

COP26 – Hazel starts walking to reduce environmental impact

Hazel Muir who lives in Kirkintilloch has had her portrait and walking story featured in Scotland's national walking charity [Path for All's](#) "Humans of the Walk" online exhibition, launched as COP26 takes place in Glasgow.

The exhibition shows the joy of walking with a gallery of portraits and personal stories showcasing the immense impact everyday walking can have on our health, wellbeing and the environment.

The 74-year-old, who has been walking with Paths for All for seven years, has made friends for life and has seen her physical fitness improve after getting out on organised health walks.

Having grown up with various health problems, Hazel could never find the right form of exercise for her. When she started to walk regularly, she noticed the rapid health benefits.

Hazel discovered the option for a free bus pass when she retired, and quickly started using it to travel to new walking spots around Scotland.

The initial walking group Hazel attended has grown over time. Friends she met at the group now meet regularly to go on more walks around the area. The friends who met through the charity have gone on to complete some longer routes, including the John Muir Way.



Hazel Muir

Hazel said: “Having been diagnosed with plantar fasciitis and not being able to walk, it has been brought home, just how much walking means to me. I am normally out every day.

“I know so much about my area now and how to get around it. I’m much more comfortable to go on walks and went daily throughout Covid lockdowns. It’s such a good way of keeping you sane when you’re locked in the house!

“My husband and I now walk to the shop instead of taking the car, or use our free bus passes to get to new walking spots in an effort to slow down the damage happening to the environment.”

Hazel, who praises Path’s for All for the connections and friendships she’s made as a result, uses the walks to enjoy nature and notice the seasons changing around the Kirkintilloch area.

She added: “I’ve made such good friends. Now that I’ve been going for years, it’s so nice to see new people make similar friendships like the ones I have made.

“It’s a great laugh and brilliant company and the volunteers are so inspiring.

“Paths for All is the best thing that’s ever happened to me. It’s as simple as that.”

Images captured by the talented photographer Rebecca Holmes and her team, bring to life individual stories of overcoming

challenges, connecting to our natural world and feeling your best self.

Nine individual stories have been captured in locations all across Scotland from different ages and abilities.

Reducing car travel for short journeys is an important step that Scotland must take to tackle the climate emergency, as car journeys are responsible for 39% of transport emissions.

The charity is determined to promote walking and wheeling as the default choices for short journeys or as part of longer public transport journey to make a happier, healthier and greener Scotland.

Kevin Lafferty, Chief Executive Officer at Paths for All, said: "We can all 'do our bit' for climate change by walking or wheeling more often to reduce our carbon footprint, while improving our physical and mental health.

"As COP26 is taking place in Glasgow we want walking to be recognised for what it is – a planet-saving, health-improving force, free and accessible to everyone.

"As a charity, we want to revolutionise the way people use their cities, and stop our spaces from being dominated by cars. Scotland's towns and cities should be a backdrop for people walking, wheeling, cycling or simply spending time enjoying cleaner, quieter, calmer streets.

"The people who have been featured in Humans of the Walk show just how wide an impact our own individual actions can have – so think of what we could accomplish together."

Paths for All's mission is to support people in Scotland to be active every day, everywhere.

The charity works to create more opportunities and better environments for everyone in Scotland, no matter who they are or where they live, to stay active through walking, wheeling

or cycling.

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