

# Wellbeing in Nature Report

January – February 2026

## Pilot Programme



### 1. Overview

This pilot programme was delivered by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) with funding made possible thanks to The Outdoor Partnership (TOPs), Adventure Carrick & Volunteer Action South Ayrshire (VASA) via Scottish Government Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Funding.

#### **Aims**

To engage South Ayrshire residents registered with a South Ayrshire Medical Practice to self-refer, be referred by a medical professional or through social prescribing avenues such as Community Link Practitioners. Sessions aimed to connect people with nature to promote physical and mental wellbeing.

#### **Summary**

Sessions were consistently delivered over the 6-week programme across 3 local green spaces namely Fullarton Woods (Troon), Rozelle Park (Ayr) and Belleisle (Ayr). Attendance was low to start with time increased with repeat attendance.

#### **Impact**

Attendee feedback was that most they learned more about everyday nature, explored more of the local greenspaces on their doorstep and would be continuing to learn and help nature whilst benefitting from the time outdoors.



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## 2. Background & Objectives

- Increase awareness of biodiversity
- Improve mental/physical wellbeing
- Increase access to nature-based activities
- Build partnerships across health, community, and green-space sectors

## 3. Programme Overview

### 3.1 Timeline

- Started 15 January 2026 concluding 19 February 2026 (every Thursday for 6 weeks)

### 3.2 Partners

- Delivery – The Conservation Volunteers
- Support – The Outdoor Partnership, Community Link Practitioners
- Funding – The Outdoor Partnership, Adventure Carrick and Volunteer Action South Ayrshire (Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund)

### 3.3 Activity Description

- Sessions lasted 2.5 hours with a social component for a hot refreshment and promoted a relaxed opportunity for discussions amongst attendees and organisers. Each session involved a gentle walk within a greenspace engaging the local community with environmental topics as detailed below:

#### **Wonderful Woodland**

Look at the different trees, explore and see the benefits of deadwood

**Date:** Thursday 15th January 2026

**Location:** Fullarton Woods, Troon

#### **Sensory Exploration**

Engage the senses by exploring nature through contact with natural materials

**Date:** Thursday 22nd January 2026

**Location:** Fullarton Woods, Troon

#### **Feathered Friends**

Learn more about local birdlife, help them during the winter months by making feeders and discover the basics about bird songs

**Date:** Thursday 29th January 2026

**Location:** Rozelle Park, Ayr

#### **What Lies Beneath Our Feet**

Explore the wonders of the hidden world from earthworms to badgers

**Date:** Thursday 5th February 2026

**Location:** Rozelle Park, Ayr

#### **Beautiful Beasties**

Discover how insects come in different shapes and sizes, learn more about minibeasts

**Date:** Thursday 12th February 2026

**Location:** Belleisle, Ayr

#### **Discover Colour in Nature**

Slowing the pace of being outdoors and connecting with nature through art to find calm within any time

**Date:** Thursday 19th February 2026

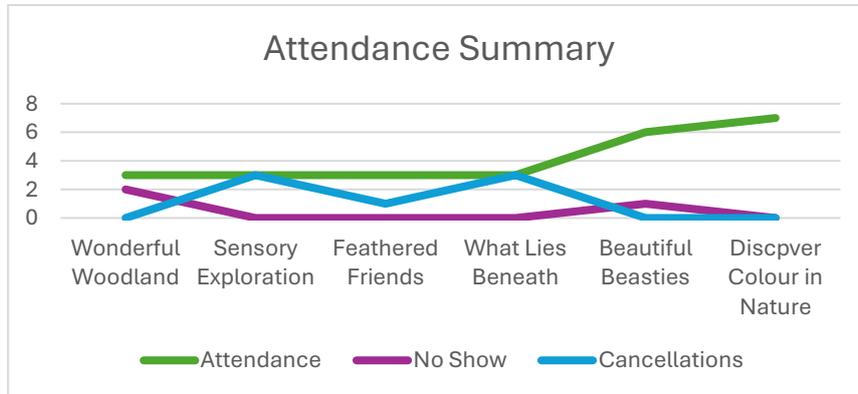
**Location:** Belleisle, Ayr

## 4. Participation Data

### Attendance Summary

- Total number of participants: 24
- Organisational staff: TCV 1, CLP: 4, TOPs 1
- Individual attendees: 14
- Total session delivered: 6

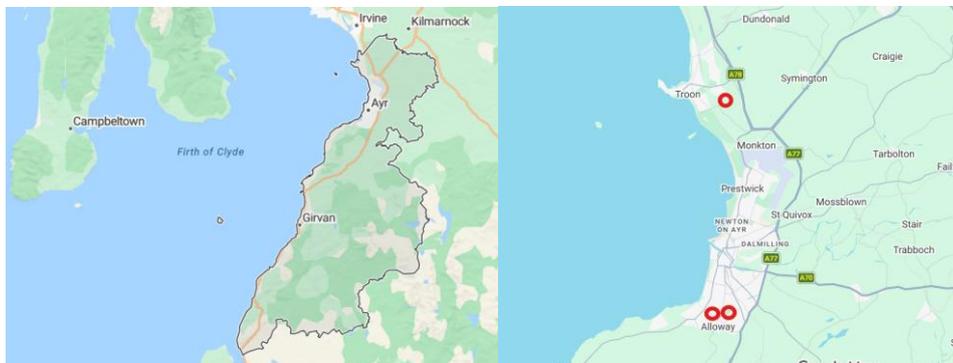
- Average attendance per session: 4
- Cancellation / Non-attendance: 6 spots cancelled last minute and 4 no shows (across series)



## 5. Geographical Activity

### Locations of Activities

- Fullarton Woods (Troon)
- Initially this was going to be Auchincruive but due to unforeseen reasons it was changed to Rozelle Park (Ayr)
- Belleisle Park (Ayr)



South Ayrshire

Delivery Sites

## 6. Promotion

Social media promotion through platforms like Facebook and Instagram were used by The Outdoors Partnership and TCV. This included some paid Facebook adverts by TOPs, posters and leaflets given to all South Ayrshire Medical Practices via Community Link Practitioners to aid awareness. In addition, third-party sharing such as Friends of Fullarton, The Scottish Wildlife Trust, posters authorised and displayed at Rozelle Park.



## Referral Pathways

- Self-referral (100%)
- Medical Practices associated with attendees:
  - Templehill Medical Practice (7)
  - Tam's Brig Surgery (1)
  - Kirkwell Surgery (2)
  - Racecourse Road (2)
  - Station Road Practice (2)

## 7 Feedback Summary

### Participant Feedback

All thanks go to you, Lindsay! I thought I could just go ahead and do a deadwood survey but you explained it so well and gave me a much better idea of what to look for and how to record it. I'll definitely be having another go later in the year.

We both really enjoyed the feathered friends walk last Thursday.

Apart from gaining new knowledge and appreciation of our feathered friends, we enjoyed the good company and chat and felt energised after it.

Hubby has been enjoying the company of a song thrush and robin this week at work and we've had our usual family arrival of Ravens , feeding off the front grass - or moss! Their large beaks are certainly aerating the grass , so it will save us a job .

Thanks again for the walk yesterday, I so enjoyed it.

“We both found the walks very enjoyable:

- venue was easy access for us from Troon and we came by car, parking was good. Can't comment re public transport links?
- Group size seemed right for us- not too many or too few- and nice group of people from different backgrounds
- Plenty of different, interesting habitats to explore in the park
- You were very engaging and informative, we both felt we learnt plenty of new things
- The cafe and coffee at the end were a very nice touch and it was good to be able to sit and chat with others.
- The spacing of the walks as a series every week seemed to work well, gave a bit of continuity.”

Thanks again for putting these walks on, it'd be great if there were a possibility of something similar in spring/summer

## 8. Lessons Learned

- The variety of topics and repeatedly using a site was well received.
- Booking was via email and there were some technical glitches where emails were not received on either end resolution may be to use a booking platform.
- High-level of last-minute cancellations or not attending of sessions although booking reminders sent out a week in advance of each session. It is unclear how we could mitigate this reoccurring.
- Barriers to attendance included ill-health, weather conditions and transportation to site influences.
- A longer period for promotion, enhanced social prescribing required for this green health option to have great impact and to be a sustainable method of wellbeing treatment.

- Need to enhance buy-in from professionals within both social and health care sector to activate referrals to such opportunities

## 9. Recommendations

- Repeating the programme pan Ayrshire to observe strengths and weaknesses
- Improving referral pathways either with green health prescriptions or awareness campaigns

