

Resources



A Borders
Buddies
project
resource

Getting Outdoors: Tips for groups

Borders Buddies is a project started in the Tweeddale area of the Scottish Borders, thanks to funding from Scottish Borders Council's Community Fund. The aim of this project is to reconnect people and groups post-pandemic, especially those who have become isolated and disconnected during recent months. Read more about it here: <https://otbds.org/introducing-borders-buddies>

Recently it has been really difficult for groups to meet up in normal ways. Many have resorted to digital means of staying connected, while others have just lost touch with some members. When Covid restrictions begin to ease, one of the safest ways to get back together will be to meet outside. Outside the Box have been speaking to different groups about getting outdoors: here are some of the tips shared by them.

WHERE TO GO

- It may be easier, especially if there are social distancing restrictions, to go somewhere within walking distance for everyone if possible. This can be a great opportunity to (re)discover the local area!
- Make sure everyone is clear about when and where you are meeting, and what they will need to bring.

FOOD AND DRINK

- For a group – if planning a café/ takeaway visit – phone ahead to make sure they know you are coming – think about ordering ahead to save time, and to be allocated a 'safe slot' if needed.
- Pay contactless - by card or with your phone.
- Is there an outdoor seating area? With social distancing?
- Everyone could take their own flasks + snacks.

WEATHER

Check the forecast and let everyone know:

- Tell people to dress for poor weather, advise waterproofs, layers and sturdy footwear.
 - For sun – hats and cream, plan for finding shade.
 - Take umbrella(s), small tarpaulins, mats.
 - Group fleeces/waterproof fleecy blankets (fire-retardant if you are having an open fire).
 - Consider having group set of basics (wellies, waterproofs, gloves, hats?*) – especially if people come from sheltered housing.
- *Have 2 sets for hygiene, Dettol spray and leave for 3 days (or wash if possible).

WHAT MAKES A GOOD OUTING?

- Have different options – or shorter routes – for less able.
- Work to the ability of your least able person.
- Make sure everyone is happy with what they are doing.
- Check in regularly – is anyone cold/hungry/tired?

HEALTH AND SAFETY, RISK ASSESSMENTS

- Keep a supply of disposable group masks.
- Think about clear masks if some people are hard of hearing.
- Keep spares in the car or in your bag.
- Take antibacterial/antiviral wipes and hand gel.
- Toilets – consider options and proximity/accessibility, take loo roll and wipes?
- Check the latest Covid rules for groups/social gatherings on Scottish government website.
- Contact tracing: make sure you have everyone's contact details, in case anyone later tests positive and you need to notify others.
- Plan and share risk assessments
- Ensure risk assessments include a plan for emergencies/changes in weather – and know your postcode/obvious landmark.
- Be aware of any relevant medical issues within the group.
- Take First aid kit and have a First aider if possible.
- Ensure you have enough volunteers/responsible people to support the group if one has to be taken away early.
- Plan enough helpers to accommodate different routes if possible.
- Plan to the ability of your least able person.

SUITABILITY AND ACCESS

- Will the activity or venue appeal to everyone? If people are living with dementia, autism or other conditions they may be overloaded or confused by multisensory experiences, loud noises or muddy puddles may confuse or alarm.
- On the other hand a walk with different sights, sounds and smells to enjoy can be a positive experience.

TIPS FROM OTHER GROUPS

- Start small and build up – a short walk to start, keeping it simple.
- Have at least one break involving food/hot drinks/informal chat or sharing what people have seen/found.
- If someone does not want to walk – they could opt (with a buddy?) to get the snacks ready for everyone else.
- Have a rough plan but go with the flow, have a plan B and be prepared to adapt as weather or other factors change.
- Do an outdoor activity then come inside somewhere warm and dry afterwards - an open covered area could be ideal, with space for social distancing.
- Have a walk - collecting photos or natural resources - to talk about or share (digitally) when you get back home or indoors.
- Think about asking a family member, volunteer or others to support the group - they might even enjoy it!
- Allow people to assess and take reasonable risks.
- Record the highs and lows of the outing – what went well? What didn't go well? What would you do differently next time? This could be through informal feedback or photos.
- Carry on via a closed social media group - that way you can share photos, ideas or generally keep the chat going long after the meetup. Anyone who was unable to join you can catch up there and avoid feeling left out.

For more information about Borders Buddies please contact ruth.n@otbds.org, 07711 210431 or see our website: otbds.org



Getting Outdoors: Tips for Individuals and Families

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Outside the Box have been speaking to people of all ages and abilities about getting outdoors. Here are some of the tips they shared.

GETTING THERE

- Look at a map; put details in a phone if possible.
- Even a short drive from home can give you more options for places to walk.
- A car trip could be confusing; look for familiar landmarks en route.
- Try to check what parking is like in advance – level/accessible? Far to walk?
- (Covid) Will it be crowded? You might want to think about somewhere less busy you can go – even if it's not as scenic.

WHAT TO WEAR

- Lots of layers - you don't need expensive clothing.
- Lightweight waterproof ('Mac in a pack') with warmer layers (fleece etc).
- Lightweight showerproof trousers are great for keeping the chill out.
- Hat, gloves, scarf.
- Warm sturdy shoes/boots.
- Wear big boots with room for extra socks.
- Take a fleecy blanket just in case.
- Keep spares in the car if travelling that way.

WEATHER

- Check the forecast – the night before and again in the morning.
- Look at two different forecasts – plan for worst case.
- Have a quick way to get back to car if weather changes.
- Take a brolly!
- Plan an alternative (indoor) activity if the weather changes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Will you need a mask?
- Will you need disposable gloves.
- Take antibacterial spray – especially if you won't have access to a tap.
- Antiviral (not just antibacterial) wipes – for hands and other objects.
- Bin bag for your rubbish.
- Take a 'buddy'?

TOILETS AND OTHER FACILITIES

- Think about where/whether there will be:
- Toilets – or go before you leave the house.
 - Parking.
 - Benches - you can sit on your own mat.
 - Picnic tables – take a wipeable table cover or take your own folding chairs.



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Getting Outdoors: Tips for Individuals and Families

FOOD AND DRINK

- If no café etc nearby – or if you'd rather have your own – take a big flask of tea + chunky plastic mugs.
- Take a bottle of tap water for hydration - with chunky plastic mugs – different colours so you know which is whose.
- Or a flask of hot water and add tea bags or coffee + milk when you need it.
- An empty spice jar is handy for milk for hot drinks.
- Lightweight food – packs of crisps, cereal bars etc.
- Take protein e.g. nuts.

CHECKLIST - BEFORE YOU GO

- Phone.
- Use toilet before leaving home.
- Map.
- Tell someone where you're going.
- Medicine – if you might need it e.g. inhaler, regular medication.
- Contact name.
- First aid kit, including recommended PPE.
- Anything else?

SUITABILITY AND ACCESS

- Think about where you are going, dress appropriately and be prepared!
- Will it be flat, even ground?
- Will it be muddy or wet?
- Wheelchair/walker friendly? Take a stick in case?
- Is it dog friendly? If taking your own dog, that's good...if planning a picnic, other people's dogs can be a pest.

ONCE YOU'RE OUT THERE, WHAT MAKES A GOOD OUTING?

- Start small and build up – e.g. a half hour walk to start, keeping it simple.
- Plan regular breaks involving food/hot drinks.
- Plan or find appropriate shelter – or aim to come back to the car for a hot drink/snack.
- A walk – maybe in a quiet place? On level ground?
- Benches or picnic tables.
- A cafe or takeaway.
- Meeting a friend.
- A picnic (with hot drinks).
- Campfire cooking.
- Collecting natural resources – or taking photos – to talk about or record in a journal later.
- Foraging for food or flowers.
- Killing two birds! Sometimes it might be handy to post a letter, buy a pint of milk, walk the dog while you're out.
- Birdwatching or watching other wildlife.

For more information about Borders

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outsidethebox



Supporting a group to start meeting up again

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For many of us, 'normal' life has been on hold for a while now. Gradually, restrictions are beginning to ease and there are some invitations to go back to 'business as usual'. However, we have been speaking to people in the community and many of them tell us they don't feel ready yet for indoor meetings. At the same time they are feeling the effects of staying at home for too long. Here are some tips for getting back to small group meetings so that everyone feels comfortable about things.

HOW

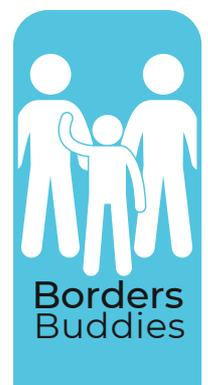
Consider whether you also want to use Zoom access in case anyone is unable/unwilling to attend in person. See below for some tips on 'Blended meetings' and here for some tips on using Zoom: https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Zoom_guide-4.pdf and joining a Zoom call on an ipad or tablet: <https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Digital-Buddies-Instructions-Joining-a-zoom-meeting-1.pdf>

Blended meetings

A 'blended' or 'hybrid' meeting or event is one where some people attend in person, while others access it virtually. This can be tricky to do successfully, but we have a few basic tips from groups who have tried this:

- Set up a table with a screen/laptop in front of all the 'live' attendees.
- You might need 2 or more screens if it's a larger group.
- Before you start, check wifi connection, video, mike and sound.
- Don't try to do everything - ideal to have one person looking after the tech.
- Think about using closed captioning for people who are hard of hearing.
- Make sure you include the people who are accessing remotely - check they have heard things and ask if they want to say anything.
- Allow enough breaks for everyone - people accessing remotely may find it more tiring.
- If your meeting is in the outdoors, ensure the screen is shaded, you have enough charge and a dongle or 4G for internet connection.

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WHERE?

Inside or out? Ask everyone how they feel about this. Could be possible to be in a very airy room with big doors/windows wide open. Many of the village halls or other venues will have their own Covid risk assessment for users – make sure you and others are familiar with this and follow its guidelines.

If you choose an outdoor or garden venue - dress appropriately! Layers you can add as it gets chilly/blanket or fleeces to put over knees are ideal. Scarves/hats/gloves are not just for winter! Group organisers could think about having some form of open shelter such as a gazebo or tarpaulin.

WHAT?

You may want to take your own equipment – take your own folding chair (many come with a handle/strap to sling over your back for carrying), you can also take your own mug and hand gel, and take a mask in case you need to walk through a confined area or use a toilet.

[Outside the Box can lend equipment for outdoor meetings – camping chairs, table, fleecy mats, mugs, flask. Please get in touch if you would like to borrow some]

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Social distancing

Make sure you put your chair where you feel comfortable – it's fine to sit back from the others.

Sharing things

Keep this to a minimum, e.g. laptop, papers, books – and have antiviral wipes on hand to wipe things down.

Hand gel

Good practice to use before and afterwards – you may have touched a door handle or other potentially contaminated surface. Take your own pocket sized hand gel.

After people have touched chairs they should either be wiped down with antiviral wipes, or left for 72 hours before the next use.

Be aware of the latest Scottish

Government rules (they change so fast) <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>. You can also contact your local Third Sector Interface (The Bridge in Tweeddale) for information and advice, especially around the safety of using indoor venues.

RISK: BENEFIT

It's well established that many people have reduced mental and physical wellbeing as a result of the Lockdowns. Of course it is always up to individuals, but maybe for some it is worth considering risks against benefits. Seeing real people again in a safe setting, instead of on a screen, can improve a person's wellbeing substantially.

Notice and talk about how people feel – before and after the meeting – 'it's great to see real people again!' said one person recently.



Some tips for getting back to seeing friends

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It can be hard to make friends in the best of times but making and keeping friendships when there have been restrictions on where you go and who you meet have made it even harder.

Now that we are 'allowed' to start seeing people again – some of us may feel unsure or nervous about taking the first steps.

Remember you can still use virtual ways of keeping in touch such as:

- Phone calls and telephone circles – where you all phone one person each.
- Sending postcards or letters to show you are thinking of them.
- Texting - sending a quick message if you see or think of something that will interest them.
- Messaging - sending photos or quick messages to groups of people.
- Video calls - where groups of people can chat and see each other.

We have templates and tips to help you do these things.

We have collected some ideas from people and organisations we work with about getting back to seeing friends. They said:

Start small and build up. It's not just about the government rules – you need to do what feels right for you.

You could start by seeing one friend in a garden – or for a walk. If meeting for an outdoor cuppa – take your own mug and hand gel, and a mask. Ask your

friend if they would like you to wear a mask/use your own mug. Arrange seats so you are far enough apart.

If meeting for a walk – go somewhere you don't have to drive to – or each drive there separately. A place with a nice wide path is ideal.

Meeting other people indoors: if you feel ready for this, you can still stay socially distanced and ensure the room has doors and windows open. If these things aren't possible, or you don't feel comfortable with it – just say no! Friends should understand if you turn down an invitation.

Try not to feel that you are missing out – if you know other friends are meeting up and you don't feel quite ready. They will be glad to see you when you are ready, and in the meantime you can stay in touch in other ways.

Begin to make suggestions to people about places and things you can go to when we can get out and about more.

Try a couple of different venues with people from your household first – then try with a friend. If the weather is ok there may be outdoor cafes, community gardens and parks where you can meet safely and comfortably.

Travelling may feel strange at first too – again, start small and build up. Take a snack or sandwich if you feel nervous about having to go to a café for the first time.

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Welcoming communities

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Nearly all communities have a mix of people living in them, including people who have just moved there and people who have lived there for a long time. We all want to belong and feel welcomed in our community. And people living in communities can help to make them welcoming places to live.

At the moment because there are restrictions on where we can go and what we can do, it can be harder for people, especially those that are new in an area, to meet new people and take part in local activities. The term integration is often used when we talk about people who have moved to Scotland from a different country.

Welcoming communities and meaningful integration happens when people have the space to share their skills, make new connections and shape their communities. And it gives communities new perspectives and ways of doing things, new expertise, and energy.

We have gathered some suggestions from people, communities and organisations we work with about ways to make communities welcoming.

Some suggestions include:

- Think about how and where you advertise activities and events - use a mix of traditional ways and social media like facebook and also knock on doors to invite people personally.
- Have local champions in each block, street, or cluster of homes who lets everyone know what's happening.
- Local champions could also welcome new people into the area.
- Talk to people in the street and encourage everyone to say hello and smile.

Creating social lifelines by having activities that are easy to join in and also to talk about and show people such as:

- Litter picks and beach cleans.
 - Small gardening projects like weeding and planting shared or communal spaces.
 - Swaps and exchanges for things like plants, seeds, extra plants, flowers and produce.
 - Daffodil and sunflower competitions - offering help to get people started.
 - Recipe swaps and baking competitions.
 - Drive way BBQ or bring your own picnics.
 - Social distanced walking groups.
 - Rock painting - decorate or paint a stone or rock and leave it for someone to find. See how many other people join in. We have heard of a 'snake' made of small rocks in a park that people keep adding too.
- Existing groups and local organisations can welcome new people by:
- Offering short taster sessions and encouraging people to try new activities.
 - Holding open days to highlight what they do and the ways people can join in.
 - Having people who welcome new members and explain about how the group or activity works.
 - Encouraging conversations and chats with different people as a key part of the group activity - that way everyone gets to know each other.

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Zoom~How To Guide

Many activities and social events are happening virtually now and using software that most of us had never even heard of a few months ago. It can be really daunting the first time you are invited to attend something using Zoom, so here is a little guide to get you started!

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JOINING A ZOOM VIDEO CALL

- Many people send out the link to the session via an email which will include a meeting ID and a password.
- Sometimes the link is on a social media page, or sent to you as a message
- When it comes to the time to join you can either go to the original invite/email and click on the Join in Zoom meeting link or you can go to zoom.us in your internet browser and put in your meeting ID and password.
- If you don't already have Zoom installed it will either give you a link to download it or it will automatically download it for you. It only takes a few minutes.
- The app will ask you for your name, which will be visible throughout the call. Some people use nicknames but be mindful not to cause offence when choosing your name. You can change it during the session too.
- Once you have done this, you will be taken directly to the session or to a waiting room where you will receive a message saying that the host will let you in soon.

HANDY TIPS FOR DURING THE MEETING

- The best way to see everyone in the meeting is to have gallery view set, otherwise you will only see the person talking. You can set gallery view at the top right hand corner of your screen. This option is not available on mobile phones or tablets.
- To turn your microphone on and off click on the microphone icon.
- To temporarily unmute yourself press and hold the space bar. As soon as you release the space bar your microphone will be muted again.
- To turn your camera on or off click the start/stop video camera icon. Sometimes if the internet connection is not great it can help if people turn off their video for a bit.
- It is also possible to have your camera on so others see you, but you don't see yourself. To do this move the mouse over your picture and three little dots will appear. Click on them to see the option to hide view from self – click on that and your picture will disappear from your screen but others will still see you.
- You can also write messages to each other during a call on Zoom. To write a message click on the little speech bubble. You can choose to write a message to everyone in the call, or choose 1 person and send them a private message. If someone posts a message you will get notification on the chat icon, like you would if you get a new message, just click on it to read it.
- The little people icon on the tool bar will show you all the participants in the video call.
- To leave the session click on end.

Video calling tips

Video calling can be a great way to keep in touch, especially when meeting in person is not an option. There are many different platforms and apps to choose from, in this guide we have compared the ones which are easy to use and free.

When you are the host of a video call - the person who organised or started the call - you will need an account and an app or software, but in some cases the people you chat with on the call won't need that.

It's important to consider who is going to join your call and what you want to do during it. Some apps offer built in games, some have time limits and they differ on how many people you can see at the same time.

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Platform	Max number of people	Chat	People you can see on phone	People you can see on PC or tablet	Dial in	Software or app needed	Account needed	Fully encrypted	What information is shared with others	Other things
WhereBy	4	✓	4	4	x	x	x	x		
Zoom	100	✓	4	49 max	✓	x	x	x		40min max
FaceTime	32	✓	32	32	x	x	x	✓	Phone number/ email	Only for Apple devices
Skype	50	✓	4	9	✓	x	✓	x	Phone number	
Google Meet	100	✓	4	16	✓	If	On mobile	x		1hr max
Messenger	8	✓	8	8	x	✓	✓	x	Facebook profile	
Messenger Rooms	50	x	8	16	x	x	x	x	Facebook profile	
WhatsApp	8	✓	8	x	x	✓	✓	✓	Phone number	No video calls on PC
House Party	8	✓	8	8	x	✓	✓	x		In built games

KEY

- **Max people** The number of people who can join a video call.
- **Chat** The availability of the option to write messages instead of video calling.
- **People you can see on phone** The number of people who you can see when video calling on a mobile device.
- **People you can see on PC** The number of people you can see when video calling on a PC or tablet.
- **Dial in option** This is the option to dial in from any phone to a video call – useful if someone doesn't have internet.
- **Software or app needed** The requirement to download software or app in order to join a video call. Most platforms require the host to download software/app.
- **Account Needed** Do you need to set up an account in order to join a call? If you are hosting the call you will need an account.
- **Fully encrypted** Built in end to end encryption: this is a safety measure which ensures only the people in the video call or chat group can see, hear and read what's being said, no one else can gain access to it. It's helpful to ensure confidentiality.
- **Info shared** What information other people on the call/chat can see about you, in addition to your user name.



Setting up a telephone circle or tree

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The idea is that each member of the telephone circle, phones one person for a conversation each week. That way each person makes and receives one call every week and has a new conversation with a friend or neighbour nearby.

The telephone circle works well with around 6 people, but you could start with 2 or 3 people and build from there.

Telephone trees - these can be useful for letting people know of last-minute changes - say an outdoor meeting is rained off. Each person phones or texts one or two others, so that it isn't down to one person to notify everyone.

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET YOU STARTED IS

- Names and phone numbers and names and agreement on when to phone.
- A list of who phones who each week- perhaps try for 4 weeks to get started and see how it works for you.
- Share the phone list with your telephone circle.

If you have the phone numbers already - phone people up and ask if they want to try it out.

If you don't have phone numbers you could send a note asking if they want to join in.

The note could say something like:

I'm thinking of setting up a telephone circle and I would like you to be part of it. The idea is that there are a few of us and each week we make a phone call to one person and another person phones us. That way we all make a phone call and receive a phone call.

My phone number is

Can you phone me so we can chat a bit more about how we do this?

Thank you

My name

How about trying it out and seeing what happens? You can change it as you go along so it works well for your telephone circle.

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outsidethebox



Microsoft Teams~ How To Guide!

Many activities and social events are happening virtually now and using software that most of us had never even heard of a few months ago. It can be really daunting the first time you are invited to attend something using Microsoft Teams, so here is a little guide to get you started!

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JOINING A TEAMS VIDEO CALL

- You will receive an invite via email/ message to attend the video call or it might be posted on social media.
- When it comes to the time to join you go to the original invite and click on the Join Microsoft Teams meeting link.
- Once you click on the link you should get 3 choices:
 1. Go to the Teams app (if you already have it installed).
 2. Download the Windows or IOS app.
 3. Continue on this browser which means you don't need to download the app.

If you don't want to download Teams use this one. Sometimes it doesn't always work with Safari so you may need to use Google Chrome.

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HANDY TIPS FOR DURING THE MEETING

- To access features on Teams you need to bring up the toolbar. To do it on PC you move your mouse to the middle of the screen. On a mobile device you simply touch the screen.
- To turn your microphone on and off click on the little microphone icon on the toolbar.
- To turn your camera on or off click the start/stop video camera icon on the toolbar. Sometimes if the internet connection is not great it can help if people turn off their video for a bit.
- You can also write messages to each other during a call on Teams. To write a message click on the little speech bubble on the toolbar on a PC. On mobile devices the speech bubble icon is in the top right corner of the screen.
- The little people icon on the tool bar will show you a list of all the people taking part.
- To leave the call click on the red telephone.

