

A wide-angle photograph of a rugged coastline. In the foreground, a grassy cliffside slopes down towards the sea. The middle ground features a prominent, tall, rectangular rock stack in the water, with waves crashing against its base. To the right, a long, layered cliff face extends into the distance. The background shows a vast expanse of the ocean meeting a clear blue sky at the horizon. The overall scene is dramatic and scenic.

NHS Orkney Biodiversity Report 2018-2020

1. Introduction



- NHS Orkney is the smallest territorial health board in Scotland and is responsible for the health care of the population of Orkney, which is made up of approximately 21,500 people.
- The organisation employs around 570 staff and provides a comprehensive range of primary, community-based and acute hospital services.
- There are 19 sites in NHS ownership and approximately 12.6 hectares of land which NHS Orkney manage.
- The Head of Estates, Facilities & NPD Contract has been tasked to lead on Sustainability for NHS Orkney.
- A Sustainability Steering Group has been established, this group has a wide membership across the Board and will include members of the Public Health team to promote health and wellbeing for staff, patients and the local community.

Figure 2

2. Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature

- NHS Orkney takes a proactive role in meeting its responsibility towards furthering the conservation of biodiversity. We do not use pesticides and we sustainably manage waste.
- Across our estate maintenance of lawns and greens has a two tier approach. We identify areas of lawn which need to be kept cut regularly such as adjacent to high traffic routes, areas where external access/amenity is required and more marginal areas where grass can be left to grow longer.
- This targeted approach to mowing has allowed an element of controlled rewilding with a proliferation of the Northern Marsh Orchid and Heath spotted orchid making a comeback in these lesser mown areas. This is an example of where an intelligent maintenance programme brings enhanced biodiversity and amenity.
- This is also reflected in any new build works where peripheral areas are planted with meadow planting requiring minimal maintenance while increasing biodiversity and amenity, an example of this was the recently completed Eday Island Health Centre. The site was too exposed to establish indigenous tree planting so the site has mown grass areas immediately adjacent to the building and parking with a large area of unmown meadow planting sown on the outer part of the site. The meadow mixture was specifically chosen to reflect local Orkney heathland species and runs seamlessly into an adjacent heathland.



Figure 3

3. Mainstreaming biodiversity

- NHS Orkney, in partnership with Orkney Islands Council produces a [Green Travel Plan](#) which promotes and encourages safe, active and sustainable travel.
- NHS Orkney takes a proactive role in meeting its responsibility towards furthering the conservation of biodiversity. This is evidenced in the new hospital and healthcare facility which has defined spaces that staff, patients and relatives can use.
- This includes a sensory/rehab garden, and dedicated outdoor child's play area. The children's play area is to encourage play as part of visit to health care services so children have a positive experience as well as understanding the importance of exercise.
- The landscape strategy for the Balfour Hospital provides landscaped external space accessible from the building benefiting staff, visitors and patients via provision of the south and north courtyard gardens and the outdoor seating areas.
- All areas provide for a variety of uses such as sitting, relaxing, playing, eating, walking and general interaction.



Figure 4



Figure 5

4. Nature based solutions, climate change and biodiversity

- The natural heritage in Orkney is highly specific to these islands and given the harsh marine environment is challenging. This means that we tend to work with island based voluntary organisations such as Orkney Woodland Group to advise us and inform us of best practice locally in enhancing biodiversity.
- The Group audited the site and advised the landscape architects when they were procuring the new Balfour Hospital and were able to advise on both what worked in our harsh environment and what best practice was. They were also able to advise on species that were specifically indigenous to the Orkney Island and where planting with a specifically Orkney genetic provenance could be sourced. This ensured that biodiversity appropriate to Orkney was enhanced.
- An added benefit was that the adopted planting scheme was uniquely adapted and robust to the Orkney climate, therefore ensuring minimal plant loss during the planting establishment period. Thereby optimising scarce resources.



Figure 6

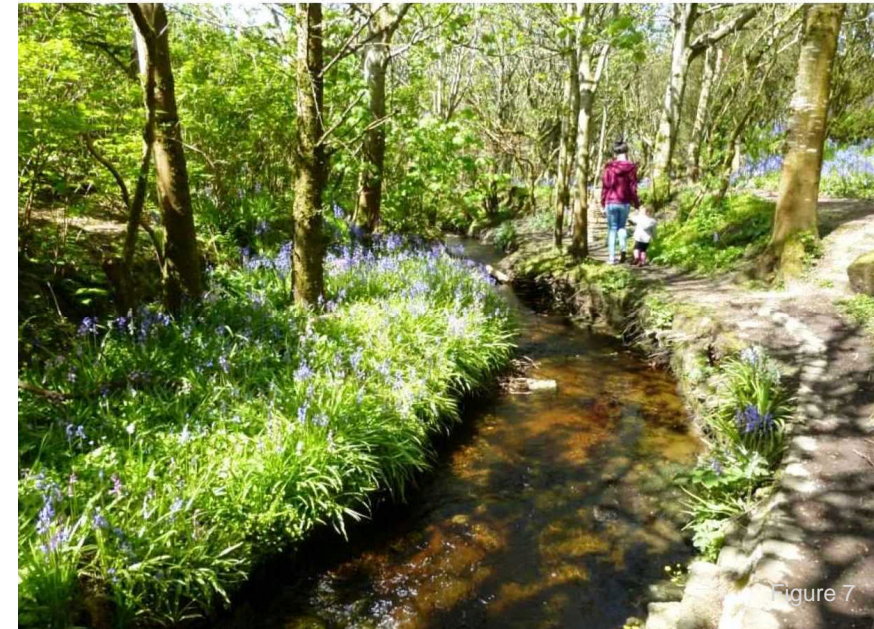
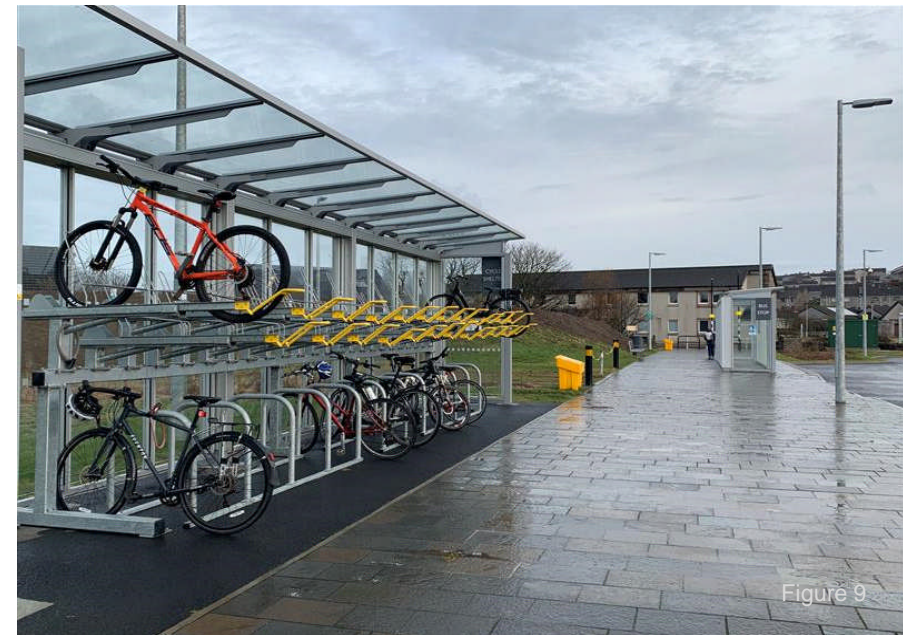


Figure 7

4. Nature based solutions, climate change and biodiversity cont.

- NHS Orkney has three Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) at the Balfour Hospital which align the modern drainage systems with natural water processes.
- NHS Orkney encourages active travel to minimise vehicles on site and reduce the carbon impact of cars. We are a member of the Cycle to Work Scheme and have dedicated cycle racks and shower facilities to encourage physical activity.
- NHS Orkney works with its community partners, particularly Orkney Islands Council to improve the use of our estate and connectivity within the surrounding environment.
- Orkney Islands Council was among the first local authorities to declare a climate emergency in May 2019. The Orkney Partnership Board established a Climate Emergency Working Group to develop a collective approach to champion and promote existing activity on low carbon issues, protecting citizens, businesses, habitats and wildlife from the devastating effects of climate change. NHS Orkney is an active member of this group.



5. Public engagement and workforce development

- NHS Orkney regularly communicates with the public to promote the benefits of exercise, step challenges and health walks.
- The gardens of the new hospital are relaxed and natural with the aim of encouraging staff and patients to enjoy the outdoors and invite the use of the pathways and walking routes to promote exercise.
- Recently GIS mapping work took place for the NHS Orkney estate to identify opportunities for increasing biodiversity value.



Figure 10

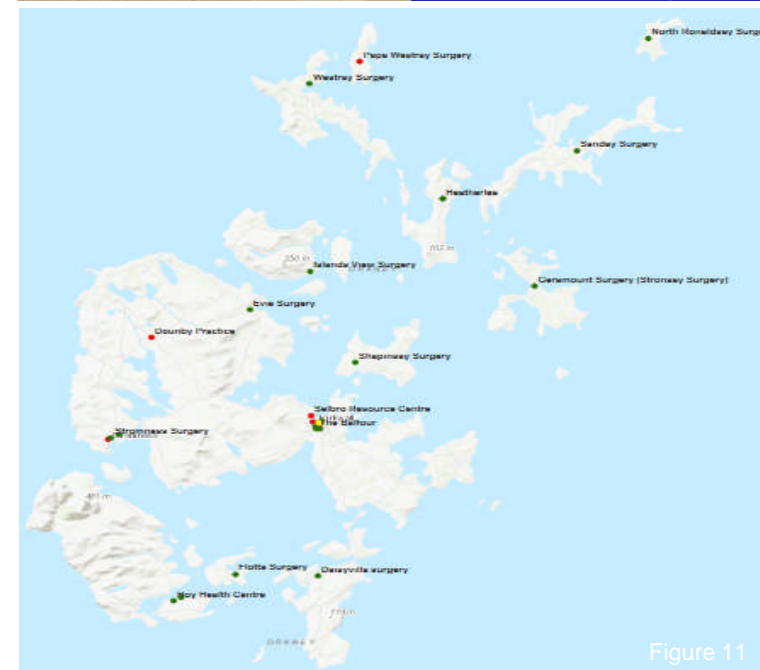


Figure 11



NHS Orkney

Did you see our recent photos from last Friday's Health Walk and want to give it a go? Then here is a list of the Health Walks currently taking place throughout Orkney.

paths **Orkney Health Walks.**

What are Health Walks?
Health Walks are short, safe, social, local, low level, fun, regular walks led by trained walk leaders and aimed at people who want to improve their health and wellbeing by becoming active through walking. Walks are free to take part in, last no longer than an hour and open to everyone.

Where do they take place?

Area/Group	Go to	Leaves from	Contact
West Mainland West Mainland Walkers	Second and third Monday of each month	Meeting point varies. Leaves 10:30	Sarah Eaton sarah.eaton2@nhs.uk
Stromness Stromness Health Walks	Wednesdays	Meeting point varies. Leaves 11:00	Marie Mowat marie.mowat@orkney.nhs.uk Tel: 01856 556 773
Kirkwall Orkney Bikes Trust	Members only	Advertised internally	Sharon Leach sharon.leach@orkney.nhs.uk Tel: 01856 574874
Kirkwall Balfour Healthy Walkers	Fridays	Garden Memorial Building, Balfour Hospital entrance from Health Centre car park. at 12:30	Jessica Jones jessica.jones@orkney.nhs.uk Tel: 01856 556 773
Kirkwall CLAR	Fortnightly on a Tuesday For groups affected by cancer	38 Victoria Street at 14:15	Elisbeth Lakkler or Karen Scott elisbeth.lakkler@orkney.nhs.uk or karen.scott@orkney.nhs.uk Tel: 01856 573399
Kirkwall Orkney Island Council	Tuesdays	Reception area OIC Customer Services, School Place	Phyllis Tomlin phyllis.tomlin@orkney.gov.uk Tel: 01856 573315

Figure 12



6. Research and monitoring

- As part of the site selection and construction programme for the new hospital we commissioned ecological surveys for the new Balfour to identify plant species and to check if there were any presence of otters.
- We adhered to the ecological surveys undertaken and measures were put in place to ensure the plants species and otters were protected.
- The local distillery (Highland Park) were concerned about their water source which was close to the site. A desktop study was commissioned which allied the distillery's fears about the project affecting their water source.
- The recent GIS mapping work of the estate will assist in identifying further opportunities for increasing biodiversity value.



Figure 13



Figure 14

7. Biodiversity highlights and challenges

- NHS Orkney held a photo competition for staff which encouraged people to explore Orkney's nature and biodiversity. The final 12 photos were used to produce a calendar, of which monies raised were donated to charity.
- Successful activities at NHS Orkney include the significant investment in active travel and dedicated pathways which lead to the wider community such as the Crantit Trail.
- We will continue to work with Orkney Islands Council to look at ways we can increase the provision of active travel.
- Challenges ahead over the next 3 years include:
 - Covid 19
 - Establishing dedicated resources for sustainability
 - Identifying possible budget and investment opportunities



References

- Figure 1: The Stack of Yesnaby, Orkney by Teresa Marwick
- Figure 2: The New Balfour
- Figure 3: Stromness view of Hoy, Orkney by Teresa Marwick
- Figure 4: Balfour Sensory Garden
- Figure 5: Balfour Seating Area
- Figure 6: Orkney Sunset by Richard Bland
- Figure 7: Happy Valley, Orkney by Julie Tait
- Figure 8: Balfour Suds Area
- Figure 9: Cycle Rack, Balfour
- Figure 10: Example Facebook Post
- Figure 11: GIS Mapping Exercise
- Figure 12: Example Facebook Post
- Figure 13: Orkney Bee by Richard Bland
- Figure 14: Orkney Otter by Nick Card
- Figure 15: Orkney Sea Pinks by Teresa Marwick