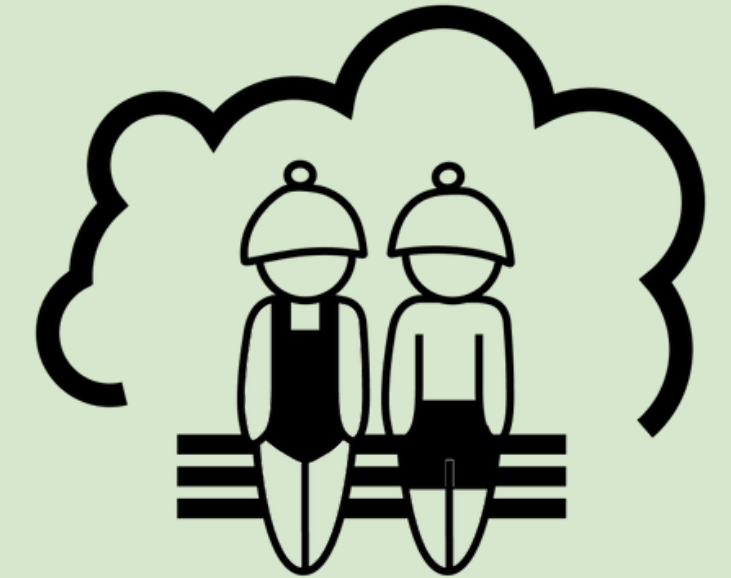




COMMUNITY
SAUNA
HIGHLAND

IN SHORT

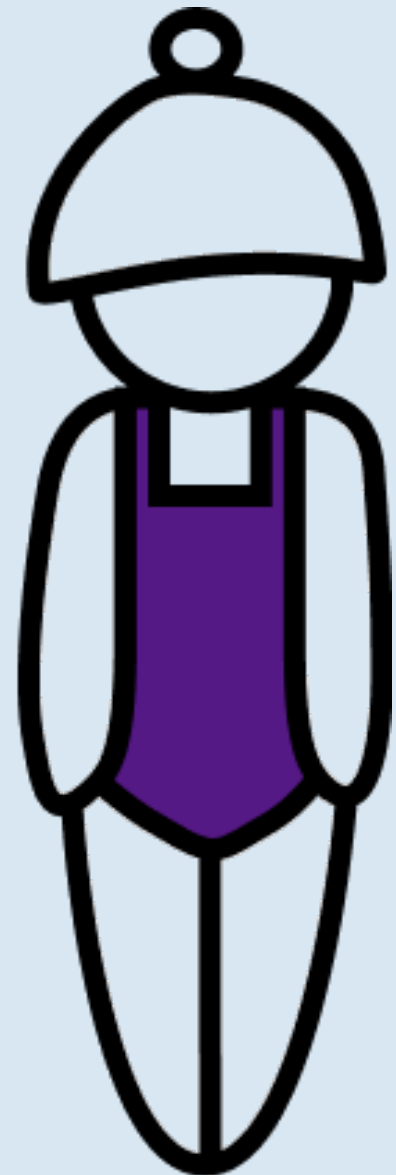
Community Sauna Highland CIC was established in April 2024 to make authentic outdoor sauna available for local Highland communities and contribute to the growing Scottish sauna culture.



The physical health, emotional wellbeing and social benefits of regular sauna bathing are well recognised. Sauna bathing makes people feel good and Community Sauna Highland CIC intends to nurture a diverse community of Highland sauna bathers.

As a Community Interest Company (CIC) profits will be paid forward to make sauna bathing as inclusive and available as possible.

COMMUNITY SAUNA COMMITMENT



Fully managed, licensed and insured

We will bring a fully managed service, with all licensing agreed with Highland Council and insurance paid for. We will have a disclaimer in place for all sauna bathers.

Not for profit focus

Our aim is to have more affordable, authentic and inclusive saunas in Highland, and to develop partnerships with community link workers and the third sector to widen the community of sauna bathers.

Staff and operations

Our staff will be trained in fire safety, first aid and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). All staff will be paid above living wage rates and be encouraged to grow and develop in their roles.

Complete Sauna Infrastructure

We have strong links with UK sauna providers and experience of sauna construction. We will plan and manage the complete sauna site from reception desk, to sauna, to cold plunge and cold water showers.

Benefits for sauna location

We can transform unused spaces into appreciated sauna corners and bring footfall to an area across the year, in all seasons. We can raise funds to protect the community sauna operation and in doing so improve drainage, water and electricity on site.



Sauna is great for a sense of community and being able to gather and chat. With Health benefits, from easing aching perimenopausal joints, to boosting mood and jumping in the cold water. A way to enjoy the outdoors through all the seasons - perfect for Highlands winters and summers!



- Sarah



I love the benefits of outdoor saunas as I get a cosy get together with my fantastic friends which is usually followed by a cold dip and some yummy food. I fully endorse this community project!



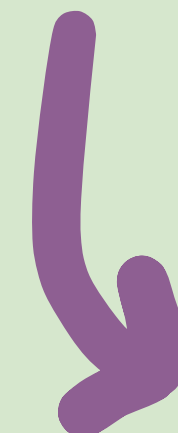
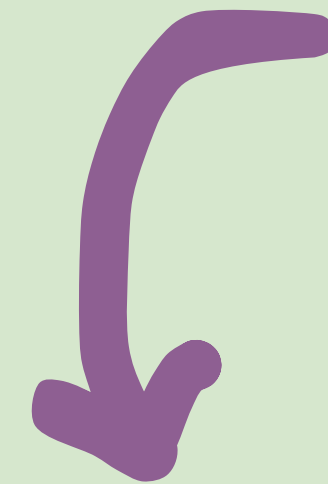
- Peta

AUTHENTIC SAUNA

At Community Sauna Highland CIC we believe that an authentic sauna experience means having a seat on a sauna bench, with hot stones inside and fresh air outside.

In 2020 Finnish sauna culture was inscribed on the UNESCO's Intangible Heritage List, noting that in Finnish sauna culture, sauna was 'readily accessible for all'. Löyly is a Finnish word and describes the feeling created when water is poured on the hot stones making steam. Bathers can play with the conditions inside the sauna creating steam, heating the stove more or less and breathing fresh air when stepping outside into nature.

There is much to experience in community bathing and heat traditions around the world. Community Sauna Highland CIC hopes to engage the Highlands in the ancient and global traditions of authentic sauna.



VISION AND AIMS

We will run an electric sauna in Inverness with cold plunge, rest area and changing space. We will create a relaxing outdoor space to sit, rest and enjoy heat, cold and nature.

We will have a friendly staff team hosting sauna sessions and engaging the wider community.

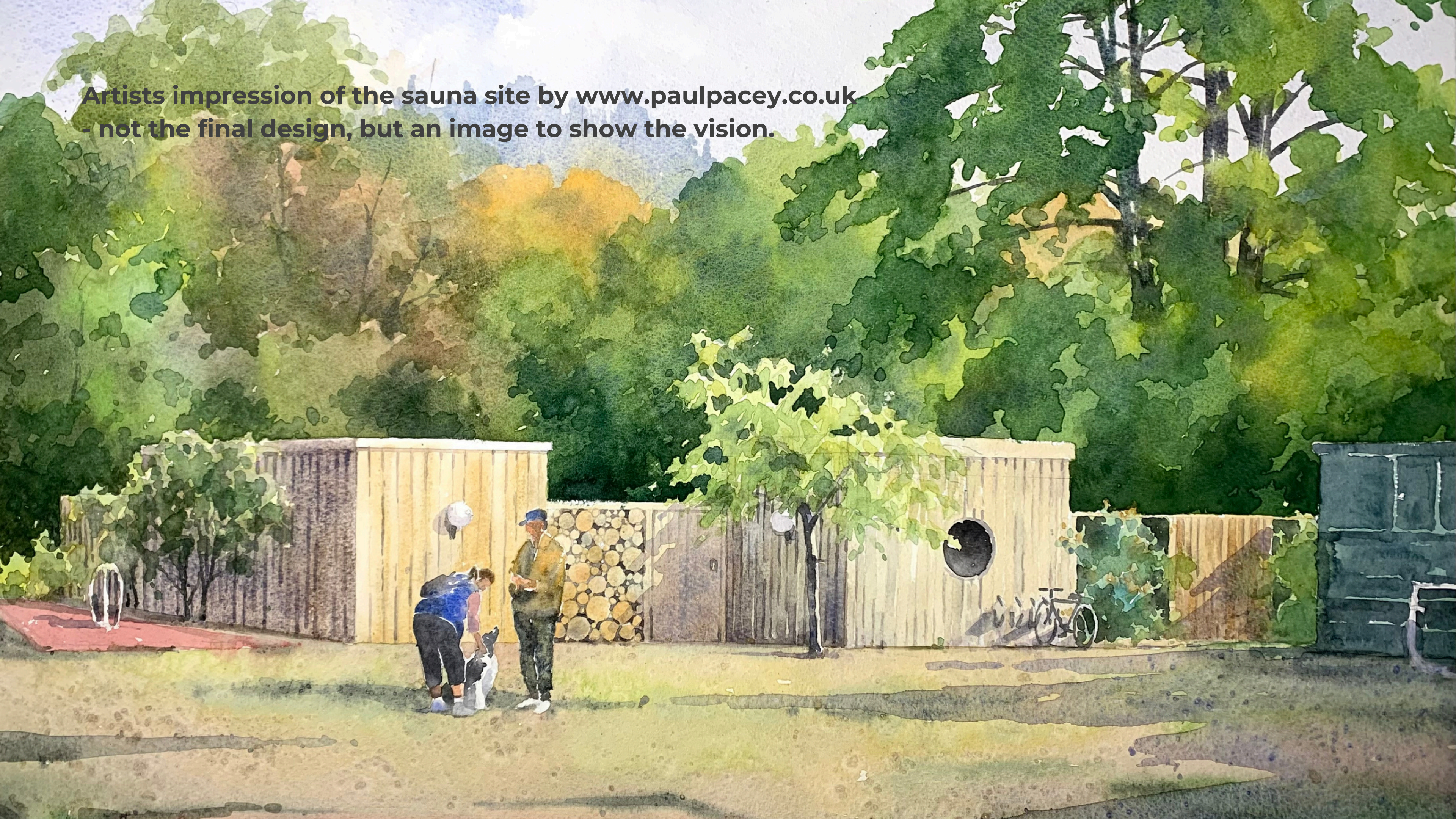
People can book a sauna seat at a time that works for them.



Our not-for-profit asset lock means funds can be used to work in partnership for example with GP link workers on social prescribing and with third sector groups to overcome barriers to sauna bathing for those who might benefit from a seat on the sauna bench.

We will share the history and current practices of sauna bathing and contribute to the growing UK sauna culture. Encouraging the public with safe and enjoyable sauna experiences, and inviting collaborations on creative ways of using the sauna space.



Artists impression of the sauna site by www.paulpacey.co.uk
- not the final design, but an image to show the vision.



 *I grew up in Finland where sauna is a part of everyday life - it brings people together accross generations and offers a space to be silent, reflective, sing songs or have conversations. It is a moment to pause, listen to the body and lean into the comfort of the warm heat. Being able to create good löyly to heat you up and then roll in the snow, plunge into the cold lake or sit outside in the nature with steam rising above is the perfect combination after which you feel elated and totally relaxed. I am very excited about having an authentic sauna in Inverness!* 

- Fiina

BENEFITS OF REGULAR SAUNA BATHING

Community Sauna Baths, London asked why people chose to come to the community sauna:

- 91% improved mood
- 53.5% helped mental health
- 21% improved confidence
- 19.5% good for managing pain
- 52% slept better
- 19% helped fitness levels



Research is indicating that sauna is positive for physical health for example:

- Frequent sauna bathing is associated with a reduced risk of fatal cardiovascular disease, (Laukkanen et al 2018).
- Sauna induces a state of relaxation and reduces stress, leading to the release of endorphins, (Hussain and Cohen 2018)
- Sauna can alleviate muscle soreness and joint pain, (Crinnon 2011).
- Sauna can help open up airways and improve respiratory function, (Hussain and Cohen 2018).
- Regular sauna use may stimulate the production of white blood cells and enhance the immune system, (Crinnon 2011).

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

Community development is at the core of the CIC model. When in 2023 Community Sauna Baths (CSB) asked their customers why they chose to come to the sauna:

- 62% felt it was due to an increased sense of belonging
- 69.5% had made new friends through the community sauna
- 47.5% came because they believed it offered healthy socialization

Community Sauna Highland CIC has a vision to connect with the third sector and widen the community of sauna bathers in Highland offering support to overcome barriers to sauna bathing. CSB has set a strong precedent for this offering free socially prescribed sessions through GP practices, reduced fee sauna in partnership with local community groups and sessions to NHS employees. CSB are the first to win the British Sauna Society award for Best Socially Prescribing Sauna.

We are also part of 'Sauna Our Souls' collective of national sauna operators and enthusiasts working with the goal of promoting socially prescribed sauna. On national social prescribing day, 14th March 2024, Sauna Our Souls led an initiative to broaden the reach of socially prescribed sauna.





Being able to access an outdoor sauna has totally changed my experience of Highland winters for the better! There's something magical about getting toasty warm, listening to the crackle of a woodburning stove and stepping into a technology-free zone on a cold January night that just can't help but lift your spirits. I would love having one in Inverness, because I could access it two or three times a week instead of once a month!



- Jane

SAUNA SPACE



The sauna space can be a place for silence, for sharing, for ritual, for health or for creative practices. Community Sauna Highland CIC invites expressions of interest for those wishing to host events in the sauna space when it is open.

Local practitioners connected to the wishes of the community will have the opportunity to grow their practice in partnership with Community Sauna Highland. In this way we can support a thriving local business ecology.

Across the UK practitioners in arts and wellbeing bring their skills and ideas to a sauna. For example, you might find sauna sessions combined with somatics, massage, yoga, aromatherapy, storytelling, singing, poetry, sound and multicultural sauna ritual like German Aufguss or Lithuanian Piritis.



SAUNA IN SCOTLAND

New Saunas seem to be opening every month in Scotland and the British Sauna Society continues to nourish the new UK Sauna culture. In 2024 the British Sauna Society held the first UK sauna industry awards and Scottish Saunas were present in five categories. We hope Community Sauna Highland will make the shortlist in 2025!

Best community sauna, runner up
Seabiscuit Sauna, Aberdeenshire



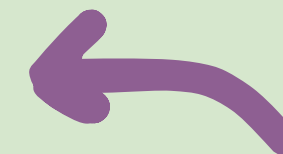
Best waterside sauna, runner up
Elie Seaside Sauna, Fife



Best socially prescribing sauna, runner up
Wild Scottish Sauna, St Andrews



Best urban sauna, runner up
Soul Water Sauna, Edinburgh



Best nature sauna, winner
Haar Sauna, Shetland

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about CSH and sauna culture, you can visit our website. On the website you can sign up to our email list or find our email address to email us directly if that works better for you. We will email with updates about the CSH and signpost to important events.

Instagram

Facebook

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info@communitysaunahighland.co.uk