



MOUNTAINHALL

COMMUNITY GREENSPACE

Welcoming Spring, Happy Imbolc:

In the Celtic Calendar, the festival Imbolc at the start of February is the beginning of spring. Imbolc, also known as Saint Brigid's Day, is celebrated half way between the winter and spring equinoxes. The sun is now rising earlier, the spring bulbs are bursting through the ground, and some of the trees and bushes have started producing buds, which is important food for birds at this time of year. Most of our hibernating animals, hedgehogs, bats and dormice, are still tucked in their burrows waiting for the more predictable warmth of the Spring equinox on the 20th March. But there are still plenty signs of life as the days warm.

Things are underway for this year and we are glad to be sharing new news and updates for 2026. In this newsletter we also offer you walking routes through the greenspace and have more creative writing to share from community members.

● **Announcements for 2026!**

The Mountainhall Greenspace Project begins 2026 with lots of exciting news!

Our [Design Statement](#) is finished! With thank you to Laura MacLean at DesignHOPES for her hard work putting this together. This has been the accumulation of the many phases of consultation, made much more fun and accessible by Laura's mosaic game and the priority matrix activity. The Design Statement describes our shared vision of the space and acts as a reference to guide our project.

We will be taking part in [The Healing Arts Scotland](#) With thanks to [OutPost Arts](#) who are bringing this incredible national festival to Dumfries and Galloway.

'Healing Arts Scotland (HAS) June 2026 is a nation-wide event celebrating and advocating for improved physical, mental and social health through the arts. Spearheaded by the Healing Arts Scotland Legacy Team, Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, Creative Scotland, and the Jameel Arts & Health Lab in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the one-week activation will include conference days, performances, workshops, talks and evaluation and is produced in collaboration with a national coalition of organisations and communities across Scotland.' [The Healing Arts Scotland](#)

We look forward to being a part of the activities across D&G on **June the 16th**.

This is really giving the Mountainhall Greenspace Community something to work towards and we are excitedly planning how we can best showcase our project. We look forward to celebrating the space and it's community members, share our learning and put us in the wider regional and national context.

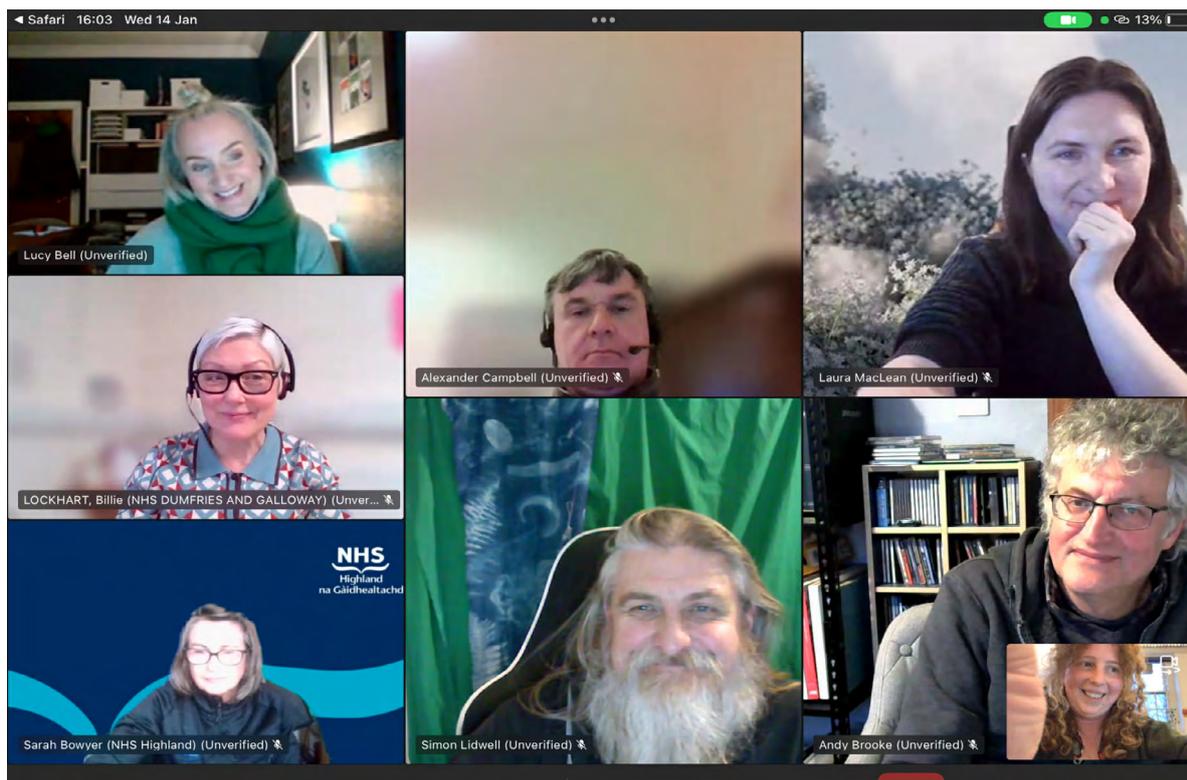


Healing Arts website

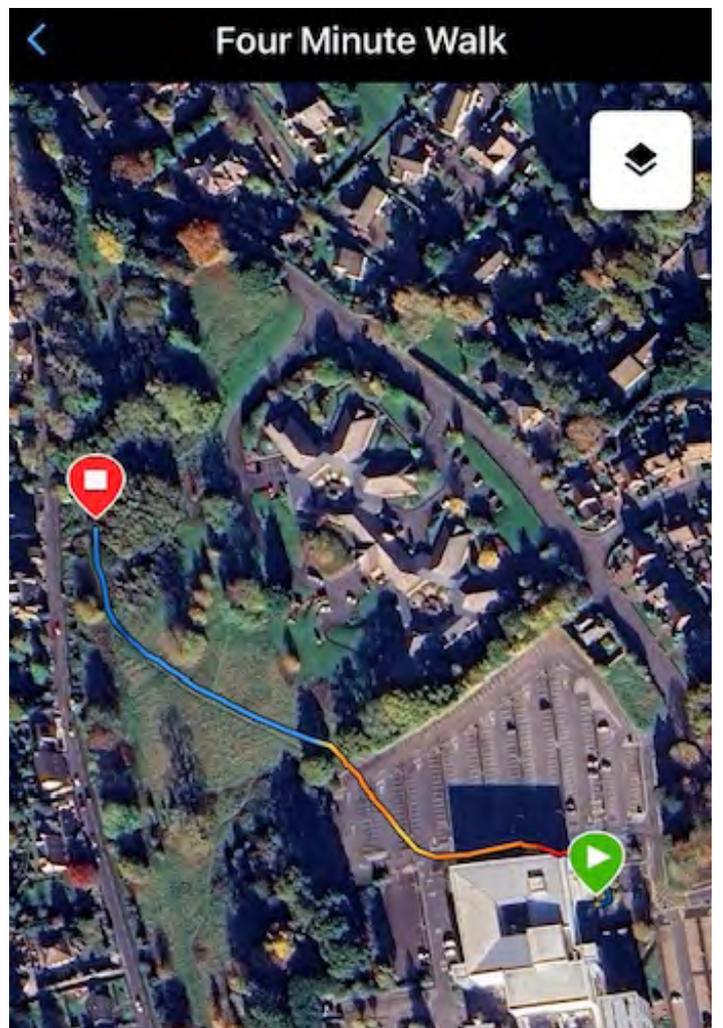
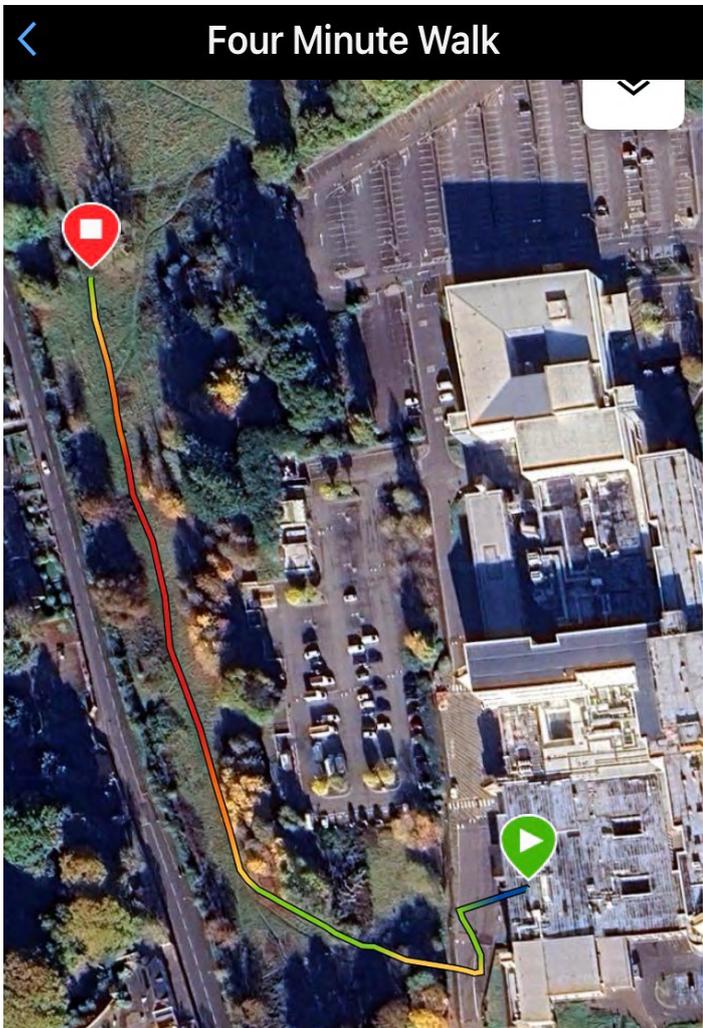
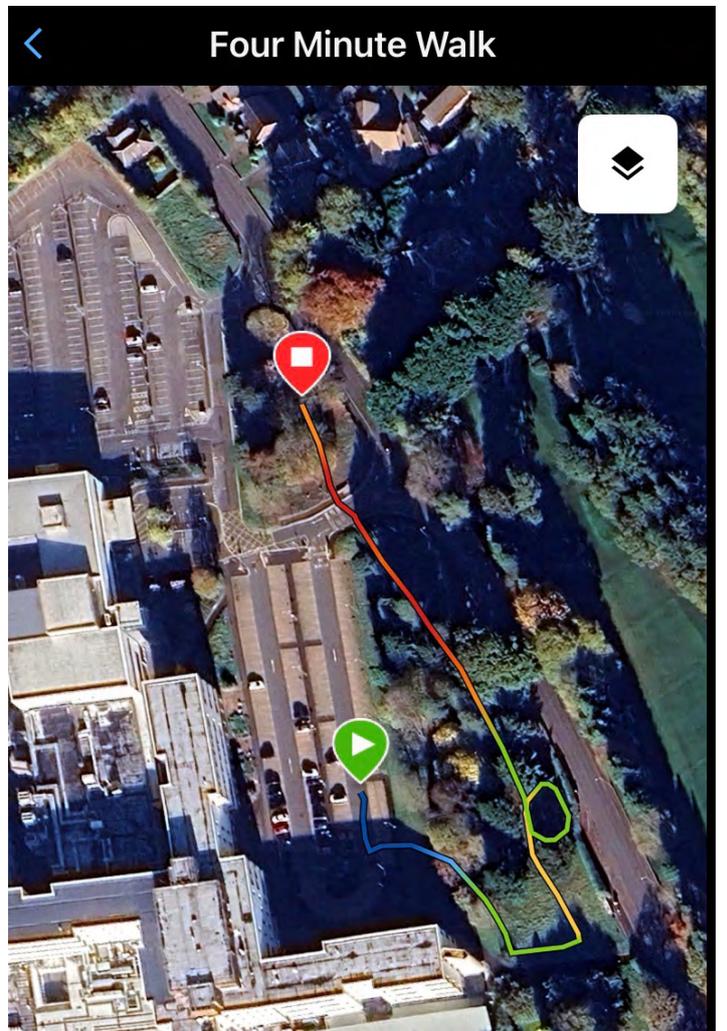
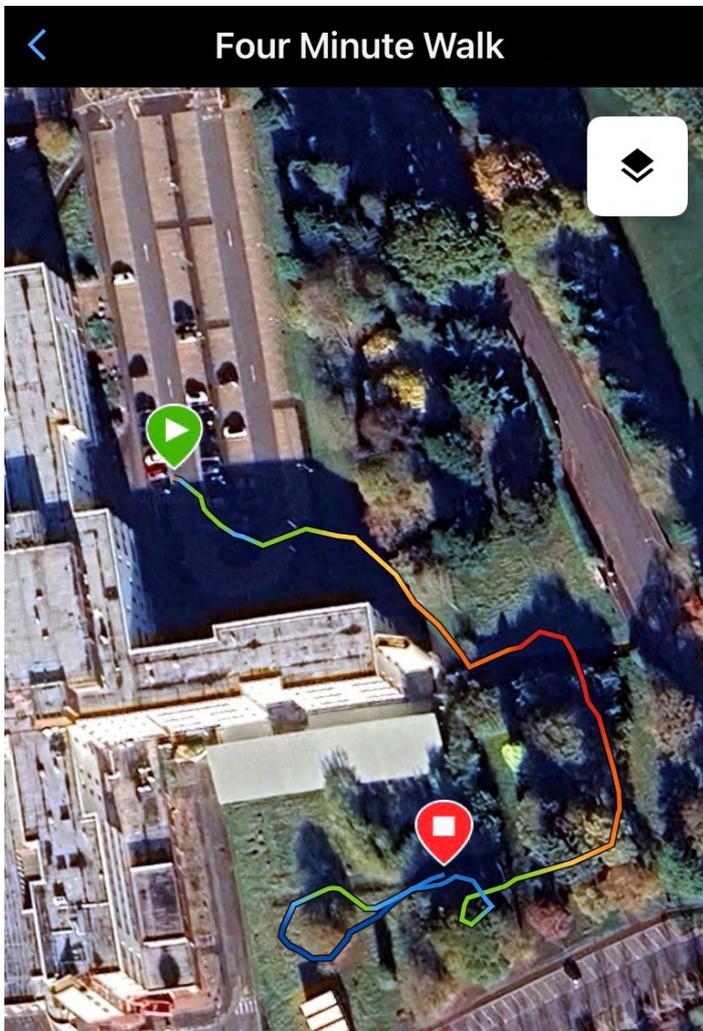
Our next big update is that we have decided to move forward as a merged group of stakeholders and community panel members. This feels like a lovely next step as we continue to learn how best to govern the space and evolve the project.

This merged **core group** now represents a wonderful mixture of; artists, conservationists, heritage crafts, community food, foraging, nature connection, spiritualism, photography. With those who have been representing the Stakeholder Group, NHS members, Council, DESIGNhopes research team, Propagate, OutPost Arts and more recently added, the Biosphere.

The Community Panel members who have been added into this core group have shown dedicated interest in helping steer this project forward. The group is still currently open, if you feel you would like to be added into this larger core group please email mountainhallgreenspace@gmail.com



Some of our core group members, online meeting.



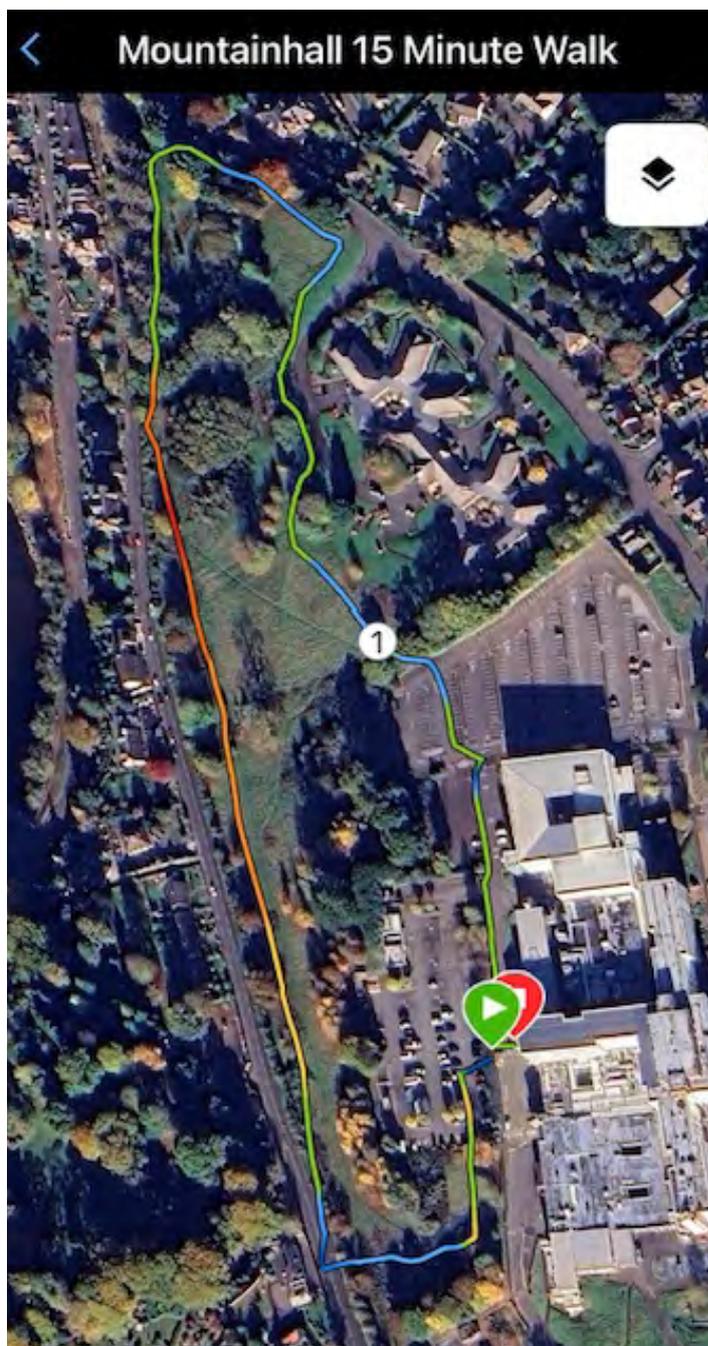
GPS walking routes - captured by Jim

- **Walking routes through Mountainhall**

We were delighted to be shared Jim's walking suggestions through the Mountainhall Greenspace. Each starting from one of the exits from the Treatment centre, these routes show how quick it is to access the greenspace and be enveloped in nature.

It's well researched, as well as being instinctual, how even a small amount of time outdoors can have a positive effect on us.

This is something we are really trying to encourage and adopt in our Mountainhall Greenspace Community project. These walking routes are perfect suggestions to give people that short lunch time walk, or break after receiving medical care from the treatment centre.



GPS walking routes - captured by Jim

- **Creative writing at Mountainhall Greenspace Community**

There is a sign up form for anyone that would be interested in pursuing the idea of a [Mountainhall Greenspace Community writing group](#). If you would like to contribute pieces of writing, if you have ideas how you would like this group to be conducted, or if you're interested in facilitating a writing workshop, please get in touch.

Imbolc poem by Lusi 2025

The destruction this winter
Yet another site clear felled
I'm feeling really bitter
And so angry I could have yelled
Why can't they see
That cutting a tree
Is far worse than dropping litter
It's like cutting out a lung
The same dendritic pattern
Whether it is old or young
The same life-giving function
Gives oxygen to me
And all biodiversity

Climate change has fuelled
The fires that raged
In California's heart
That We cannot understate
It makes the winds blow stronger
And the icebergs melt
The rains fall harder
The flood waters higher
Sea levels rising
Penguins dying
Storm Eowyn
The worst storm in a decade
Will come again and again
Snowdrops in December
Daffodils in January
That beautiful bittersweet
The joy and excitement
Of every new leaf
And yet knowing its early arrival
May be caused by climate change.

Yet if you're feeling melancholic
A spring leaf can be a tonic
Every new leaf brings hope
Every leaf is a sign of joy
Helping us to cope
Hope's a thing they can't destroy

Spring growth demonstrates how
Nature is so resilient
The snowdrop knows its early
Showing how it is brilliant!
Sure she says, warmth so soon!
Why not! Let's sing a tune!
Show off our brightest flowers
Hang blossom in our bowers

Soon the ants will lope
Let us dance with hope
Sing the joy of spring
Make people smile and grin

The snowdrop is resilient
Withstanding frost is brilliant
After snow she doesn't wilt
She has so much strength inbuilt

The lupin dons her green rosette
Excited to push up a green spike
Preparing to flaunt her purple bonnet
That delights folk and bees alike

The wild garlic's spring scent
Rejoicing, resilient
Awakens us from winter's sleep
It makes my heart leap

Once again, the nettles sting
A delightful sign of spring
Soup is coming soon
Nettles in a spoon

The ground elder sprouted
And so the gardener pouted!
her green leaf defying men
Who'd rather she didn't rise again!

So now it is spring
I want you to grin!
Dance and sing!
Have a spring fling!
Let the party begin!

- **Whats next...**

We are encouraged by the newly developing core group. Our next steps are to identify roles, expertise and focus groups to keep us on track. We very much look forward to connecting with other NHS greenspaces, learning together how we can use the NHS greenspaces to enhance public health. There is a high chance the Healing Art Scotland festival will be a perfect time to meet others working on similier projects.

It has been decided that our newsletters will now become quarterly. This has been the main bulk of our community engagment since The Community Open day last March. But with the hope of more regular engagements, we've decided to put our focus elsewhere.

Thank you to everyone that has sent in content! It's been lovely watching this platform of community building grow. Please keep sending your thoughts, photos, poems, wildlife sightings, foraging tips and recipie ideas too: mountainhallgreenspace@gmail.com

We would love to include them in our seasonal newsletters, which will orientate around the Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter equinox. This project's main aims are to connect people to nature and the outdoors, and what better way than to celebrate our seasons.

Don't forget you can always keep up to date, and share on our [Mountainhall Greenspace Community facebook](#) page.

We also have a [I-Naturalist Mountainhall Greenspace](#) account to record the biodiversity found in our greenspace. I-Naturalist is a community platform which ID's plants and insects whilst recording important data on biodiversity.

I-Naturalist can be downloaded as an app onto your phone, which makes it easy to upload photos, get identifications, and contribute to our understanding of the Mountainhall greenspace! It's a lovely way to pass the time and a great way to contribute to this project!

Hope to see you all soon.

With kind wishes,

Emily

emily@propagate.org.uk

<https://www.propagate.org.uk>

Propagate are a regenerative food collective specialising in local, community and sustainable food projects.

Mountainhall Greenspace Community is a community project being developed from the NHS grounds of the Mountainhall treatment centre. The project aims to create a resilient community, with access to nature and creative wellbeing.

Propagate and DesignHOPES are partnered with the NHS to develop this project.

