



**GET
INVOLVED
TODAY!**

Creating Natural Connections Carbrain Stories



In 2020 Wild Ways Well worked with NLC Community Learning and Development (Schools) to create a project to help families from Carbrain Primary School discover the green spaces of Cumbernauld and learn how nature and the outdoors can help everybody to live happy, fulfilling lives.

As part of every session we used Story Stones to help us imagine some of the stories and adventures that might be going on all around us. The children took turns to draw a stone at random and then make up a line relating to the picture on the stone. Stone by stone the stories developed—and took some amazing twists on the way!

Later in this booklet you'll find a guide to make your own Story Stones to help you find out what adventures your imagination can take you on!

The artwork was contributed by the families and volunteers—with a special shout out to students from Greenfaulds High School who took part.

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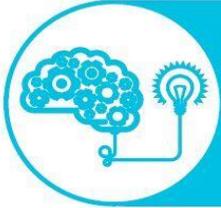
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With thanks to the families who took part, Carbrain Primary School, Greenfaulds High School and volunteer artists Gillian Hatcher, Fiona Johnston and Grant Fleming.

Stories and the Five Ways to Wellbeing



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

Building these five actions **BE ACTIVE, CONNECT, GIVE, TAKE NOTICE, LEARN** into our daily routine helps everyone live happier, healthier lives.

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



Spending time outdoors in amongst nature and wild places helps too!



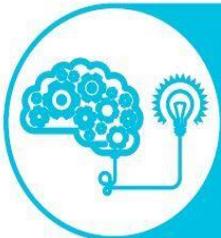
GIVE – Your time to be in nature. Give something back by sharing experiences and undertaking conservation tasks.

Scientists have shown that playing and learning outdoors helps children (and adults!) to be happier, and healthier. It also helps with things like confidence, creativity, imagination, learning and memory.

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



Playing outdoors helps people to get fit, sleep better and enjoy life. It also helps families to bond together and make memories that will last a lifetime.



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

Where-ever you live in Cumbernauld there are greenspaces right on your doorstep –why not step out and explore them?

The Dancing Fish

One day we were outside playing the piano and the guitar down by the river. We made some great music and the fish were dancing to it – going “BLOOP”, “BLOOP” as they jumped out of the water.

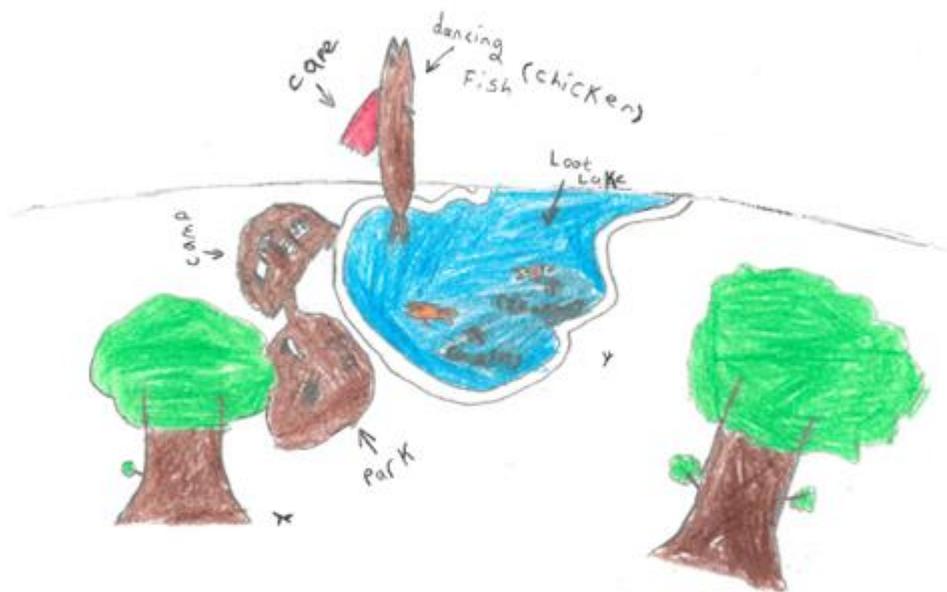
It was a beautiful sunny day and the Sun had its hat on so we felt lovely and warm, we felt we could have stayed playing music and dancing all day.

We weren't the only ones there, in the grass near the river a snail was sunbathing while it watched the fish. It had come right out of its shell so it was covered in factor 50 sunblock!

As it got dark the fishes and the snail and everyone else decided to have a fire to stay warm. They cooked all sorts of good food and had a huge feast.

Once they were all full they built shelters in amongst the trees by the river, so they could stay out all night and watch the stars.

In the morning they were very hungry, but they had eaten all the food the night before. But some of the animals knew where more great food could be found so they went exploring— and it didn't take long to find a big green tree full of red apples to eat!



The Little House

We were walking through the forest when we decided to stop and make a campfire so we could cook our favourite food — marshmallows.

Just as we started to cook however a huge rain cloud came over and the rain fell so hard it put the fire out. The rain was thundering down and no matter what we did we couldn't start it again, everything was just too wet.

We went looking for shelter and after a long hunt we eventually discovered a tiny little house inside a tree. It had little windows and a tiny front door. It looked inviting so we shrunk ourselves down so that we could fit through the door and went inside.

Inside the little house we found there was a cosy kitchen and it had everything you could need, all in miniature. We were cold and wet so we made a cup of tea to warm us up.

Just as we were about to drink however the owners came back and they were very angry that we were in their house. They shouted and chased us so we had to dodge past them, out of the little kitchen and through the tiny door, out of the little house running away as fast as we could!

The little people were very fast runners though and as fast as we ran, they ran faster. They had nearly caught up with us so we tried to distract them by singing a song. The little people loved our music and they stopped chasing us so that they could sing and dance!



The Snail and the Frog

One day we were out walking near the river to get water for everyone to drink. We found a snail but it got a huge fright when it saw us and it jumped so high it fell into the river. It couldn't swim so it was very scared.

In the middle of the river there was a green frog sitting on a rock enjoying the sunshine. When the frog saw the snail fall in it shouted "Ribbit-Ribbit" and it leaped to the rescue! It jumped high up into the air and landed next to the snail with an enormous splash. It was a great swimmer so it soon rescued the snail and brought it to shore.

The snail was very cold after being in the water so we made a fire by the riverside to dry it out and the frog and the snail came and sat next to it with steam coming up off them.

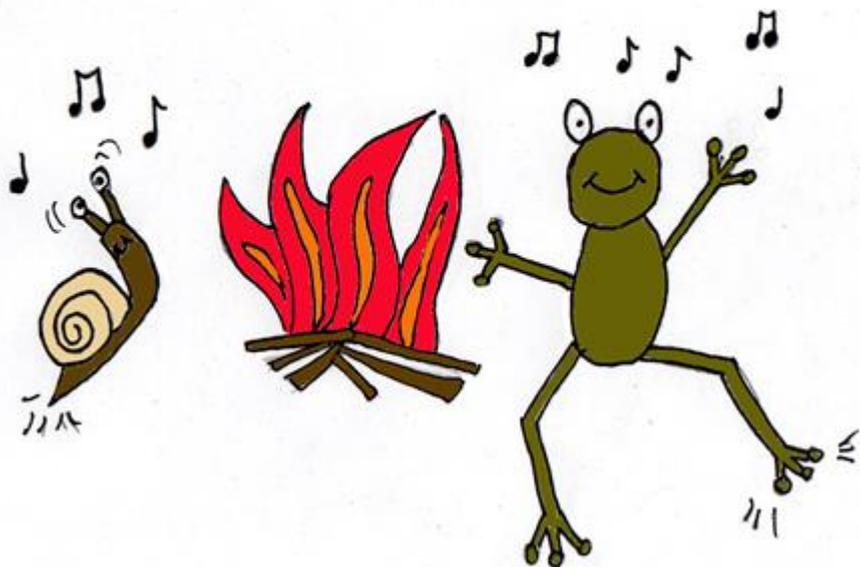
Then all of a sudden an enormous rainstorm came and put the fire out. The animals were still soaking wet and shivering and we were very worried about them

Luckily we had an idea! We started to sing a song and the snail and the frog started dancing. They loved the singing so much they danced themselves dry!

The frog and the snail realised they were in love so they planted a tree to remember the spot where they had danced by the fire and over the years it grew really tall and lots of animals came and lived in it.



Sometime later...



The Lion and the Pebble

One day a bee was buzzing along through a meadow looking for flowers to make honey. It found a pink flower and stopped to gather nectar and pollen. Once it had all the pollen it flew on, and then it saw a red flower and a blue flower and all the colours of the rainbow.

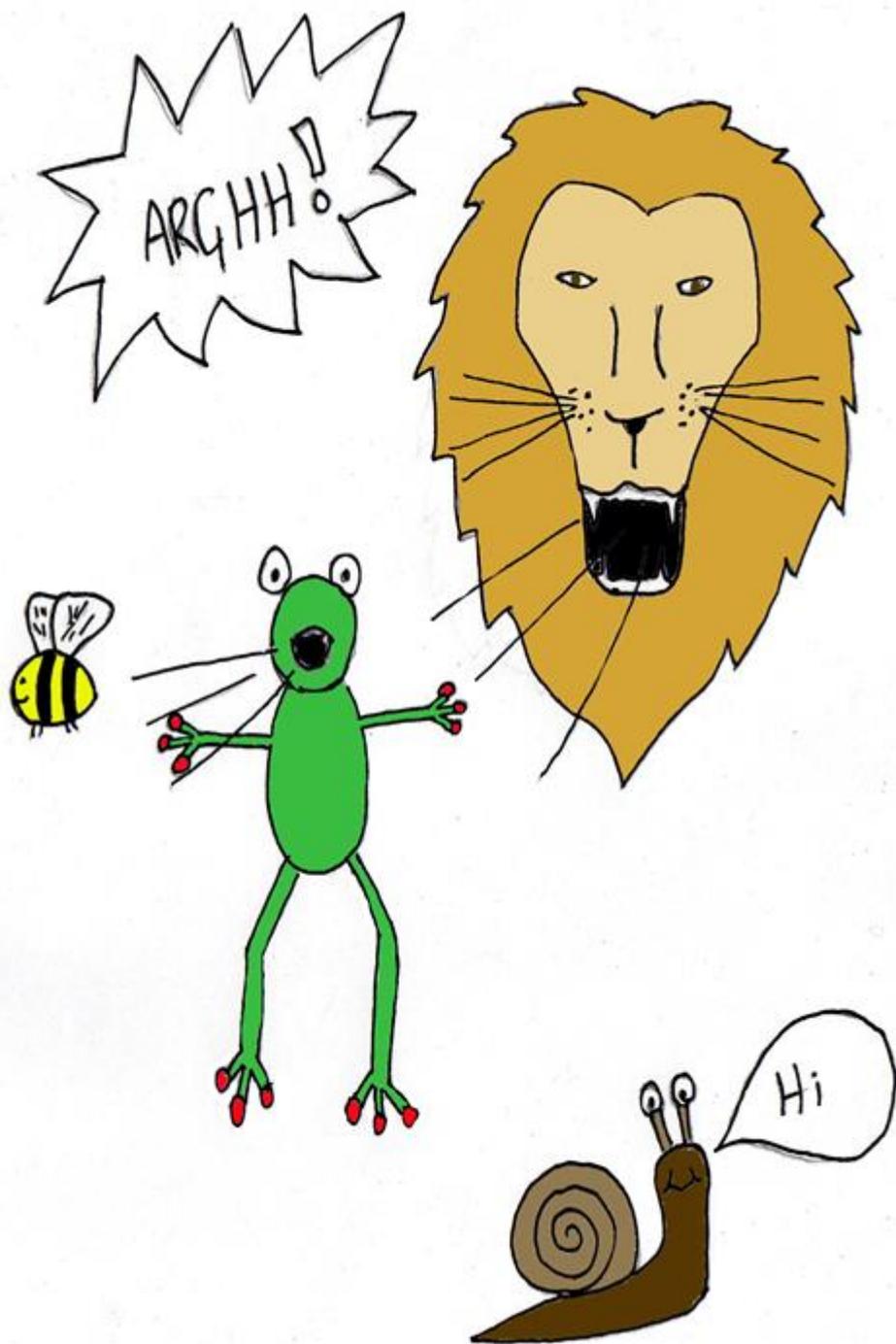
It collected pollen from them all, but finally it found what it was really looking for. It found a yellow flower, which was its favourite colour, so it was really happy and it buzzed extra loud.

The bee flew on looking for more yellow flowers. It saw a green flower and flew closer... but it wasn't a flower it was a frog! The frog's long slimy tongue came flying out and with a great big splodge it caught hold of the bee and pulled it into its tummy. The frog hopped off, ribbiting, but the bee could still be heard buzzing away inside it.

The frog hopped on looking for a warm stone to sit on. It soon spotted a big yellow rock but as it hopped closer the rock turned out to be a lion! A little boy had left his pet lion out in the meadow and it was very hungry. The lion pounced and grabbed hold of the frog in his jaws and then swallowed it down whole. As the lion walked off purring the frog and the bee could still be heard ribbiting and buzzing inside it.

The lion walked on and saw a little pebble but when it walked closer the pebble turned out to be a snail! The lion roared to try and scare the snail but the snail wasn't afraid and it popped its head out of its shell and roared back even louder. The lion was so scared it screamed and as it did so the frog leapt out of its tummy, then as the frog gasped for breath the bee flew out of the frog's mouth!

The frog and the bee were covered in sticky, yucky liquid from being inside someone else's tummy and the sun was beating down so they felt horrible, but suddenly the weather changed and a great rainstorm came and washed them clean. Then the sun came back out and dried them off and they happily ribbited and buzzed off back to their homes.



The Mystery House

One day a little snail walked down a blue path to meet his friend the bee. They visited their favourite patch of flowers and had lunch in amongst all the beautiful colours – they couldn't decide which colour they liked to eat best!

After lunch they went a walk to burn off some calories, they saw a tree so they decided to climb it. Up and up they went, higher and higher in the branches until they were so high they could see a very long way.

In the very far distance they saw a house, they had never seen it before as it was so far away. They decided to go on an adventure and go and visit and see who lived there.

They had been walking for quite a while when it started to rain so they ran for shelter – but just as they found shelter the rain stopped and the sun came out. They stepped out into the sunshine but only managed a few steps before the rain came pelting down again – typical Scotland!

They were ducking in and out of the sunshine and the rain, gradually getting wetter as they found more rain than sun, when they saw a campfire. They decided to go warm up and dry off round the fire.

As they sat round the fire they noticed that someone was already there – it was a green frog and it was lying on its back with its feet on a rock drying them off! They got to chatting and soon found that they had lots in common, in fact they quickly became great friends.

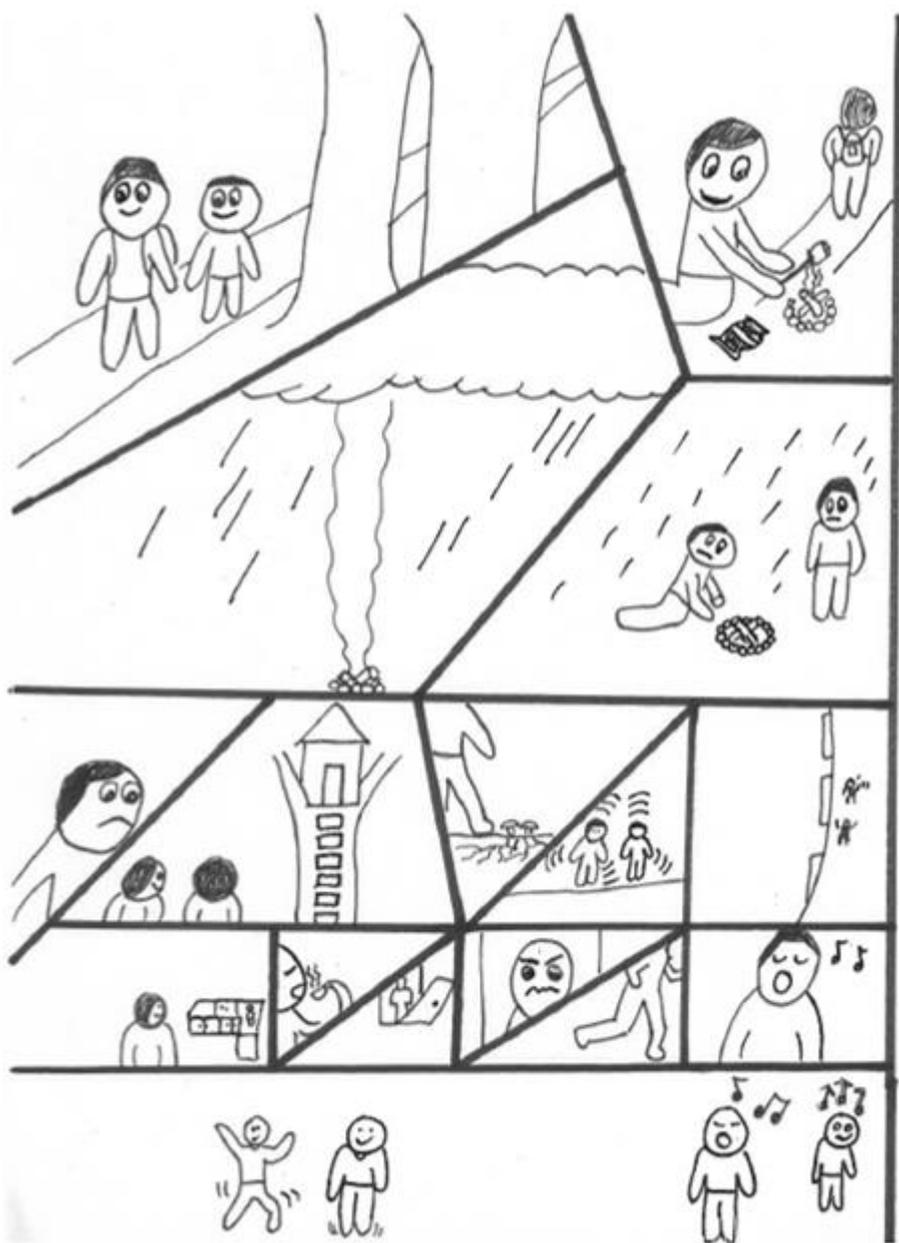
They told the frog about the house they had seen and he nodded wisely. “I think you are talking about the house where the bird lives” he said. “Come and I'll take you there, I know the best way.”

Soon they came to the house and they saw its big door was lying open. From inside they could hear the most amazing singing. They had never heard anything like it, it was so beautiful! They peeked around the door and saw that the bird was tending its nest, and in the middle of the nest was a huge, brightly coloured egg. The bird was singing to the egg as she worked and the egg was singing back to her!

They listened to the singing for a while but they didn't want to disturb the bird while she worked so hard, so after a while they quietly crept away and headed back to their homes and their flower patch

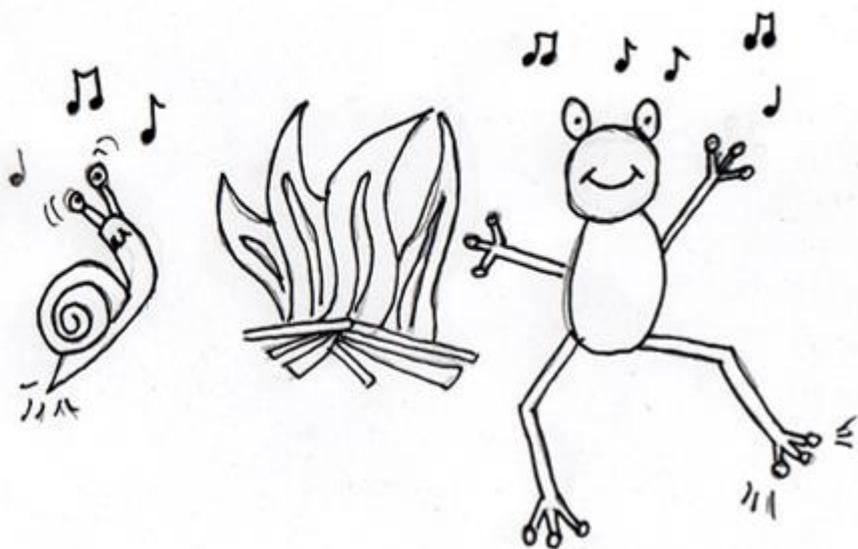








Sometime later...







Questions we'd like to ask the Apple Tree Man

On one of our trips outside in Cumbernauld we wassailed (sang) to the apple trees, which people used to do to ensure a good apple harvest.

Wassailing the trees is a really old tradition and by doing it legend tells us that there is a chance that we could meet the **Apple Tree Man**. The Apple Tree Man has magical powers, and if the conditions are right, **he can give us the ability to talk to animals and ask them one question**—which they must answer truthfully!

These are the questions the children from Carbrain Primary would ask the Apple Tree Man...

Why do animals poo everywhere?

Do animals like people?

What's the meaning of life?

What's it like to fly?

How do I get a dog!?

What would your answers be to these questions?

Can you and your family think of any other questions you would like to ask the animals?

Story Stones

Story stones are simply stones with a picture on one or both sides that can inspire your imagination to make up a story. By randomly picking out stones you can use the pictures on them to make up a story line by line. The story will be different every time—and because you don't know which stone will appear next you never know where each adventure will take you!



Make your own Story Stones

Go for a walk in nature and collect some flat, smooth stones. Make sure they are safe to pick up, and that you're not damaging anything, and then take them home.

Six or so stones is a good place to start—but the more stones you have, the more varied your stories will be. Once home give your stones a wash (and wash your hands too!) and then leave them to dry.

(If you can't find any stones, another idea could be to cut pictures out of a magazine or just draw on paper.)

Now get creative! Paint or draw a different picture or design on each stone (you can even do different pictures on each side of the stone if you like). You could draw a detailed picture of a ladybird for instance—or just draw a pair of eyes and leave the rest to the story teller’s imagination!



Some ideas for pictures might include animals, plants, weather symbols, emojis, buildings, natural places or symbols for actions (like ‘run’, ‘jump’, ‘dance’). Let your imagination run wild!



You’ll need somewhere to store your stones so that they can be drawn out randomly without you being able to see what is on them. A tub or bag would be ideal—but even an old hat or a sock would work!

You can do this on your own, but it can also be fun to get the whole family involved

Each person picks a stone from the bag/tub, looks at the picture and then makes up a sentence about it. Then the next person takes a turn and adds to the story, and so on until all your stones are used.

Get someone to make a note of each sentence and put the story together! There are blank pages in this book where you can add your own stories.

Why not use these blank pages to write your own stories? Or draw pictures to illustrate the stories you've read?

WILD WAYS WELL AND FAMILIES

The **Wild Ways Well** project is designed to get people—adults, children and families—spending more time outdoors in order to benefit their wellbeing.

Its long been known that spending time in nature makes people feel happier and healthier. We combine this with **The Five Ways to Wellbeing**, five easy actions anyone can do every day to feel better about themselves.

While you're outdoors on our activities you'll **Be Active**. Going for a walk, running and playing outside is one of the best things anyone can do for their health.

While outdoors we'll encourage you to **Take Notice** of nature via games and activities. We might ask people to look out for a certain colour, tune their ears into a particular bird song, or use their senses to find their way around.

Children's minds are always absorbing new information. We'll encourage everyone to **Keep Learning** by exploring the natural world around us. What's the best way to build a beaver dam? How do squirrels find food in the winter? What's the name of that tree? Fostering every child's natural sense of curiosity will lead to ever more questions.

By encouraging families to spend time together we'll also help everyone to **Connect**—not only as a family but with other children and families who might live nearby or share similar interests. We'll help people form bonds with each other, and with nature, friendships and interests made in the outdoors that will bring lasting memories.

Finally we'll **Give**. By learning together about basic forest skills and simple rules such as 'leave no trace' we'll all help to conserve and respect nature. We'll help each other to learn and have fun—and we'll help wildlife by simple tasks like making bird feeders or bug hotels.

Wild Ways Well runs sessions for adults as well as families and children. Get in touch to find out more.

Links

Cumbernauld Living Landscape cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk

Wild Ways Well cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/project/wild-ways-well

Community Learning and Development twitter.com/NLFamilyLearn

www.facebook.com/NLCFamilyLearning

There are lots of online resources which can help with outdoor and indoor nature activities, here are just a few of them

Cumbernauld Living Landscape cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/get-involved/activities

Scottish Wildlife Trust Wildlife Watch www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Woodland Trust Nature Detectives www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives

RSPB for Kids www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids

The Conservation Volunteers www.tcv.org.uk

The Scottish Wildlife Trust www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

The Scottish Storytelling Centre www.scottishstorytellingcentre.com

There are many resources online that can help with mental health and family life

The Five Ways Well www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx

SAMH www.samh.org.uk

Family Lives www.familylives.org.uk

NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline www.childline.org.uk **0800 1111**



Cumbernauld Living Landscape is a partnership between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, Sanctuary Scotland, the James Hutton Institute and TCV – The Conservation Volunteers.

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cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk

5-7 Napier Way, Wardpark North,
Cumbernauld, G68 0EH

E cumbernauldl@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

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Our partners



Our funders



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