.

We have also been hard at work removing Himalayan balsam from the park. There is a sizable amount of this devastating plant overtaking the woodlands. This overgrowth falls into streams and spreads throughout Cumbernauld. It is vitally important to remove this invasive species before it seeds. We pull out the plants and place them on piles where they will quickly rot down.

We have trained up our volunteers in the use of brush cutting machinery to deal with overgrown verges. As the grass grows longer throughout the year, we hope to get along these paths and cut them back. Doing this will reveal litter that we will also lift and carry away.

If you would like to get involved with this wide variety of tasks in this stunning area of land, then why not get in touch? Our volunteer groups are going out again on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am-2pm. If you would like to get involved contact David at d.walsh@tcv.org.uk





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Cumbernauld Living Landscape is led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, a Scottish registered charity (charity no. SC005792) and a company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland (registered no. SC040247).

WILD WAYS WELL TAKE NOTICE



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



We rarely Take Notice of the natural environment or our place within it. By practising this skill we give ourselves time to breathe, to think and to be at peace. Everyone has issues or problems in their lives and the Wild Ways Well project does not aim to solve these. But a session out in nature with us can give you a couple of hours of free space and time to take your attention away from life's issues and concentrate just on being you.

- **Learn a bird song** - Every bird has a different call and as you walk through the woods or streets you'll hear all sorts of noises. See if you can begin to identify different birds by their song. There are lots of online sites to help you get started. Try <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-songs/what-bird-is-that/>
- **Look for a bumblebee** – Bumblebees are among our most important pollinators. Without them life on Earth would be very different. There are seven very common bumblebee species that you have a good chance of seeing on any walk around Cumbernauld. You can tell the difference between them by noting the different patterns and colours of stripes on their bodies. This guide will help <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/identify-a-bumblebee/>
- **Smell the flowers** - Use your senses. Instead of only exploring nature with your eyes try tuning in your sense of smell. Try and tell different flowers apart by their different scents or notice the fresh smell of a woodland or meadow after rainfall.
- **Find a rainbow** – Take a walk through a greenspace and try to make up a rainbow out of purely natural objects. Some colours are more difficult at different times of year but it is nearly always, just about, possible...
- **Watch a cloud** - Find a safe place where you can see the sky and lie on your back looking up at the clouds—can you make any patterns? Watch the weather change as the clouds move across the sky.
- **Track some wildlife** – look for signs of the mammals that live in the greenspaces alongside you. See if you can find footprints, hairs, dens or beds of deer, foxes and badgers. How far can you follow their signs? This guide will help you identify them <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/how-identify/identify-tracks>



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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.



SPENDING TIME WITH NATURE IMPROVES WELLBEING

Spending time outdoors, amongst nature, makes people feel better about their lives.

Wild Ways Well gets people suffering from, or at risk of, poor mental health out into the greenspaces of Cumbernauld.

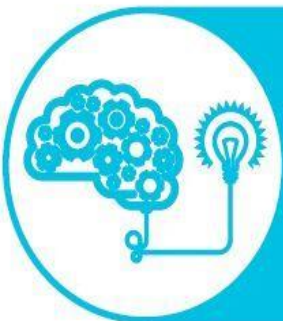
Whilst out amongst the trees, parks and reserves participants get a chance to slow down, relax and enjoy being in the company of other people.

All sessions include a walk, a chance to safely socialise with other people over a hot drink (often round a fire) and opportunities to try a variety of environmental and conservation related activities designed to fit in with the internationally recognised Five Ways to Wellbeing mental health framework.



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.



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Cumbernauld Living Landscape is improving Cumbernauld's greenspaces for both people and wildlife, while helping everyone in the community connect with the nature on their doorstep.



Cumbernauld is incredibly green and we believe that everyone should benefit from this. However, these green areas are often disconnected from one another and many are not as good for people – or wildlife – as they should be.

Without good quality, healthy places people and wildlife cannot flourish. Working closely with the local community, we need to ensure that healthy places are at the heart of the town's future. We will achieve this through a range of projects across the town, divided into four major workstreams.

Improving Habitats and Access – We're improving habitats for wildlife and making it easier for people to find and access these sites. We will also enable people to volunteer and take practical steps to conserve and improve these places.

Connecting Young People to Nature – We're providing opportunities for children to get involved in practical environmental projects and helping schools use the outdoors as part of their lessons.

Promoting Green Health and Wellbeing – It is now well established that access to the outdoors is vital for people's health. The Wild Ways Well project helps people, care practitioners and groups to use nature to manage their mental health.

Unlocking Community Capacity – We are unlocking and developing the skills of the community. By building relationships with groups and individuals and helping them to take action for nature we will ensure a legacy that will last beyond this project.

The lockdown is demonstrating just how important nature is to people's physical and mental health – but it is also making accessing greenspaces much more difficult. While our outdoor sessions are on hold we want to help people experience the benefits of nature on their own doorstep. This pack contains ideas, inspiration, information and activities that anyone can try to help them connect with the outdoors. Perhaps they'll help you to see Cumbernauld's greenspaces in a new light.

Remember to observe guidelines on social distancing and only access nature in your local area.

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You can find out more about all our projects by visiting our website

www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk

Facebook - **Cumbernauld Living Landscape** or

Twitter and Instagram - **@WildCumbernauld**



Wild Ways Well is our nature and wellbeing project which is free for anyone to join. Each session involves a short walk, a chance to relax and chat (if you want) over a hot drink and try some fun, creative activities. There's time to immerse yourself in nature while you learn more about wildlife and Cumbernauld. It's a great way to meet new people, explore nature, try new activities, relax and de-stress. Sessions take place regularly on weekdays and at evenings and weekends. You can come as an individual but we also offer bespoke sessions to groups. If you are an individual who would like to part, a group leader, or someone who would like to refer participants to the project you can find out more details by contacting: **Paul Barclay** at p.barclay@tcv.org.uk

The Nature Ninjas Are our practical conservation volunteer group. This aim of this group is to improve habitats across Cumbernauld for nature. Our groups are great places to make friends, keep fit and see the outdoors. No prior experience is necessary. Examples of activities coming up include tree planting, scything, hedge laying, pond cleaning and much more! We also provide training for upskilling or just for enjoyment and building knowledge of nature and conservation. If you would like to get involved, then please contact: **David Walsh** at d.walsh@tcv.org.uk

Early Connections and Natural Connections are our education/outdoor learning projects for Connecting Young People to Nature.

Early Connections workshops for ages 8-11 years links to habitats projects and the wildlife in our town.

Natural Connections encourages high school students aged 11-16 to connect with nature on a deeper level to aid employability skills.

We also offer Continual Professional Development **training** to enable teachers and leaders to confidently deliver outdoor learning for their young people.

For more information contact:

Tracy Lambert at tlambert@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

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