



Winter Programme

2023- 2024

Winter Programme

Welcome

Welcome to our winter adult community programme. This year we are running single day outings, linked skills courses as well as exciting trips. We hope we have something for everyone whatever your aspirations and ability.

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Falkirk Council

Find us on  Falkirk Outdoors

Information and Bookings

Our office hours are;

Tuesday to Thursday 09:00 – 16:30 & Friday 09:00 – 12:30

Outdoor Activities Base - NEW PREMISES

Bothkennar Hub, Main Street, Skinflats, FK2 8NU

Tel: 01324 506846

Email: outdooractivities@falkirk.gov.uk

Web: www.falkirkleisureandculture.org/fit-and-active/outdoor-activities

For information and to book a course please telephone the Outdoor team using the above details.

Payment must be made by debit or credit card over the phone.
Full payment must be made before a course can be booked.
Details of prices can be found alongside our list of course dates.

Participants are strongly advised to take out travel insurance to cover the cost of our courses in the event of unforeseen circumstances preventing them attending any course which falls out-with our cancellation period.

Equipment

Our modern and comprehensive stores have a full range of equipment for all of our courses. The stores will be open on the morning of your course for you to borrow anything you need. All this is **included in the course fee**. Of course you are welcome to use any of your own equipment on our courses if agreed with the instructor on the day.

Transport and Venues

All our courses start and finish from our main office at our new premises at **Bothkennar Hub** and transport to and from there is included in the course fee. Vehicles can be left in our car park.

Start times are listed with the course dates and finish times will vary. Please ensure you plan on being out with us all day - if conditions are good we will make the most of them.

Venues are dependent on Mother Nature and will be decided on the day of activity.

■ Outdoors Winter Staff Team



John Jackson

John heads up the Community Programme and is the manager of the Outdoors team. He holds the Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor certificate, Mountain Ski Leader as well as a host of paddlesports qualifications. He has climbed and skied extensively in the European Alps as well as other mountain areas throughout the world.



Craig McLaren

Craig holds the Winter Mountain Leader award and he is responsible for planning the High Tops days and trips. He has been wandering the Scottish hills in all weathers for over 40 years.

This time in the mountains has allowed him to build up a very good knowledge-base of all things Scottish hill related.



Michael Hunt

Mike has an extensive skiing background. He holds the BASI 2 award and is a Mountain Ski Leader. He immerses himself in all aspects of skiing including telemarking. He is also a Mountain Bike Leader, Winter Mountain Leader and is responsible for coordinating the Outdoors team's delivery of activities for schools.





Martin Holland

Martin has been climbing for over 40 years. He holds the Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor certificate and is a very active all-round climber. His speciality is seeking out esoteric new winter routes, especially in the Southern Highlands.



Euan Whittaker

Euan is a British Mountain Guide. He has been instructing and guiding mountain activities for 27 years. These days, he splits his time between the European Alps, Norway and Scotland delivering courses in alpine mountaineering, rock and ice climbing, off piste skiing and ski touring.



■ Seasonal Highlights

- **Isle of Skye mountaineering or winter hillwalking trip**
- **Cairngorm mixed winter climbing trip**
- **Ski touring mountain expedition**
- **Snowholing expedition**
- **Winter camping expedition**
- **Beginners and intermediate winter climbing and ski touring**
- **Linked winter skills courses and weekends**





Winter Mountain Skills Courses

Introduction to Scottish winter skills, winter navigation and avalanche awareness, and winter ropework for hillwalkers.

With these three courses we hope to give you some of the building blocks that will enable you to enjoy journeying through Scotland's winter environment.

These skills days stand alone or can be linked to provide progression.

Intro to Scottish winter skills

Starts at 07:00 • Cost: £45

This is an essential day for anyone who wants to enjoy Scotland's mountains in winter conditions. This is a full day on the hill and will consist of looking at equipment for winter hill walking and skills such as 'using the boot as a tool', cramponing techniques, walking with an axe and self-arrest.

Previous summer hill walking experience is essential.

11/01/24

01/02/24

22/02/24

27/01/24

11/02/24

14/03/24

Linked Winter Skills Weekend for Hill Walkers

Starts at 07:00 • Cost: £90

Over two days, departing from Falkirk each day, this linked two day course will be looking at building walking confidence on the winter mountain environment. We might visit different venues each day, depending on conditions, but the emphasis will be on progressing personal walking skills as well as strategies for getting around the hill - including avalanche awareness and elements of navigation.

Previous summer hill walking experience is essential.

02/03/24 - 03/03/24



Winter Navigation & Avalanche Awareness

Starts at 07:00 • Cost: £45

Our winter navigation course is for hill walkers who have some experience of using a map and compass navigating in the mountain environment. This course will cover winter navigation tactics and will include an element of avalanche avoidance and safe-travel.

Previous winter hill walking experience or completion of a recent winter skills course is essential.

12/01/24

15/03/24

09/02/24

Winter Ropework for Hillwalkers

Starts at 07:00 • Cost: £45

In full winter conditions the Scottish hills can have serious consequences if you are unprepared. Sometimes, taking a rope for unplanned use will be prudent. As always though, kit is only as good as the person using it! This course will give a practical introduction for hill walkers using a rope on the hill in winter. Selection of appropriate snow anchors as well as belay and abseil techniques will be covered. Expect lots of digging!

Participants should be competent winter walkers with a basic awareness of snowpack analysis.

26/01/24

22/03/24

09/02/24

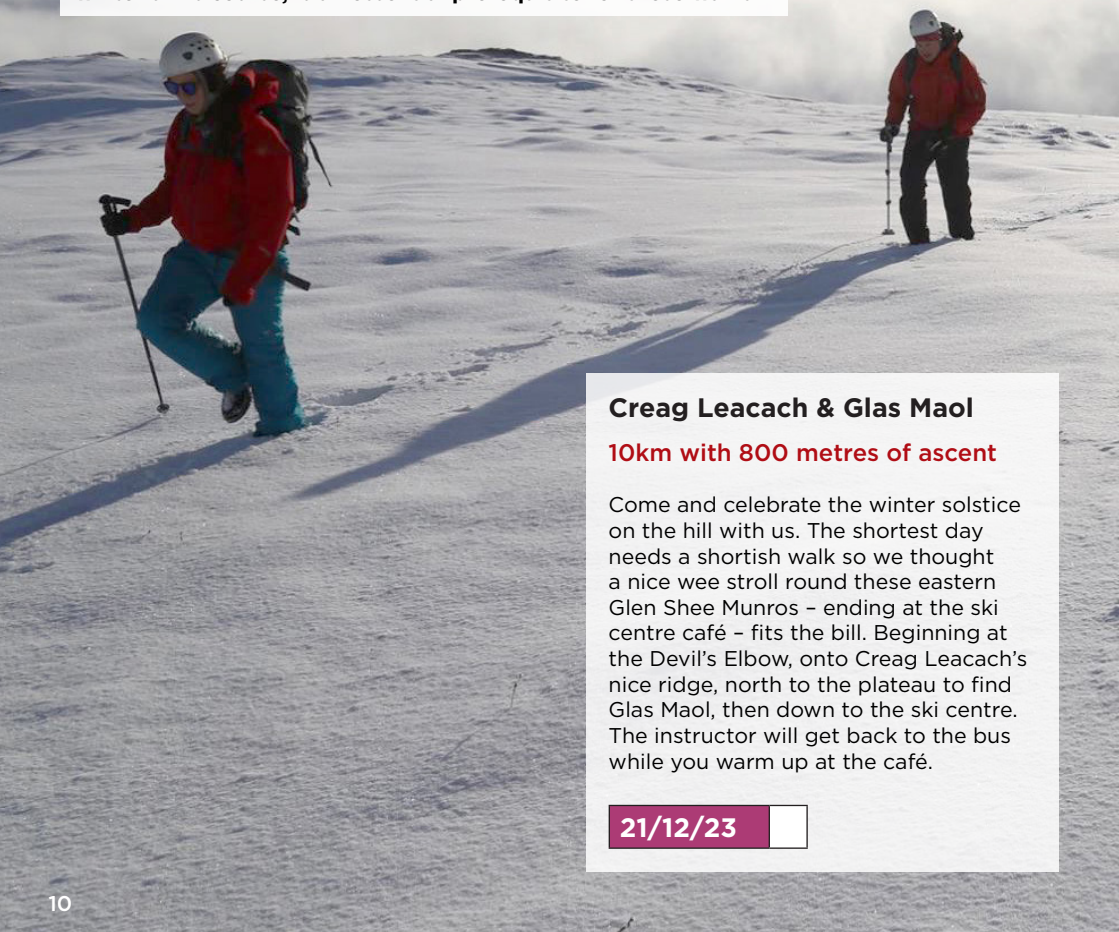
■ Winter High Tops

Starts at 07:00 • Cost £45

The days will involve a high top - either a Munro or one of our finer Corbetts - so you will need to have previous hill walking experience. Once the snow gets firm enough for winter tactics to come in to play folk need to have the skills to cope with conditions. Our Intro to Scottish winter skills course is recommended for anyone needing to learn the basics or improve rusty technique. NB - Winter hill walking is a lot more strenuous than in summer conditions so be prepared for more of a workout.

All winter High Tops are weather dependent. If there is a high avalanche risk on the slopes we're planning to go on to we will change the route or the hill. If storm winds are blowing we may have to take in a shorter, lower hill. Occasionally we might have to cancel the activity.

Previous winter walking experience, or completion of a recent winter skills course, is an essential prerequisite for these walks.



Creag Leacach & Glas Maol

10km with 800 metres of ascent

Come and celebrate the winter solstice on the hill with us. The shortest day needs a shortish walk so we thought a nice wee stroll round these eastern Glen Shee Munros - ending at the ski centre café - fits the bill. Beginning at the Devil's Elbow, onto Creag Leacach's nice ridge, north to the plateau to find Glas Maol, then down to the ski centre. The instructor will get back to the bus while you warm up at the café.

21/12/23



Beinn Donnich & The Brack

12km with 1100 metres of ascent

Arrochar is an area with a lot of hills packed into a small geographical space. Two fine Corbetts sit to the west of Glen Croe offering good walking on steep ground. A highish Start point by the Rest and be Thankful leads onto a good hill path over Donnich's schist and round its fissures. The way to The Brack is from Bealach Dubh-lic. It's a steeper and slightly higher hill with grand views over the area.

18/01/24

Meall nan Eagan & The Fara

14km with 800 metres of ascent

We did this walk previously as an alternative (due to snowbound roads on the hill we were after) and found it was such a fine excursion to be worthy of inclusion again here. Meall nan Eagan is a Graham, a nice wee hill in its own right which - included with the neighbouring Corbett, The Fara - makes a grand walk, especially if one takes in the geological wonder which is the Dirc Mhor, a truly enormous glacial cut in the landscape. This is an unusual way up The Fara which is way better than the usual route.

28/01/24

■ Winter High Tops

Creag Uchdag & Creagan na Beinne

19.5km with 1230 metres of ascent

The hills west of Perth lie in a large expanse of upland moor crisscrossed with good through routes on tracks. There are three Corbetts in the area, this walk tackles the two closest to Loch Tay. They are a fair distance apart and, being Corbetts, there is a significant drop between the two. Expect a variety of walking from very good to rough, with a fair bit of bog. The walk begins at Ardeonaig and finishes in nearby Ardtalnaig. The instructor will use a bike to go back for the van at the end.

08/02/24

Beinn Eunaich & Beinn a' Chochiull

13.4km with 1230 metres of ascent

A nice round of two big Munros, overshadowed by mighty Cruachan which is near by. These hills can catch the snow so hopefully they'll be in full nick when we get on them.

17/02/24

Creach Bheinn & Beinn Sguilard

17km with 1460 metres of ascent

Leap year bonus walk! This is a fine Corbett Munro combo in a nice wee corner of the country. It's quite a long walk with a fair bit of ascent but the views out west and over to Glen Coe make it worth it.

29/02/24



Beinn Maol Chaluim & Bidean nam Bian

11.7km with 1360 metres of ascent

The Glen Coe hills in winter are spectacular – offering proper mountaineering experiences. This esoteric walk takes in a hidden away Corbett on the way up to the highest peak in old Argyll. It begins at the old Coe visitor centre car park then heads cross-country up the Fionn Ghleann before a steep pull onto Beinn Maol Chaluim. From here a fine broad ridge connects onto the southwest shoulder of Bidean, then onto its summit. The descent is via Coire nam Beitheach. This will be a fairly testing day on the hill.

If the Glen Etive road is free of snow and ice we might begin in Glen Etive and come back over Stob Coire Sgreamhach – giving us a bonus Munro – which is actually a wee bit shorter but with a bit more height gain.

17/03/24

An Dun & A' Chaoirnich

BIKE ACCESS

18km with 230 metres of ascent Bike – 9km with 750 metres of ascent Walk

As the days get longer we like to try for bigger days in more remote areas. An Dun and its higher neighbour, A' Chaoirnich, are Corbetts best accessed through the Gaick Pass from Dalnacardoch on the A9. They are both fairly steep and could still hold snow at this time of year. Hopefully the track in will be snow-free.

28/03/24

High Tops and Winter Skills Trips

We can't get to all the areas we'd like to in a single day. These trips take care of that.

Winter Skills Weekend for Hill Walkers

Starts 06:00 • Costs £125

This overnight trip, based in Aviemore, will be focusing on covering the fundamental winter mountaineering skills over the two days. We will have quick access to the snow in the Northern Cairngorms and may take in a summit if we get the chance. If folk already have some winter walking skills, we can look at progressing to more advanced techniques.

Day 1 – Depart Falkirk, get straight on the hill, practice personal winter walking skills, go to Aviemore.

Day 2 – Depart Aviemore, get back on the hill, use our winter skills on a journey on the mountain, return to Falkirk.

Participants need to arrange their own accommodation for the night. The instructors will be staying in Aviemore Youth Hostel. There are other options in and around Aviemore. Transport and any equipment needed are included in the course fee. Participants with alternative travel / accommodation arrangements will need to meet the instructors in Aviemore or at Cairngorm Mountain car park before each day on the hill.

The course is open to anyone with summer hill walking experience.

20/01/24 – 21/01/24

Snowhole Trip

Starts at 07:00 • Cost £135

Snowholing – “sleeping” in relative comfort high in the winter mountains – is a great experience.

On this overnight course you will learn how to dig a communal snowcave, cook in it, and have a great night's kip metres from hostile elements. It takes effort and time but it's worth it. We'll send out a kit list nearer the course date.

This trip is suitable for any winter hillwalker up for a proper adventure.

19/02/24 – 20/02/24

Isle of Skye High Tops Trip

Starts 16:00 • Costs £235

We've not been up to Skye in winter for a while. In winter conditions it's the place to be - lots to go at on the hill! As is usual in winter we need to be flexible, but the itinerary below would be the ideal programme.

Day 1 - Meet at the Outdoor Base and drive north to Skye Basecamp in Broadford. We will stop at Fort William on the way up.

Day 2 - Sgurr nan Eag 13km with 980 metres of ascent. This most southerly of the Black Cuillin Munros is a real adventure - fairly remote by Skye standards with some route finding even before we get on the ridge.

Day 3 - Garbh Bheinn & Belig 9.5km with 1100 metres of ascent. A Corbett Graham combo away from the main ridge but with the same stunning Skye gabbro scenery.

Day 4 - Sgurr na Banachdich 7.5km with 940 metres of ascent. An easier third hill day up to a Munro on the main Cuillin ridge. Returning to Falkirk after. We'll be based at the excellent Skye Basecamp hostel, set up by climbers and offering great facilities. Accommodation is in mixed dorms. This trip includes the cost of the hostel in the course fee.

Previous winter walking experience, or completion of a recent winter skills course, is an essential prerequisite for this trip.

05/03/24 - 08/03/24

High Tops Winter Camping Expedition

Starts 06:00 • Cost £135

In the Cairngorms some of the summits are so far from the road that they're not a practical option to get to on foot in a single day in winter. Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuidr are two such remote Munros.

This overnight camping expedition is a great way to experience these hills.

Day 1 - Starting the walk at Invercauld near Braemar, an estate road leads to tracks then a path to upper Glen Quoich between both hills. The camp area will be near the Quoich Water at around 650m altitude. 11.8km with 380 metres of ascent carrying the exped rucksacks. Once camp is set up the walk to Ben Avon will go up its south west shoulder onto the plateau area, The actual summit - Leabaidh an Daimh Bhuide - involves a short scramble up a tor. 9.4km with 590 metres of ascent. Descent will be down by the Glas Allt Mor.

Day 2 - After a grand night's kip a circuit of Beinn a' Bhuidr is the next objective. The route goes up by the Allt Dearg onto the North Top - the Munro Summit - followed by a stroll round the crest of the magnificent coires to descend past the South Top back to the tents. 9.4km with 620 metres of ascent. Once the camping gear is packed up, we return by the outward route back to the modern world.

Camping in winter can feel like hard work but, by staying relatively low on the hill, this outing should feel a bit more like a normal wild camp - albeit carrying the usual winter equipment on top of camping gear. We will send out a kit list to participants. We have a good stock of suitable equipment if it is required.

A good level of winter hill walking fitness is required for this expedition.

25/03/24 - 26/03/24

■ Winter Mountaineering

Starts at 07:00 • Cost £75

Our mountaineering days will take you along a classic ridge or up a graded gully. The days will normally involve the use of just a walking axe (not technical climbing axes); however, the variable nature of the Scottish winter conditions can make a grade I plod highly exciting on the day.

A good level of competence in winter hill walking is required for these days.

Sron na Lairig - (Grade II)

GLEN COE

Our first mountaineering outing of the season will go in most conditions. In winter it can offer good sport on mixed ground and turf, following the main spine of the ridge up. If early season conditions don't materialise, it's still a good scramble.

18/12/23

Curved Ridge – Buachaille Etive Mor (Grade II / III)

GLEN ETIVE

We offer a magnificent route up a superlative mountain with this classic winter climb which has a bit of everything: route finding, steep ground and some of the best views over to Rannoch Moor. We finish up on top of the mighty Buachaille Etive Mor.

15/01/24

Chockstone Gully & Great Gully link Up (Grade II)

ARROCHAR

This is the best mountaineering route up to the summit of The Cobbler's North Summit. Chockstone Gully is steady with the amazing jammed chockstone providing great sport at the end. A short walk leads to Great Gully which has an awkward step to gain the main gully feature. Topping out on the summit is the icing on the cake. If the gullies aren't an option we'll do the South East Ridge (Grade 2/3 or III) instead.


05/02/24

The Gullies of Coire Fee (Grade I / III)

GLEN CLOVA

South Wall in Coire Fee offers a range of low grade climbs. In ideal conditions we could spend a fine day here going up the II's and back down the I's. If conditions mean we need another aspect then Winter Coire, Coire Farchal and Corrie of Clova all give good nearby options.

26/02/24



Aonach Eagach Ridge (Grade II/III)

GLEN COE

This outing is popular enough for us to run it at least once a year. It's billed by some as the hardest scramble on the mainland but the moves are pretty straight forward if you are on a rope. Taking in two Munros, we start at the higher eastern end and then scramble towards the western seaboard.

18/03/24

Winter Climbing

We don't advertise winter climbing route or venues in advance so we can go where conditions are best on the day

Intro to winter climbing

Starts at 07:00 • Cost £75

This course is for those who have experience of using winter walking equipment (crampons and ice axe) but have not yet experienced the thrill of Scottish winter climbing. This course will look at being organised for winter climbing, the use of two ice axes and the removal of winter anchors. It is the perfect stepping-stone towards our winter climbing courses.

**Previous winter walking/
mountaineering experience
is essential.**

10/01/24

24/02/24

09/02/24

13/03/24

21/02/24

23/03/24





Winter Climbing

Starts at 07:00 • Cost £75

For those of you who wish to get onto steeper ground with technical tools our winter climbing days should tick all the right boxes. As usual we do not pre-plan specific routes so we have the flexibility to find the best winter conditions. This is a chance to be guided up one of Scotland's classic climbs, either on west coast ice or Cairngorm mixed ground.

Previous winter climbing experience is essential.

06/12/23	<input type="checkbox"/>	25/02/24	<input type="checkbox"/>
20/12/23	<input type="checkbox"/>	28/02/24	<input type="checkbox"/>
17/01/24	<input type="checkbox"/>	24/03/24	<input type="checkbox"/>
07/02/24	<input type="checkbox"/>	27/03/24	<input type="checkbox"/>

Climbing and Mountaineering Trips

We can't get to all the areas we'd like to in a single day. These trips take care of that. NB Some hostel accommodation will need to be booked by the participant. Please see details for each trip.

Northern Cairngorm Mixed Winter Climbing Trip

Starts at 06:00 • Cost £295

We plan to head into the Northern Cairngorms area and climb some of the classic mixed winter lines that the area is justly famed for. In the past we've got on The Haston Line (III), Hidden Chimney (III), Aladin's Mirror Direct (IV 4) to name a few of the classics in the area.

The instructor team will be staying in Aviemore youth hostel.

Participants need to arrange their own accommodation for the trip.

There are other options in and around Aviemore. Transport and any equipment needed are included in the course fee. Participants with alternative travel / accommodation arrangements will need to meet the instructors in Aviemore or at Cairngorm Mountain car park before each day on the hill.

Previous experience seconding routes at Scottish winter climbing grade III or above and a good level of hill fitness is essential.

22/01/2024 - 24/01/24

Isle of Skye Mountaineering / Winter Climbing Trip

Starts 16:00 • Cost £325

We love going to Skye in winter. When the Cuillin Hills are in winter condition there is simply nowhere else comparable in Scotland. We will be based at the excellent Skye Base Camp Hostel in Broadford, run by climbers so it caters for all our needs. The hostel has mixed dorms and accommodation is included in the course fee.

All of the Cuillin summits involve mountaineering to some degree. We plan to go where conditions are best. We could be on a winter traverse of Pinnacle Ridge, The Inn Pin, Clach Glas – the possibilities are endless. If conditions are better on the nearby mainland we might head over there to catch the snow.

Previous experience seconding Scottish winter climbing routes is essential.

05/03/24 - 08/03/24



****All our days are guided by a British Mountain Guide or Mountain ski Instructor****

All ski equipment (skis, boots, poles etc.) and safety equipment is available for clients and is included in the course fee, however you are welcome to bring your own.

Intro to Ski Touring

Starts at 07:00 • Cost £70

The course is aimed at those who have on-piste experience but wish to move into the backcountry! The day will have an emphasis on skill acquisition, and this will be delivered whilst in the context of a simple ski tour. Typical venues for these days include Geal Charn in the Drummochter Pass or the Lawers range above Loch Tay. During the day topics covered will include equipment familiarisation and use, ascending techniques (including the use of skins, heel risers and ski crampons), efficient travel, safe travel, and basic avalanche search and rescue techniques using transceiver, shovel and probe.

This course provides excellent preparation for our guided ski touring days. Ski ability – confident descending red runs on pisted slopes.

09/01/24

24/02/24

30/01/24

05/03/24

03/02/24

23/03/24

20/02/24

Guided Ski Touring

Starts at 07:00 • Cost £70

A day out in the mountains ski touring. There will be elements of teaching if required, however the focus will be on getting out and enjoying the hills. Previous trips have involved completing summits such as A'Bhuidheanach Bheag in the Drummochter Pass, Glas Maol in Glenshee and a traverse of Meall a'Choire Leith and Meall Corranaich in the Lawers region.

Ski ability – confident on red runs and experience of ski touring summits in Scotland or the Alps. A reasonable level of fitness is also required.

16/01/24

27/02/24

04/02/24

19/03/24

06/02/24

24/03/24

25/02/24



Ski Touring Trips

We can't get to all the areas we'd like to in a single day. These trips take care of that. NB Some hostel accommodation will need to be booked by the participant. Please see details for each trip.

Winter Skills Weekend for Ski Tourers

Start 06:00 • Costs £175

This two-day linked course will be based in the Northern Cairngorms. We will look at getting around the hill safely on skis. Elements of safe travel and navigation on skis along with transceiver and rescue work will be looked at. There will also be plenty of ski touring in between with a bit of ski coaching for those who are looking for it.

Participants need to arrange their own accommodation for the night.

The instructors will be staying in Aviemore Youth Hostel. There are also other options in and around Aviemore. Transport and any equipment needed are included in the course fee.

Participants with alternative travel / accommodation arrangements will need to meet the instructors in Aviemore or at Cairngorm Mountain car park before each day on the hill. The weekend has no steep touring planned so is open to anyone with previous skiing experience.

20/01/24 - 21/01/24

Ski Touring Overnight Expedition

Starts 07:00 • Costs £185

This is a chance to sleep out in the mountains after traversing lots of skiable terrain. If conditions allow, we'll sleep high under the stars, but we could also end up in the vicinity of a friendly bothy. We will be carrying touring kit as well as expedition gear, so a good level of fitness is desirable if you want to enjoy this cracking overnight trip. Ability - confident skiing red runs, experience of ski touring summits in Scotland or the Alps.

11/03/24 - 12/03/24



Community Winter Programme - At a Glance

High Tops | Mountaineering | Winter Climbing | Winter Skills | Skiing | Trips

	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024
1		Office closed	Winter Skills	
2		Office closed		Linked Winter Skills
3			Intro Ski Touring	Linked Winter Skills
4			Guided Ski Touring	
5			Winter Mountaineering	Intro Ski Touring North West High Tops Trip North West Climbing Trip
6	Winter Climbing		Guided Ski Touring	North West High Tops Trip North West Climbing Trip
7			Winter Climbing	North West High Tops Trip North West Climbing Trip
8			Winter High Tops	North West High Tops Trip North West Climbing Trip
9		Intro Ski Touring	Navigation / Avalanche Intro Climbing	
10		Intro Climbing		
11		Winter Skills	Winter Skills	Ski Touring Expedition
12		Navigation / Avalanche		Ski Touring Expedition
13				Intro Climbing
14				Winter Skills
15		Winter Mountaineering		Navigation / Avalanche

	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024
16		Guided Ski Touring		
17		Winter Climbing	Winter High Tops	Winter High Tops
18	Winter Mountaineering	Winter High Tops		Winter Mountaineering
19			Snowhole Trip	Guided Ski Touring
20	Winter Climbing	Winter Skills Walkers Trip Winter Skills Skiers Trip	Snowhole Trip Intro Ski Touring	
21	Winter High Tops	Winter Skills Walkers Trip Winter Skills Skiers Trip	Intro Climbing	
22	Office closed	Cairngorm Climbing Trip	Winter Skills	Winter Ropework
23	Office closed	Cairngorm Climbing Trip	Winter Ropework	Intro Climbing Intro Ski Touring
24	Office closed	Cairngorm Climbing Trip	Intro Climbing Intro Ski Touring	Winter Climbing Guided Ski Touring
25	Office closed		Winter Climbing Guided Ski Touring	High Tops Camping Trip
26	Office closed	Winter Ropework	Winter Mountaineering	High Tops Camping Trip
27	Office closed	Winter Skills	Guided Ski Touring	Winter Climbing
28	Office closed	Winter High Tops	Winter Climbing	Winter High Tops
29	Office closed		Winter High Tops	
30	Office closed	Intro Ski Touring		
31	Office closed			



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