

# Sauna Kallio

## Community Through Sauna



The need for strong community support networks has never been greater. Across Britain, people are more digitally connected than ever, yet loneliness, stress, and mental health challenges continue to rise. The Downs exists to serve the wellbeing of Bristol, and we have a unique opportunity to strengthen that mission now.

In Finland, sauna is more than heat; it is a shared ritual woven into daily life, where people slow down, share space, and meet as equals. No status. No pretences. Just you. We believe Bristol can adapt this tradition for our own culture, creating something that is authentic, sustainable, and deeply embedded in community life, delivering the same societal, health and cultural benefits sauna has brought to Finland for generations.

What is that feeling of true sauna? We're determined to help you find out.

## Vision

We will lead the growth of authentic sauna culture in the UK, adapting the tradition for our own context while protecting its core values of connection, equality, and restoration. We will ensure it becomes a sustainable, lasting part of British life, delivering the same social, cultural, and wellbeing benefits it has brought to Finland for generations.

## Mission

We will build Bristol's first permanent public Finnish sauna on the Downs - a year-round community space where people connect with themselves, each other, and nature.

This flagship project will:

- Set a benchmark for authentic, culturally rooted saunas in Bristol and the wider UK.
- Offer an inclusive alternative to the pub culture that often dominates British social life.
- Celebrate and support the Downs in every season.

From here, we will grow a network of community saunas nationwide, each adapted to its local community but united by the same core values.

## Our Broader Approach

Once the project is live, we will launch a dedicated Community Interest Company (**CIC**) to act as a steward for the UK sauna movement. The CIC will:

- Partner with emerging and existing sauna projects to share knowledge, uphold authentic standards, and support local adaptation.
- Secure funding to provide subsidised access for those who would otherwise be excluded.
- Protect the cultural, environmental, and social values that make sauna a transformative practice.

# Alignment With the Downs Committee Principles

## **Principle 1 – Space for recreation**

The sauna will be a year-round public facility open to all through affordable pricing and funded access schemes. It will support health, wellbeing, and social interaction for thousands of visitors annually, creating a new form of recreation that complements existing uses of the Downs.

## **Principle 2 – Space for nature conservation**

By repurposing the existing Sea Walls toilet block, the project avoids new encroachment on green space. The design will be low-impact, using sustainable materials and will enhance visitors' connection with nature through year-round engagement with the Downs.

## **Principle 3 – Funding**

The sauna will generate a dependable revenue stream, with a portion ring-fenced for the maintenance and stewardship of the Downs, directly supporting the Committee's aim of reducing reliance on public funds.

## **Principle 4 – Events**

In addition to daily use, the sauna will host small-scale, culturally diverse events such as wellbeing artistic workshops in partnership with local groups. These will be planned to ensure the significant majority of the Downs remains accessible at all times.

## **Principle 5 – Buildings and infrastructure**

The project focuses on renovating and repurposing an existing, underused structure, in line with the Committee's preference for upgrading existing assets rather than new large-scale development.

## **Principle 6 – Openness and involvement**

We are committed to ongoing dialogue with the Downs Committee, local residents, and community organisations. We will operate with transparency on access, pricing, environmental performance, and contributions to Downs maintenance. Additionally, we will work with locals to bring their ideas for what to do with the space alive.

## Why This Matters

This is not just a business idea. It is a vision to support a community of Bristolians navigating the pressures of modern life, and to lay the foundations for a nationwide movement. Through careful stewardship, cultural respect, and commitment to inclusivity, we will help sauna culture take root in Britain and keep it thriving for generations to come.

**We look forward to working with the local community, Downs Committee and city council to make this happen!**