

UNIQUE MOSFELLSBÆR

The New MCPB ehf.
Destination



MOSFELLSBÆR



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UNIQUE MOSFELLSBÆR

The town of Mosfellsbær is only a 50-minute drive from Leifur Eiriksson International Airport at Keflavik and a 15-minute drive from midtown Reykjavík.

Mosfellsbær district is a community of 9,500 inhabitants in the outskirts of the greater capital region and has a total area of 220 square kilometres. The region has developed fast in recent years, as an increasing number of people seek life in a community like Mosfellsbær, which offers an urban life in a rural setting.

Town planning is adapted to the varied and beautiful nature within its limits where vast natural areas are available, offering unique recreational possibilities sheltered by hills and heaths, and by the lakes and coastlines.

Mosfellsbær boasts a considerable uniqueness as far as variety is concerned. The community consists of an urban area by Leirvogur cove, where essential services are provided, as well as a vast rural territory such as Mosfellsdalur valley.

The inhabitants of Mosfellsbær appreciate their surroundings and are generally fond of outdoor activities. Horsemanship is a prominent part of everyday life, as horse riding paths stretch into all directions.

Excellent marked walking paths are available from the shore to the mountains, and sports facilities in Mosfellsbær are not rivalled by many towns.

Two golf courses are located in Mosfellsbær, and facilities for bird watching are also available in Leirvogur and by the river mouths of Varmá and Kaldakvísl.

Many pearls of nature and historical sites are to be found in the Mosfellsbær district, such as waterfalls Tröllafoss and Helgufoss, river Varmá, the church Mosfellskirkja and the archaeological excavation site by Hrísbú in valley Mosfellsdalur.

The occupational history of the area is also unique in many ways, with its long-standing tradition of a comprehensive woollens industry and poultry farming.

Culture has also occupied a place in the history of Mosfellsbær for a long period of time, as the writer and Nobel Prize Laureate Halldór Kiljan Laxness used to be a habitual resident of Gljúfrasteinn in valley Mosfellsdalur. Other examples are cultural objects in Álafossvos and varied cultural activities.



HEALTHY MOSFELLSBÆR

Mosfellsbær's core business is Health Care and Rehabilitation. Furthermore, Mosfellsbær plans to reassert itself as Icelandic Center of Health and Rehabilitation and has placed the development of Health Care as its top priority.

Mosfellsbær's Mission Statements for the Health Care sector are as follows:

- Mosfellsbær's mission is to establish and maintain the role of the society to be the leading town of Health Care and Rehabilitation in Iceland, founded on the success story of Reykjalundur and the towns excellent facilities.
- Mosfellsbær want's to double the number of jobs within the Health Care sector, in the community over the next five years.

Reykjalundur

Reykjalundur, the main rehabilitation center of Iceland for decades, is located in Mosfellsbær. Each year over 3,000 patients are treated there; some are admitted on a residential basis, while others attend a day programme or as outpatients.

It has over 200 employees; doctors, nurses and other skilled Health Care professionals. In additions to Reykjalundur, there are over 30 other businesses in Health Care, sports and athletics in Mosfellsbær resulting in another 200 skilled employees in the sector.

Reykjalundur is a centre for all- round rehabilitation, with the aim of improving the quality of life, skills and independence of those who seek help there. The emphasis is upon providing treatment in accord with each patient's needs, both individually and in group sessions.

Rehabilitation at Reykjalundur in Mosfellsbær comprises nine main fields: heart, lung, psychiatric, arthritis, pain, habilitation, neurology, nutrition and occupational

rehabilitation. Within each field staff form teams, which include members of all the health professions working at Reykjalundur. The role of the team is, among other things, to make decisions on treatment in consultation with the patient, and to supervise the effectiveness of rehabilitation. Reykjalundur has a radiology department, a blood pathology laboratory, and a research laboratory specialising in the physiology of heart and lungs/cardiac and pulmonary physiology.

Specialists and other staff at Reykjalundur play an active role in teaching health professionals, and in research and scientific work with their fields. Reykjalundur's scientific policy is that the centre be active in research on rehabilitation, by supporting research-based scholarly work and promoting ties with Iceland's universities and teaching hospitals.

Rehabilitation and Online Learning

Framhaldsskólinn í Mosfellsbæ (FMOS) is an upper secondary school which was founded in Mosfellsbær in 2009. The main focus points in the school's policy are two: resources and environment in the broadest sense of the words. The school will focus on the natural recourses as well as human resources, with special emphasis on public health and culture. The environment-focus centres on making the school's environment a prominent feature of the school life where we look especially to the natural features of the environment, respect for the environment and how we can both take pleasure in the environment and utilise it in a sensible way.

FMOS and Reykjalundur have signed an agreement on developing an effective program for patients with continuous pains where methods used in outpatients departments are blended with methods used in distributed learning. The program is organised for 12 weeks with 2-3 residential modules (1-2 days) in Reykjalundur and the rest of the time patients are at home, but in constant communication with the administrators of the program in Reykjalundur



through an online learning management system. The role of the school in this project is to provide an access to the learning management system and train both the teachers (the doctors, nurses, etc.) and patients in using this method of learning and treatment.

GREEN CONSCIOUSNESS, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY AND ETHICAL LIVING

Mosfellsbær recently published its policy for a sustainable community 2020 which link to the policy-making objectives of Mosfellsbær from 2008.

The policy objectives of Mosfellsbær for a sustainable community until 2020 are directly linked to the policies made by the town in 2008. The process in 2008 involved employees of Mosfellsbær, elected delegates and the inhabitants of the municipality, and their work was presented in a policy-making report, which contains the following vision for the future:

“Mosfellsbær is a popular town and residential area where families are put first. Mosfellsbær is a dynamic community, responsible towards nature and the environment, where efficiency and communal responsibility are constant criteria. The administration and services of Mosfellsbær are effective, responsible, of high quality and among the best in Iceland. Mosfellsbær is a desirable workplace for competent individuals, where emphasis is put on a personal and modern service.”

During the policy making process, values were defined for Mosfellsbær which are meant to act as a guiding light in all the activities of the municipality. Mosfellsbær’s values were defined as: Positivity, Respect, Concern and Progressiveness.

The role of Mosfellsbær as a municipal community was defined in the following way:

“Mosfellsbær is a progressive community which cultivates willingness and respect.”

Sustainable-Community-Policy

The policy-making activity is, in fact, the cornerstone of the policy of Mosfellsbær for sustainable development presented recently; the two policies are joined by unbreakable bonds and support each other while a sustainable community is created, which takes the welfare of the inhabitants into account.

The policy objectives for a sustainable community in Mosfellsbær until 2020 emphasise that the community will:

- Lead the way in sustainability among Icelandic municipalities.
- Increase public accessibility to the decision-making process in the community to strengthen democratic principles.
- Increase transparency in the administration and the flow of information to the inhabitants.
- Promote a varied existence that is at peace with nature.
- Promote and support increased environmental awareness among the inhabitants.



Mosfellsbær's vision of a sustainable community in 2020 is as follows:

“Mosfellsbær wants to be in the forefront of sustainable development in comparison with other municipalities, as well as being a dynamic, environmentally friendly and modern community which offers diversification.

Geothermal water

Mosfellsbær has long since started directing its course towards green consciousness and ethical living although the aim for 2020 is to meliorate.

Ample geothermal water resources have enabled Mosfellsbær to develop extensive market gardening and the town has become particularly well known for its flowers. Reykir had been a large farm for centuries, and in 1922-3 Iceland's first geothermally heated greenhouse was built here. The story goes that the local clergyman warned against pumping up hot water from the depths of the Earth, since no one could be sure where it really came from! In fact there is such a “devilish” amount of hot water under the ground in Mosfellsbær that springs and boreholes at Reykir and in Mosfellsdalur were the main source of heating for Reykjavík from the time a concrete-cased pipe was laid to carry water to the capital in 1943, until Nesjavellir geothermal power station was opened in 1990.

Greenhouse cultivation tradition

The greenhouse cultivation tradition in Mosfellsbær still to this day provides Mosfellsbær with its unique characteristics especially eminent in the outdoor farmers' market held in Mosfellsdalur every Saturday from the end of July to the beginning of September. A wide range of locally grown foods are on sale at the market, in particular organically grown vegetables as well as local flowers, and brook trout and trout from Lake

Pingvallavatn. There's a great village feel to these community gatherings, with home-made food on sale, jam-making contests and the like and a visit to the market has become a popular pastime for locals as well as visitors.

Organized forestry

Locals are generally interested in all things green. Organised forestry started in Mosfellsbær in 1955. Since then, million plants have been planted in Mosfellsbær and its surroundings as a part of a national attempt of reclaiming the forests that were destroyed by the settlers. In addition to reclaiming the forests, the aim of the organized forestry is obviously emission reduction, although Iceland's carbon footprint is the second lowest in Europe due to its ample sources of renewable energy.

MOSFELLSBÆR'S NATURAL HEALING ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the green consciousness so apparent in Mosfellsbær, the natural healing environment is all-embracing. Mosfellsbær's recent heritage is closely knitted with wool. Literally. The Álafoss factory in Alafosskvos in Mosfellsbær is where Iceland's woollens industry was launched in 1896. Alafoss was for decades the leading manufacturer and exporter of Icelandic woollens. The name, Álafoss, is derived from the warm waterfall, behind the factory, that drove its mills. The Icelandic wool is the reasons Icelanders still exist. Without it, it would have been impossible to fight off the terrible cold in the darkest winters in rural Iceland. Icelanders still embrace the Icelandic wool and in recent years the wool has reclaimed its place as Icelanders' first choice of fabric when choosing warm clothing.

Furthermore, Icelandic sheep is a unique breed. For over a thousand years, total isolation and absence of contact with other breeds have protected the purity of the strain.



Icelandic fleeces are among the rarest in the world, grown only in the high mountains. The rugged sheep brought over by the Vikings in the year 874 A.D. have maintained the same gene pool, making them truly one of the purest breeds in the western world.

Healing herbs

Icelanders live in such close relationship with nature that despite modern medicine they still believe strongly in the healing qualities of wild, Icelandic herbs. In recent years, demand for Icelandic healing herbs as well as knowledge and information on the herbs has grown rapidly as locals seek natural cures for common ailments. In the area of Mosfellsbær tens of well known Icelandic healing herbs grow wildly. A few of the most common are: Vallhumall (*Achillea millefolium*) is very healing for eczema and allergy skin problems; Ætíhvönn (*Angelica archangelica*) removes tension, increases blood flow and has warming and alterative effect; Blágresi (*Geranium sylvaticum*) reduces swelling, is healing and effective on arthritis, bruise, eczema and persistent wounds; Mjaðurt (*Spiraea ulmaria*) is natural aspirin, good on swellings and arthritis, reduces development of acid.

Healing water

Herbs are not the only natural resource in Mosfellsbær that have healing powers. One of many interesting spots hidden away in the foothills of Mosfellsdalur is Guddulaug, a freshwater spring which is claimed to have healing properties. In his memoirs, Laxness wrote: "My father believed in this spring. I believed in this spring too. When my father was seriously ill with pneumonia the first time, I was sent to fetch water for him from this spring, twice a day, and he got better. When he contracted pneumonia again, eight years later, I was in the city having *Child of Nature* [debut novel] printed, there was no one to fetch water for him from the spring, and he died."

Healing runes

The Viking runes are also said to have magical powers. Mosfellsbær is at the heart of one of the largest Viking

settlements in Iceland. An American-led team of interdisciplinary scientists under the direction of Jesse Byock, archeology professor at the University of California in Los Angeles, started excavations at Hrísrú in Mosfellsdalur from 1995. The purpose of the dig is to map the settlement in Mosfellsdalur as it was in the time of the Vikings and understand how people lived, their habitation, power relationships, religious and mortuary practices.

Although it was not the aim of the excavation to find the burial site of Egill Skalla-Grímsson a grave was found under the altar of a church from the settlement period. The findings fit nicely to the descriptions of Egill's saga where he is said to have been buried underneath a church that his foster daughter Þórdís had built, but his bones were subsequently moved to a site at Mosfell. No bones were found at the burial site but the grave found under the church is over two meters long, and Egill is described as having been a tall and powerfully built man.

In Egill's Saga, Egill writes a poem describing the magical powers of runes as Egill is possibly Iceland's most famous rune magician. Rune Magic is said to have been exercised in Iceland all until 17th Century despite the church's attempts to destroy and eliminate Viking paganism. Today, runes are still believed to have healing energies.



MOSFELLSBÆR'S UNIQUE NATURE

The district includes an area stretching to the Leiruvogur cove, which forms part of Kollafjörður fjord. Three rivers empty into the cove: Leirvogsa, Kaldakvisl and Varmá. The natural landscape of Mosfellsbær is rugged, and 80% of the district lies more than 100 metres above sea level. Hills such as Mosfell, Grímannsfell, Helgafell and Úlfarsfell, all 200-300 metres high, dominate the landscape; their slopes are grassy with screes. Two valleys lie between the hills, Mosfellsdalur and Reykjadalur. Most of the district's population lives in the latter valley.

Pingvellir's nature

No single place epitomizes the history of Iceland and the Icelandic nation better than Pingvellir by the river Öxará, only a 20 minute drive from Mosfellsbær.

In the last few decades, research has made it clear that Pingvellir is a natural wonder on an international scale, with the geologic history and the biosystem of Lake Pingvallavatn forming a unique entity, a magnificent showcase. Being able to witness the evolution and formation of new species in a place like Lake Pingvallavatn is of immense value. The Pingvellir area is part of a fissure zone running through Iceland, being situated on the tectonic plate boundaries of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. The faults and fissures of the area make evident the rifting of the earth's crust.

Making most of nature

Mosfellsbær boasts of a variety of walking, hiking and cycling routes within close proximity of the town. Numerous trails make the journey easy and interesting.

There are also a great number of walking routes where you are surrounded by nature.

The routes are of varying difficulty. You can stroll comfortably along the seafront, walk along the rivers Varma or Kaldakvisl or take a more challenging hike up

one of the many hills and mountains around Mosfellsbær. The most challenging hike is Mt Esja, (914 m/2,999 ft) which provides a beautiful view across the Reykjavík Capital Area, Reykjanes peninsula, and Snæfellsjökull glacier and beyond. A little less demanding is a hike to the top of Lagafellsklif, which provides an excellent view over the surrounding area.

Further recreational opportunities

It is sometimes said that you've never seen Iceland properly until you've seen it from horseback. Mosfellsbær's strong horse-riding tradition provides excellent opportunities to rent a horse and ride into the nature. Hardy but sure-footed and obedient, the Icelandic horse is a particularly suitable way to explore the land as you've never done before, come summer or winter.

Swimming is another all-year-around sport in Iceland as the ample geothermal water bubbling in the ground under Mosfellsbær makes swimming in a warm pool and relaxing in a hot jacuzzi – outdoors on a cold winter's day – enjoyable.

Skiing is a little colder pastime in Mosfellsbær with Skalafell skiing area in 10 minutes driving distance towards Thingvellir. A more summery sport though, is fishing in Lake Hafravatn in the outskirts of Mosfellsbær in beautiful surroundings.

The same goes for golfing although Iceland represents a particular challenge for golfers, with its changeable weather and rugged terrain. Other features such as "breathtakingly" fresh air and virtually round-the-clock daylight in summer combine to make the golfing experience in Iceland second to none. With its spacious natural setting, Mosfellsbær is an ideal place for golfers to practice their sport as it offers two golf courses, one by the seafront and the other in Mosfellsdalur valley.



On Mosfellsbær's 20th anniversary in 2007 the local government gave the inhabitants of Mosfellsbær an adventure park as a present. The park is situated between Varmá and Kaldakvísl and will in the near future be a recreational park for the whole family to be used the whole year around. The emphasis is on the nature and green consciousness in according to Mosfellsbær's policy and mission statement.

Mosfellsbær provides excellent bird watching locations in Leiruvogur Cove. Leiruvogur is a shallow fjord with large mudflats and rich and varied shores with rich birdlife all year round, but numbers are at their greatest during migration periods in spring, late summer and autumn. Some ducks winter on the geothermal river Varmá which flows into Leiruvogur. A birdwatching hide is situated midway along the fjord, but the birds move a lot as they follow the tide line.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL MOSFELLSBÆR

Places in and around what is modern day Mosfellsbær feature widely in the ancient sagas and other literary and historical sources. According to the Book of Settlements, the first person to live in Mosfell was Þórður Skeggi, who took the land between Leiruvogur bay and Úlfarsá river on the advice of Ingólfur Arnarson, the first settler of Iceland, probably around 900. Leiruvogur was a well known mooring point for ships in the 10th-13th centuries, and the setting for some encounters in the sagas. Helgufoss waterfall at the head of Mosfellsdalur – one of several impressive waterfalls around Mosfellsbær – is said to be named after Helga, the daughter of Bárður Snæfellsás, a half-man and half-giant who kept guard over Snæfellsnes peninsula (which can be seen across the bay on a clear day). Other local places are associated with Helga too.

But certainly the best known resident in ancient times was the outrageous Viking poet Egill Skallagrímsson, who

killed his first man at the age of seven and was too rowdy to take to a drinking feast when he was three. In his old age Egill moved to Mosfell to live with his stepdaughter Þórdís and her husband, and still kept his wild streak despite being blind. Originally he planned to throw his treasure – a gift from King Athelstan of England – over Þingvellir to make everyone at the assembly fight over it, but when no one would take him there he had two slaves go with him to bury it somewhere in the vicinity, then killed them.

"When Christianity was adopted by law in Iceland (around 1000 A. D.) Grím of Mosfell was baptized and built a church there. People say that Þórdís had Egill's bones moved to the church, and this is the evidence. When a church was built at Mosfell, the one that Grím had built at Hrísbú was demolished and a new graveyard was laid out. Under the altar some human bones were found, much bigger than ordinary human bones, and people are confident that these were Egill's because of stories told by old men. "Egill's Saga, chapter 86

During the Viking Age, Mosfellsveit was a self-contained social and economic unit connected to the rest of Iceland through a network of roads, including a major E-W route to the nearby assembly place for the yearly Alþing. With its ship's landing or port at Leirvogur, in the bay at the valley's mouth, the region was in commercial and cultural contact with the larger Scandinavian and European worlds.

Þingvellir in historical context

At Þingvellir – literally "Parliament Plains" – the Alþing general assembly was established around 930 and continued to convene there until 1798. Major events in the history of Iceland have taken place at Þingvellir and therefore the place is held in high esteem by all Icelanders. Today, Þingvellir is a protected national shrine. According to the law, passed in 1928, the protected area shall always be the property of the Icelandic nation, under the preservation of the Alþing.



Laxness/Gljúfrasteinn

Mosfellsbær's favourite son beyond all shadow of a doubt is Halldór Laxness (1902-1998), winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955. He was born in Reykjavík but at the age of three moved with his parents to the farm Laxnes in Mosfellsdalur, where he lived until he published his first novel at the age of 17. After more than two decades of almost continuous travel and writing under the nom de plume Laxness, which he took in homage to his childhood home, he had a house built nearby at Gljúfrasteinn, where he lived almost until his death in 1998.

In 1955 Halldór Laxness became the first Icelander to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. In his acceptance speech, he thanked his parents and in particular his grandmother who lived at their home at Laxnes and "who taught me hundreds of lines of old Icelandic poetry before I ever learned the alphabet".

At once a writer of great pathos, lyricism and humour, Laxness builds on the old Icelandic epic tradition, renewing and modernising it. His characters are typically "independent people" (the title of one of his greatest novels) who fight to preserve their ideals and values in an unsympathetic society. Laxness' works have been translated into 43 languages. Best known among them are the novels *Independent People*, *Salka Valka*, *World Light* and *Atom Station*, although in later life Halldór Laxness turned increasingly to autobiographical writing, in which the countryside around Mosfellsbær naturally features strongly.

Part of the humble old farmhouse at Laxnes in which the writer was brought up – now the oldest building in Mosfellsbær – remains intact at what is now a horse farm, but is not open to the public. However, the elegant house at Gljúfrasteinn where he spent almost fifty years is now open to the public as a museum, unchanged from when Laxness lived there. There visitors can learn more about the Nobel laureate and honorary citizen of

Mosfellsbær and wander in the garden and surrounding countryside, a source of much inspiration in his later life.

Artists' Community in Álafoss

A village unto itself, known as "Álafoskvosin," was once a major landmark in Iceland's industrial history and now a separate community where artists have their workshops and studios.

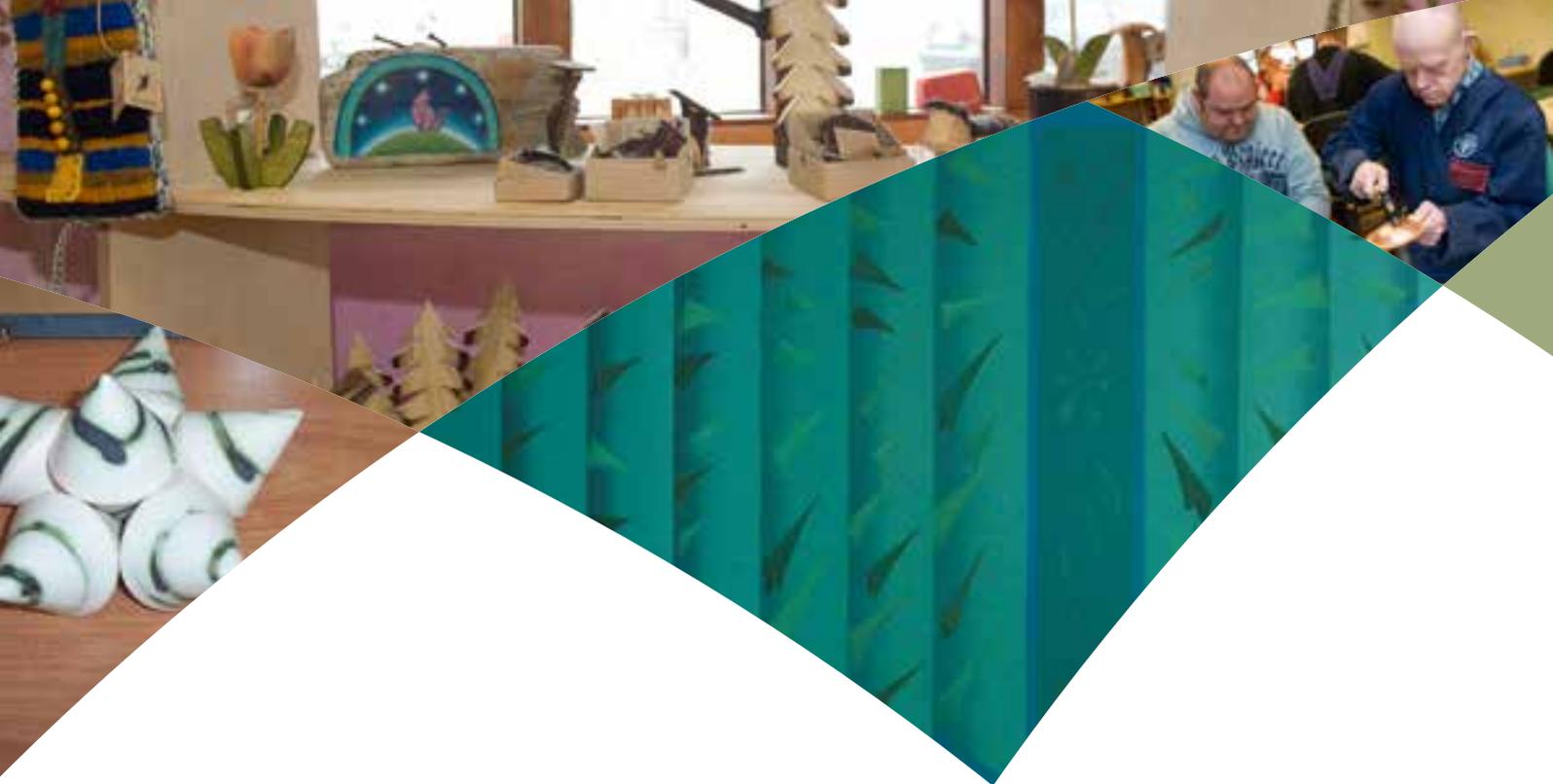
A number of artists have studios in the former premises of the Álafoss wool mill and some of them are open to the public – although visitors should always arrange an appointment in advance.

One is the studio/workshop of Palli Kristján, Iceland's only professional knifemaker, who uses the bone and skin of native and other animals and intricate decoration, often using Viking Age designs. Works by other craftsmen are also on show at his studio, including wood carvings and turnings, items of silver, silk prints and paintings.

In the same row of buildings is the Dieter Roth Academy, an avant-garde gallery and workshop dedicated to the memory of the Swiss-born artist who lived in Mosfellsbær for many years. Other artists in Álafoskvos are painter Hildur Margrétardóttir and ceramicist Helga Jóhannesdóttir.

Near the bridge at the foot of the hill in Álafoskvosin in a house with the inscription "Álafoss fót best" you'll find Ásgarður. The slogan, which means "Álafoss clothes best" dates from when Álafoss and Iceland's woollens industry were in their heyday, and Ásgarður is located in one of the old buildings in what is now an artists' village.

Ásgarður is a handcraft workshop for disabled workers which produce a range of handmade wooden toys and utilities in the spirit of Rudolf Steiner's antroposophy. The emphasis on Ásgarður's production is to develop simple, strong and beautiful toys that are inspired by



Icelandic reality. The material used is mostly Icelandic wood and every item is handmade. The aim is to nourish the best part of every individual, make them build on their skills and promote their capability.

One section of the Álafoss factory outlet premises is devoted to arts and crafts, with a particular focus on the works of local artists. However, Álafossvosin is not the only place to see artists at work, since ceramicist Þóra Sigurþórsdóttir welcomes visitors to her studio at Hvirfill in Mosfellsdalur, and ceramicists Inga Elín Kristinsdóttir and Arnfríður Lára Guðnadóttir also receive visitors at their studios. Steinunn Marteinsdóttir also invites visitors to take a look at her paintings and ceramics at Hulduhólar, just off the main road to Reykjavík.



UNIQUE LOCATION FOR A MCPB EHF. DESTINATION

In addition to Mosfellsbær's special characteristics, history, culture and resources mentioned above which will help provide the healing experience of the MCPB ehf. destination, Mosfellsbær can offer an exceptional location for the new MCPB ehf. destination, which will yet but add to the healing environment.

An attractive location is available for MCPB ehf. in Mosfellsbær called; "Sólvellir" which will be further outlined in pictures and graphics.

"Sólvellir" in Mosfellsbær provides ample space, green surroundings, tranquility and peacefulness despite its proximity to the capital and the international airport.

