

Flip of the Coin: Growing Community

Gill Buck and Victoria Arnold, University of Chester.

Lucy Campbell, Flip of the Coin, January 2026.



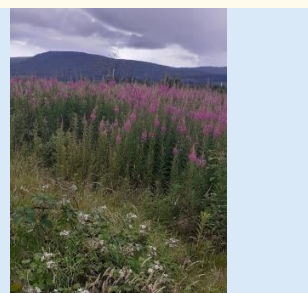
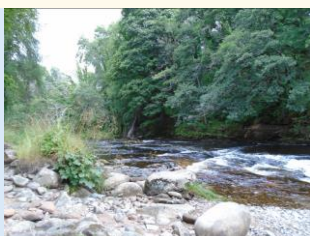
UK Research
and Innovation



Introduction

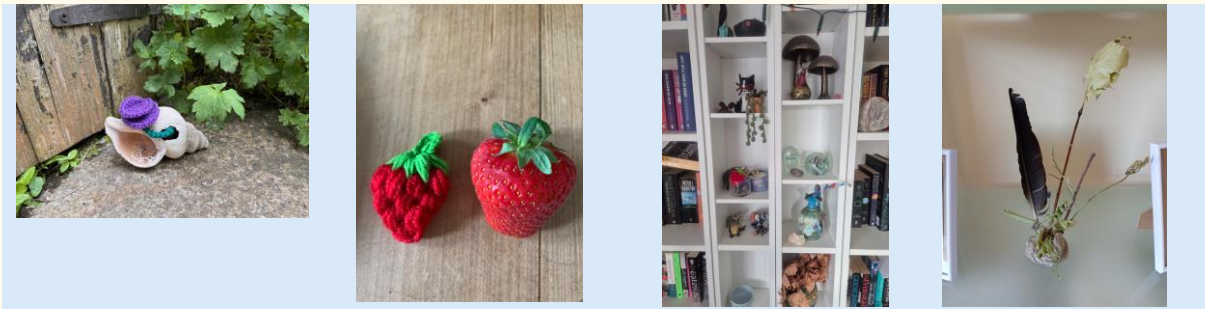
This report tells the story of [*Flip of the Coin CIC*](#) (*Flip*) a women-led, lived experience-driven organisation based in the Scottish Highlands. *Flip* works to improve people's wellbeing, confidence and sense of connection through creative, community-based activities. The organisation is rooted in the belief that lived experiences, particularly of adversity, disconnection and transition can offer important insights to help shape healthier communities. In this study, people working with and for *Flip* used an approach called 'Photovoice' to tell the story of the work. Below we draw out some themes across the images people made to explain how people experience working with and for *Flip*.

Theme 1: 'Nature':



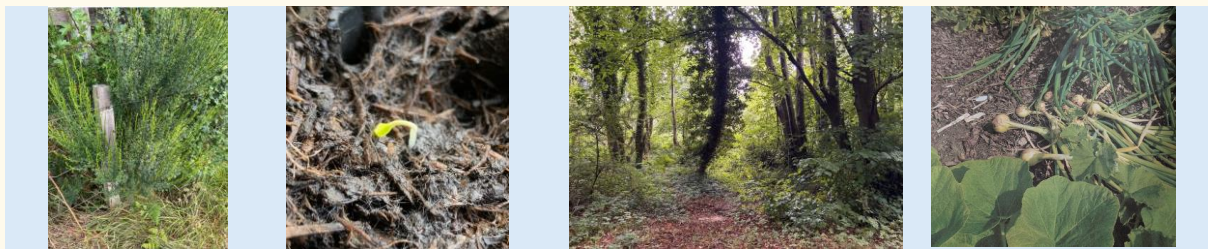
Nature became a quiet but powerful guide, providing pathways to meaning and renewal. Through time spent on beaches, in forests and along riverbanks, nature encouraged people to slow down, connect with themselves, notice details and see the world differently. Natural elements became symbols of personal meaning and hope. Engaging creatively with the natural world helped people who had felt disconnected from themselves and others to feel alive again, reminding them that healing and new beginnings are possible.

Theme 2: Creativity



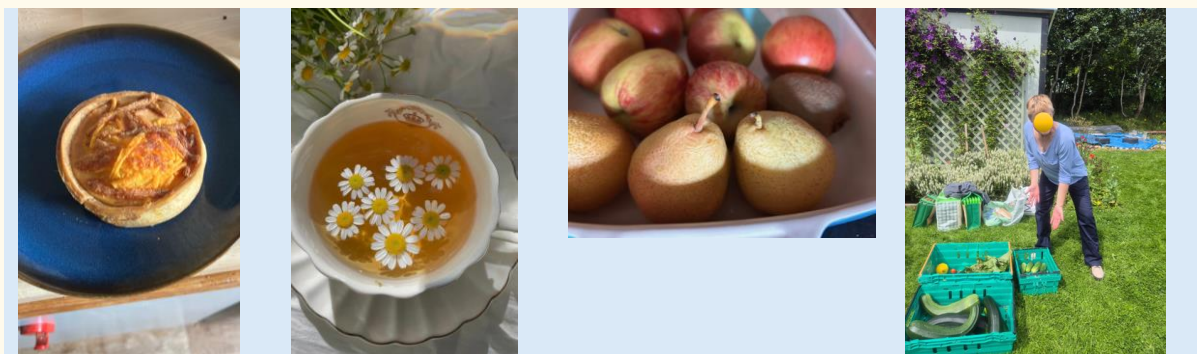
People described creativity as a gradual process of opening up. Creative work enabled self-expression and the development of new skills, which in turn helped people to (re)discover confidence, especially when they had felt unsure or disconnected. Creativity did not require ability or expertise but learning together in an atmosphere of shared uncertainty and encouragement. Creative acts restored joy, a sense of belonging and helped people reclaim parts of themselves that anxiety, loneliness or distress had dulled. The artworks exchanged became mementos of connection, carrying the spirit of the community into everyday life.

Theme 3: Growing Together:



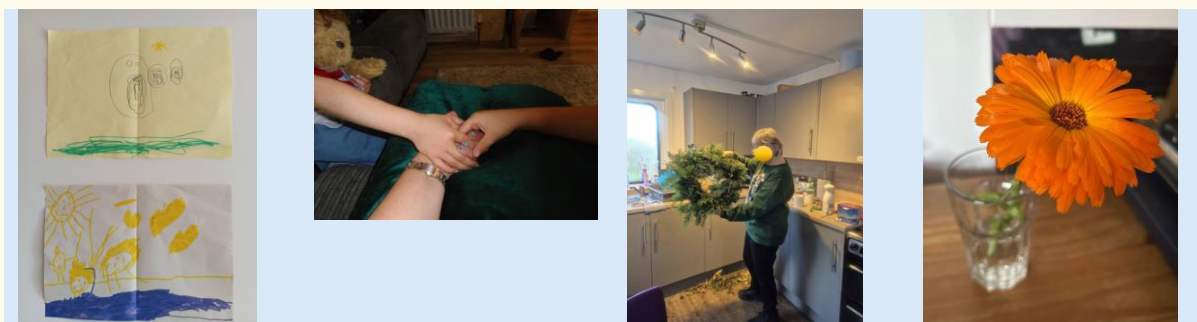
Growth happened collectively, not in isolation. Like trees connected by invisible networks, people grew best when supported by others. Images of plants pushing through fences and seedlings becoming crops represented breaking out of limits imposed by others or ourselves. People enjoyed the food they tended and nourished the wider community through sharing crops with the food bank. Growth was nurtured through proximity to those who could understand and pass on their own experiences.

Theme 4: Nourishment:



Food and drink represented mutual care, connection and sustenance. Nourishment was practical and emotional, providing fuel for new directions. Moments like a cup of tea with a hurting friend carried deep significance, representing the quiet support of sitting together without needing to fix anything. Light and warmth symbolised how people felt seen, were able to open up and reconnect with their authentic selves. Food and drink became expressions of care and connection, supporting physical nourishment alongside relational bonds and hope.

Theme 5: Family



Flip became a family, not just a service or a group. A feeling of family was nurtured through care and shared growth. When parents prioritised their own health, they modelled self-worth and resilience for their children. Strength built in one person rippled outward. Family also expanded into chosen connections. Warm, intimate moments between community members created a sense of belonging and safety, fostering a 'family feeling' rooted in care and mutual encouragement.

Theme 6: New Pathways Forward

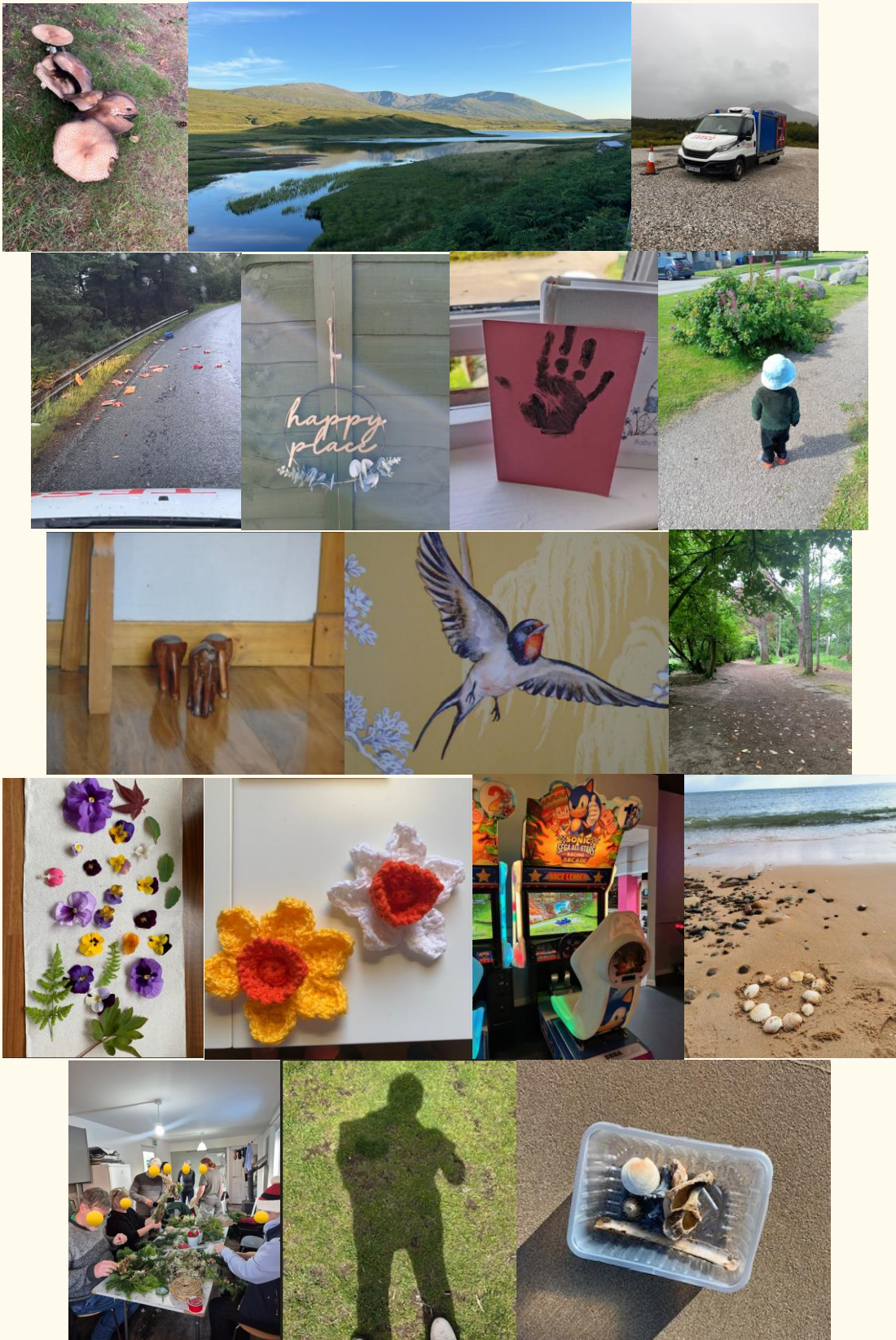


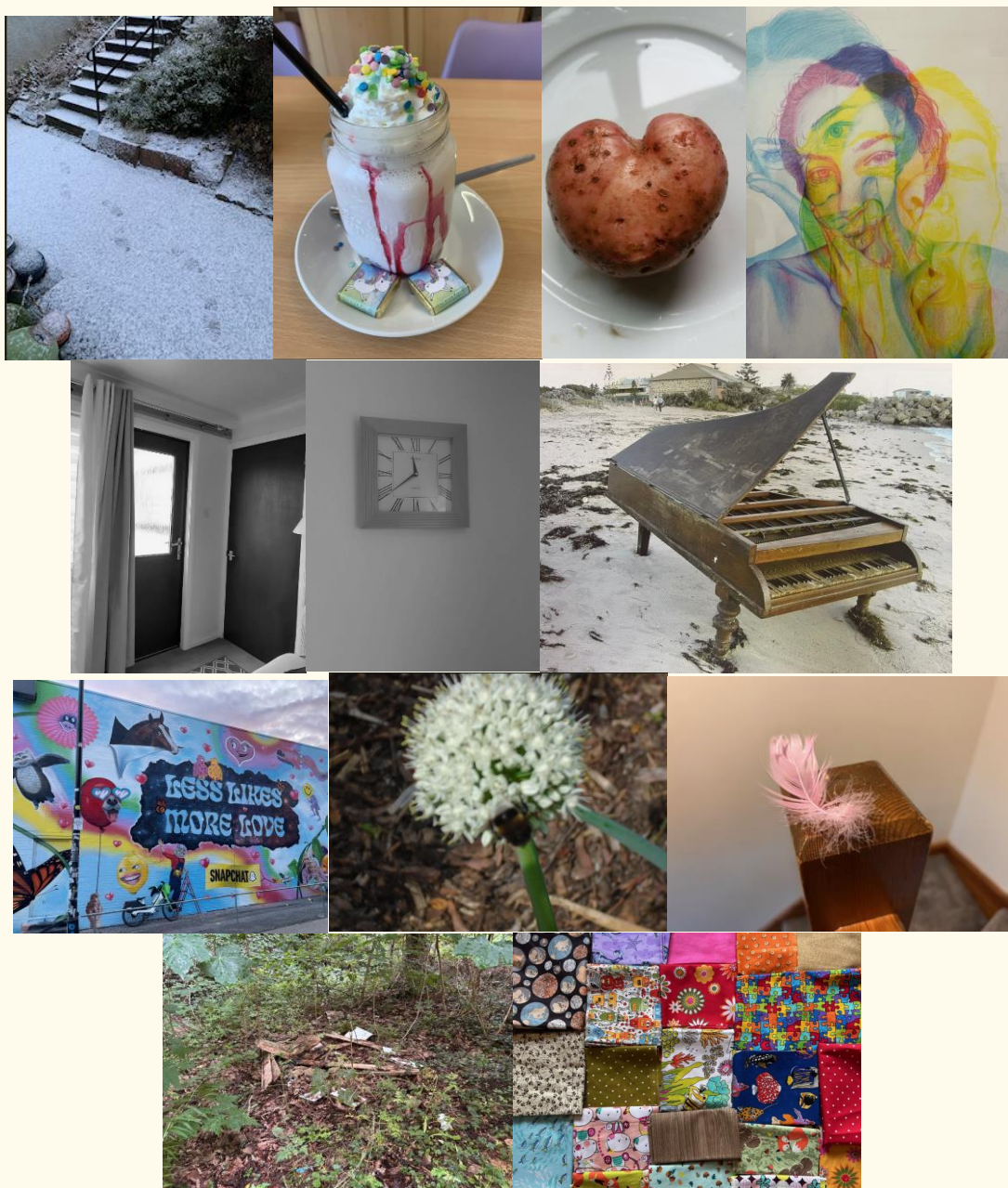
People felt pathways opened up for them, away from restriction and toward choice, from survival toward purposeful living. Images of breaking chains and stepping forward captured moments when barriers (whether illness, anxiety, disability, or exclusion), began to fall away. *Flip* became a space where everyone belonged, allowing people to take steps without fear of judgement. For those once unable to leave the house or see beyond immediate existence, *Flip* created a sense of possibility and momentum. Direction did not mean having all the answers, but people did begin to reclaim a sense of agency.

Conclusion

Collectively, themes of **Nature, Creativity, Growing Together, Nourishment, Family** and **New Pathways Forward** showed that *Flip* created conditions for people to grow, feel alive and thrive. *Flip*'s place-based community health model was created by a woman with lived experience, whose knowledge of exclusion and rebuilding informed its design from the ground up. Rather than organising around risks or labels, *Flip* was built as a shared community space where people meet as human beings. Through creativity, nature and shared relationships, *Flip* offered care, connection and belonging in place of judgement. Growth happened collectively, within families and communities, through trust and mutual support. Creativity restored confidence, while pathways forward became clear through a growing sense of agency. Together, these themes revealed an organisation with a blueprint for rethinking community health and justice. By organising around strengths and belonging rather than deficiency, *Flip* shows how environments themselves can be structured to nurture growth, connections to others and rootedness in place.

Photographs: Seeing inside the work of Flip of the Coin





*We would like to thank all the co-researchers and participants for taking part.
Thanks also to UKRI (grant no. MR/Y017110/1) and the University of Chester for
supporting this project.*

*For more evidence of lived experience-led justice across the UK and Ireland, visit
<https://imaginejustice.co.uk/>*

*For follow up questions or to see a full report with descriptions of all images in the
study, contact g.buck@chester.ac.uk*