



The James  
**Hutton**  
**Institute**

# Supplementary Participatory Video Report: **The Neighbourhood Networks** **Wild Ways Well Health Walk**

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# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the [Cumbernauld Living Landscape's Wild Ways Well \(WWW\) programme](#) and partners a summary of the supplementary data associated with the participatory video (PV) "The Neighbourhood Networks Wild Ways Well Health Walk". This film was created and filmed by members of [Neighbourhood Networks](#) (NN), Cumbernauld, Coatbridge and Airdrie, to show the impact of the Wild Ways Well programme on them, the programme's beneficiaries. This report also includes additional data of impact observed by researchers during the PV process that may not have been captured in the final video, as well as providing the context to the PV process. It is intended that the film and this supplementary report will be used by project partners to evaluate the impact of such programmes and inform future modes of monitoring, through the eyes of the intended beneficiaries. The WWW programme was developed by Cumbernauld Living Landscape (CLL) which is a partnership project including the [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#) (hereafter referred as The Trust) and [The Conservation Volunteers](#) (TCV) amongst other organisations. This programme now forms part of CLL [Creating Natural Connections](#) project in Cumbernauld.

The WWW programme is designed to promote health and wellbeing through people taking part in various social activities, learning new skills and taking time to notice and reflect on greenspaces. It draws upon the Five Ways to Wellbeing, a framework for promoting good mental health in use by organisations all over the world including the NHS and the major UK mental health charities (Cumbernauld Living Landscape, 2019). The programme consisted of weekly meetups in Cumbernauld, often starting in the town centre before walking to the various greenspaces and woodlands managed by The Trust. The group would be led through various activities by TCV project officers and supported by workers from NN. The types of activities included (but were not limited to) woodland walks, sensory activities e.g. listening to birds, installing bird feeders, litter picking, learning how to identify wildlife and sharing these experiences with each other over food and drink in the woodlands.

Participatory Video (PV) is a set of techniques to involve a group or community in shaping and creating their own film, with the aim of bringing people together to explore issues, voice concerns or simply be creative and tell stories. PV offers a way to empower and 'give voice' to so-called 'hard to reach' people, such as disadvantaged young people, to communicate their needs and ideas to decisions-makers and other groups and communities (Lunch and Lunch, 2006). Thus, for the monitoring and evaluating of impacts by the Creating Natural Connections project, PV allows intended beneficiaries to express the impact of interventions on them, through the creative medium of film.

Throughout 2018 and early 2019, researchers from the James Hutton Institute (JHI) worked with six adults from the [Cumbernauld Neighbourhood Network](#) (CNN) who had previously taken part in a 12-week WWW programme. The members of the group consisted of individuals with a range of support needs, or who were at risk of social exclusion or have lived experiences of poor mental health .

# Method

## Process and timeline

The PV process used by the researchers was designed to ensure individuals and collective voices were acknowledged and heard in the making of the video. The PV is designed to be accessible to anyone, no matter previous experience or skills in film making or working as a group. Figure 1 illustrates the timeline for creating the 'Neighbourhood Networks Wild Ways Well Health Walk' film. There were 10 sessions with the group, each being approximately 3 hours long.

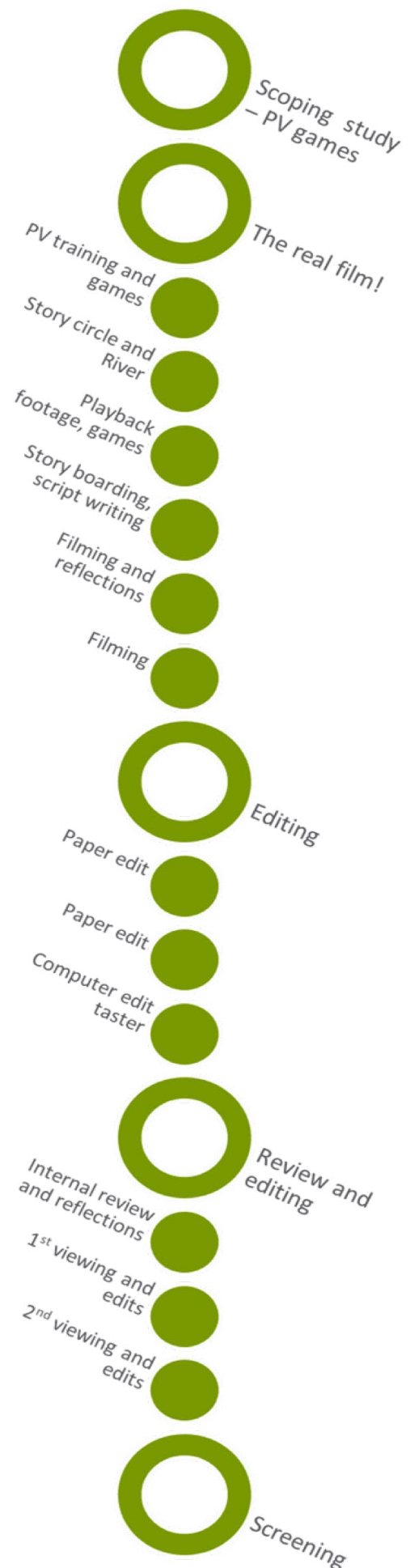
### Scoping study

Prior to the PV project, two researchers from JHI conducted 3 separate introductory sessions with various members from the CNN project, including participants, NN and WWW staff. The sessions introduced the PV process and provided an opportunity to build trust between the CNN group, WWW staff and researchers, as well as providing an opportunity to test out methods and gauge levels of commitment for a PV project.

It was expected at the beginning of the PV process that most participants would be unfamiliar to video making or indeed being videoed themselves. Therefore, a series of activities and games using a video camera were introduced to build confidence, develop group working skills and to overcome any nervousness to film making. These included the Name Game, Disappearing Game, Show and Tell, Tripod Techniques, Looking for Beauty. See (Lunch & Lunch, 2010) for further details.

### Consent

A significant amount of time was given to ethical considerations, both in formulating the consent procedure with JHI human ethics committee and gaining informed consent from the participants for both the scoping study and main PV project. Throughout the entire PV process, we applied the principle of 'do no harm' to guide our decisions in respect of the participants and ourselves as facilitators. The standard practice in research projects using human participants is to have a single point in time to gain consent, which is usually at the start. Given the creative and participatory nature of the project which brings a significant degree of uncertainty (for participants, researchers and project



1. Before filming or activities – agreeing to take part.
2. After filming – agreeing footage can be used for PV editing.
3. After editing – approval of final film edits.
4. Screening and distribution – approval for public screening and level of distribution.

## PV Training and games

Before being encouraged to reflect on the WWW programme, various activities and games were introduced to familiarise the group to the film making process. These included, 'Learning by Doing', 'Six Shots' and 'Story Boarding' (Lunch and Lunch, 2006; Benest, 2010).

## Story circle

## River Journey

To encourage the group to explore their experiences in more depth and to share any changes they had experienced as a result of taking part in WWW, a 'River Journey' activity was introduced (Benest, 2010). This uses the course and flow of a river as a metaphor to help elicit and map the participants' experiences throughout a programme. An outline of a meandering river was drawn



*Fligure 2. WWW River Journey*



on a long sheet of paper. The 'River Journey' was then populated with summaries and quotes that the group had shared during the previous story circle (see figure 2). We then invited the participants to imagine the WWW programme as a journey and prompted them to share key events/stages that shaped their experience of WWW. Their comments were noted and placed at various stages of the river.

The group were also encouraged to talk about their experiences, changes or impacts (positive or negative) during the programme. In order to elicit these responses, we used a variety of open questions (see appendix) to help form the key messages or story they would like to share through the PV.

Four themes emerged from the comments and conversations during these activities, which the group then agreed to use to shoot and depict in the film, these themes were 'looking after Cumbernauld Glen', 'learning new things/skills', 'friendship and company', 'being in, listening and observing nature'. These themes were developed further alongside other camera activities into a story board (see figure 3).

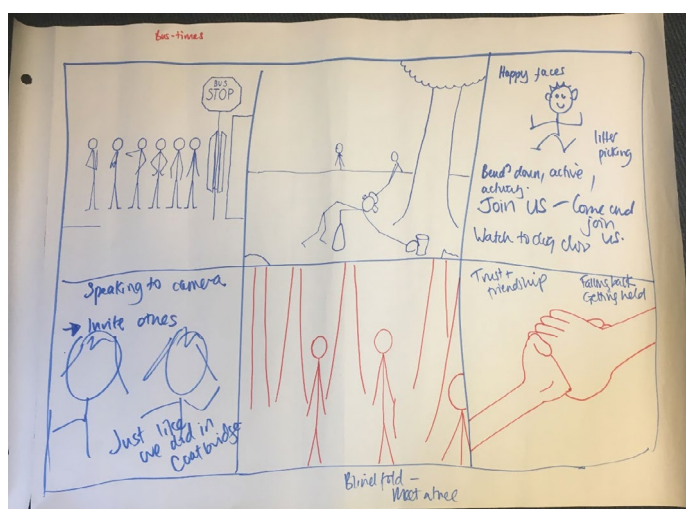


Figure 3. The story board for the footage 'Looking after Cumbernauld Glen'.

## Filming

The filming was carried out over three sessions and generally involved participants enacting scenes from a previous WWW session they had experienced. The filming took place in and around Cumbernauld Glen with participants predominantly shooting and directing the film. JHI researchers provided technical support and facilitated the process to provide an opportunity for everyone to rotate in the various roles, including camera operator, sound person, director or actor. See figures 4 and 5.



Figure 4. 'Blindfolding scene'



Figure 5. Filming 'Blindfolding' activity

## Editing

The PV editing process developed by InsightShare (Benest, 2010) was adapted to the diversity in abilities and time available with the group.

The process began with a 'paper edit' workshop in which the group met, reviewed each film clip and individually gave them a score between 1 – 10, with researchers also asking them to comment on what they liked, did not like, what was good, not so good. These scores



and comments informed the 'paper edit' process, in which a consensus was reached on what clips to include and where to place them relative to each other on a paper timeline (see figure 6). The group then began to edit each scene using an iPad (See figure 7). The JHI researchers completed the first full edit, using the paper edit produced by the group as guidance.



Figure 6. Paper edit exercise.



Figure 7. Group edit.

## Screening of first rough edit

The first edit was then screened back to the group for feedback comments and to suggest any additional material. The main feedback received was a request for additional voice overs to enhance the narration for certain scenes. These were then recorded by the participants and edited by JHI researchers into a revised version.

## Final editing

The final edit was then produced by the researchers and sent to CLL for a screening with the group. The group unanimously approved and endorsed the edit and gave consent for a public screening to be held in Cumbernauld with family, friends, project partners and greenspace stakeholders (see Figure 8).



## Results

The final film consisted of various scenes depicting four main themes that emerged throughout the sessions, which showed a snapshot of activities the group had taken part in and the experiences gained from the WWW sessions. These themes were given the titles of *'looking after Cumbernauld Glen and other greenspaces'*, *'friendship and company'*, *'learning new things/skills'* and *'being in/listening and observing nature'*. The film depicted a group of confident adults, enjoying their time together, whilst proudly looking after and caring for their environment.

***"Good to see confident people doing great stuff for the environment".***

Comment from audience member after screening.

## Looking after Cumbernauld Glen and other greenspaces

This theme coincided with the general enjoyment of litter picking in which the group expressed a sense of care towards the woodland and animals, as depicted in the opening scenes. For some members of the group litter picking provided physical exercise, with one member expressing how picking litter was like *"moving on a dance floor"*. The walks and associated physical activity were enjoyed by all members, but one member was very expressive in his enjoyment of walking: *"I just enjoy it, I enjoy it all"*. Another mentioned proudly several times through the sessions how he had lost weight: *"my jacket is much looser now than it was 2 years ago"*.

Litter picking also helped provide a sense of pride and achievement and a general feel good factor, to the extent that some members of the group had initiated litter picking in their home neighbourhoods outside Cumbernauld. For one member, litter picking in his neighbourhood helped him reduce stress and tension.

## Friendship and Company

This theme emerged from the visible social connection within the group and with the TCV and NN support officers. All the activities involved members working and supporting each other, for example, as with the blindfold activity. There were a few moments of tension between some members, but the researchers observed overwhelmingly that there existed a strong social bond within the group. Some individuals described the group feeling like a family and expressed the sense of security it gave, by saying:

***“I wouldn’t want to walk on my own (in the woods) because I would worry I’d get lost, I would like to do it as a group”.***

The camaraderie in the group was very important to the members and had developed over time through their shared experiences and shared conversations, as well as sharing funny moments together, such as remembering when one of them fell out of a hammock.

## Being in, listening to and observing nature

This theme encapsulated the regenerative and relaxing experiences felt by members of the group revealing individual impact. One member said about being in the glen:

***“I like the peace and quiet, if you’ve got too much in your head – it helps clear it away”.***

Another recalled during a session that

***“When there’s a big crowd, I take it all in, it gives me a sore head. So, I go to these places, it’s quiet, as a group or on my own”.***

One member, who is keen on computer games, expressed how the sessions helped him get away from his gadgets and screens and how lying in the hammock in the woodland relaxed him:

***“When it’s nice and quiet you can hear what’s around you, the traffic going by, the flames around the fire. You switch off”***

## Learning new skills

Acquiring new skills such as fire-lighting using only a flint, or learning how to build a shelter in the woods appeared to be confidence boosting to the members. One member was proud to announce how they were now an expert at building fires. Whilst challenging initially, it was apparent from the sessions that learning new skills, and how to do them properly was very important to the members. One member expressed how learning new challenging things for the first time boosted their confidence:

***“If you are a little reluctant at trying new things, it helps build confidence”.***

It was both implicit and sometimes explicit from general comments that members in the group had better recollection of activities that challenged and empowered them, and boosted their confidence, e.g. litter picking, making a fire, setting up a hammock, rather than those associated with learning about nature e.g. learning the names of plants, birds or discovering a badger set.

One member did say that he enjoyed learning about the names of different animals and plants. However, it appeared the greatest impression or impact on the group, stemmed from those activities that gave them a sense of personal empowerment, such as survival skills which gave them *‘the know-how to survive in the wood, without a tent or anything’* and those activities that generally built on personal autonomy and confidence.

## Articulating impact and change

It became apparent during the PV process that at times the group and individual members struggled to reflect and directly articulate their personal journey or change or impact they had experienced through the WWW programme.

At times it required the project workers to remind the group of various activities they had done, e.g. using photo prompts. The group tended to generally describe what happened during the activities and what they enjoyed the most. Whilst the participants sometimes struggled to articulate the changes verbally, the positive changes (confidence, self-esteem) on the group members was observed more notably by project workers who had worked with the group throughout the programme.

The beginning of the film shows the members travelling independently to the location of the WWW session. However, what was pointed out by a support worker was that this wasn't the case at the beginning of the project, and that it was through the programme they gained the confidence to travel independently. As they commented in a follow up interview:

***“Making that journey to Cumbernauld themselves was a huge achievement for some people.., So that in itself, their confidence, has just really, really grown and that’s all the members”.***

They also commented that in their experience people are not always able to see changes in themselves:

***“they possibly don’t know where they started off and they probably don’t realise how far they’ve gone”.***

A project worker, who was also interviewed after the PV project, commented that sometimes people may not be willing to talk about or share their past experiences because these could trigger negative emotions for them. Thus, highlighting the need to be sensitive to the ethical considerations when attempting to establish ‘baseline’ data from people who feel emotionally vulnerable.

## Impact of the PV process

The PV process built on the confidence already developed by the WWW programme. As a support worker commented in a follow up interview:

***“I think they’re continually growing in confidence and I think probably the participatory video had a part in that as well”.***

It was apparent that some members were reticent in operating the cameras and in particular being filmed at the beginning of the PV process. However it was observed that through taking part in the games and activities, members visibly grew in confidence and became more comfortable with all aspects of the filmmaking process. The participants seemed to particularly enjoy the play-back sessions of footage they had taken. On one occasion one member was visibly ‘chuffed to bits’ after seeing himself on film, slapping his thigh with pride. The fun games and participatory video exercises during the process played a significant role in helping them be more assured in all aspects of filmmaking, including seeing themselves in the film. It also allowed individual members to show off their existing talents and skills such as drawing, creativity and technical camera work.

The confidence gained through the WWW programme and the PV culminated in the whole group being able to stand up in front of an audience and introduce their film at the screening.

## Lessons Learnt

- The PV process revealed that the WWW programme was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by all, where members rarely missed a session. The members did not express anything negative about the programme apart from the taste of nettle soup that was made during one session. However, one must caution that the lack of negative comments could be attributed to an unwillingness to share these in front of NN and WWW support staff, who were present throughout the duration of the PV project.
- The most memorable and important activities were those that gave the members a sense of achievement and pride; either by clearing an area of litter or by being able to build a shelter and light fire, and ‘look after each other’.
- The WWW programme instilled a sense of stewardship in the members and NN support staff for the green spaces of Cumbernauld, to the extent that one member regularly litter picked around his local greenspace.
- Strong friendships developed and strengthened



between the members, the support workers and TCV engagement officers through the programme. These friendships were very important to the members. The camaraderie between the members was very strong, however it was difficult to attribute this solely to WWW, as the members also socialised through NN. Friendships continue to develop outwith organised WWW or NN sessions.

- Being in nature and greenspace undoubtedly had a restorative effect on the members and was widely appreciated. However, it was not possible to assess whether this was only for a short time or had longer lasting effects.
- Articulating change or impact of activities over time, and in the past, was challenging for some of the members. The final film represented the group currently, but did not necessarily represent possible changes to their health and wellbeing over time. Without knowing the group, it may not be apparent for some viewers the changes within the group (confidence, self-esteem) observed by support workers and engagement officers.

## Reflections on the PV process

Due to the differences in individual personalities and abilities within the group and confidence levels, not all individuals were able to fully engage in whole group activities and discussions. Thus, small working groups are preferable to encourage greater participation and inclusion, with support workers following up activities on a one to one basis to try and ensure all voices were heard and included in the final video.

Some members of the group struggled giving relative comparisons when scoring the video clips between 1 -10, e.g. one member scored everything a 10. This was not a problem for the PV process, however it does highlight the problems associated with traditional quantitative feedback forms that require people to score, e.g. their sense of wellbeing on a given day.

Consent processes should be made simpler and less intimidating by using more verbal consent or filmed consent, rather than lengthy forms, which assume minimum levels of literacy to understand.

## Recommendations

WWW project partners may want to consider creating time and space in the programme for participants to make their own meaning of nature. This can at later date be shared with other meanings such as those of the CLL, TCV and The Trust rather than having an emphasis on meaning from a conservation perspective. This approach may be helpful for the aims associated with reconnecting people to nature.

The members valued and appreciated being part of a friendship group afforded through NN or WWW, and the associated confidence and pride that came with it. Therefore, continued support by NN and WWW may be necessary for some groups and individuals to continue to gain the health and wellbeing benefits from the outdoors and nature. But this will require continued investment and training of engagement officers specialising in health and wellbeing, allowing more people to access such programmes.

For monitoring and evaluation purposes it may be necessary to include a supplementary film or report developed by support workers to set the context of the group and give an insight into where their journeys had begun and the changes they had observed through the process.

## Acknowledgements

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## Suggested citation

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## Appendix

To encourage the group and individuals to talk about their experiences, any changes or impacts (positive or negative) during the programme we used a variety of open questions (see appendix)

*Can you think of key moments along this river journey that come to mind? Good, challenging, interesting or difficult moments or events?*

*What was your worst moment (least favourite)? What was your best moment (most favourite)?*

*Can you think of a session that stuck out as being particularly interesting, difficult or rewarding?*

*Has anything changed for you along this journey – from the beginning to the end? Or has it stayed the same? Got worse?*

*How did you feel at the beginning of the journey? In the middle, At the End?*

*Have you noticed any changes in yourself after a session? After the programme?*

*Have you noticed any changes in other people or as a*

*group? Have you noticed any other changes in your life? How you've felt in general or after a session?*

*Are you doing anything now that you weren't before?*



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