

The Common Ground Forum

The Common Ground Forum SCIO

registered Scottish charity (SC055239)



Terms of Reference

Version: September 2026

This document: *This Terms of Reference has been put together to:*

- *ensure that individuals that have joined the Common Ground Forum Network are clear on the purpose of the Forum and Our Common Ground Accord, and the expectations of their role in being part of the Network.*
- *ensure that individuals who are the members of the Common Ground Forum SCIO understand their role*
- *ensure that organisations/businesses/groups that have signed up to the Our Common Ground Accord are clear on the expectations that come with their sign up.*

If you have any questions about this document, please contact info@thecommongroundforum.scot

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PURPOSE AND REMIT OF THE FORUM

Why are we here?

The purpose of the Common Ground Forum is to build trust and relationships between the various groups with a stake in Scotland's upland deer management sector including open hill, woodland and commercial forestry to enable them to collaborate and work constructively together to identify, address and ultimately overcome the diverse challenges the sector faces.

The CGF's work sometimes extends beyond upland Scotland when it helps its core purpose, and is open to approaches from organisations from other areas or sectors if they wish to learn from our work.

What do we hope to achieve?

The various stakeholders within the deer management sector are able to navigate difficult conversations and conflicting views working constructively together without external support.

What are the principles of the Forum's approach?:

- The CGF understands that trust and good relations are like oil in a machine - they keep the parts moving to allow people to work better together to find solutions collaboratively
- The CGF recognises that some conflict is inevitable but that disagreements can inform fairer, more positive and more resilient outcomes when managed well
- The CGF does not represent or favour any views or opinions. It is a neutral space for dialogue and facilitation
- The CGF values and respects all voices
- The CGF approach is context specific and will not be appropriate for every scenario

WHAT IS OUR COMMON GROUND ACCORD?

Our Common Ground Accord is a set of principles that sets a standard for respectful behaviour across Scotland's upland deer management sector. The signatories of the Accord, organisations, businesses and groups involved in upland deer management in Scotland, commit to work in its spirit.

KEY RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTS

- [CGF SCIO Constitution](#) - The Forum became a charity in May 2026, this document sets out the framework for its activity
- [CGF's Purpose and Remit](#)
- [CGF's Framework for Delivery](#) – sets out the work plan for the Steering Group and subgroups
- [Our Common Ground Accord](#) – includes the list of current signatories
- CGF [Privacy policy](#)
- [Shared Google drive](#) with CGF resources

FORUM GOVERNANCE

[The SCIO Board](#) provides a strategic direction and manages the Common Ground Forum with the assistance of the Steering Group, the Project Manager, and the sub-groups.

The work of the Common Ground Forum is guided by [the CGF Steering Group](#) consisting of a range of individuals from the upland deer management in Scotland who have a willingness to find and implement solutions. They ensure that the work of the CGF is effective, rather than representing any particular side of the debate.

The Steering Group is managed by a Convenor, who chairs meetings, provides strategic oversight, supports the Project Manager and helps ensure that Steering Group members are able to contribute effectively. The Convenor maintains a neutral position on the group, primarily playing a facilitative role.

The Steering Group ultimately makes the decision on the direction of the work of the Forum, guided by its sub-groups, and in consultation with Forum members. The plan of work is captured in its [Framework for Delivery](#).

The Steering Group works closely with [Centre for Good Relations](#), an independent not-for-profit company whose core work is “civic mediation” - working with people positively on matters of contention, taking them through the dialogue process to unpack issues and tensions.

In addition, [an independent evaluator](#) carries out annual assessments of the impact the CGF is having against its objectives.

[The CGF Project Manager](#) supports the Steering Group to achieve the work described in the Framework for Delivery, reporting to the Chair.

There are several **CGF sub-groups** that play a strong role to deliver specific elements of the CGF's Framework for Delivery: They are formed and dissolved as needed. They report back to the CGF Steering group and are composed of active members of the Forum who support delivery of the group's outputs.

Current CGF sub-groups are

- Stalkers
- Foresters
- Communications
- Fundraising

The ToR for individual sub-groups can be found here . If you would like to get involved in a sub-group, please contact info@thecommondgroundforum.scot

CGF linked groups - are groups that are not officially a “CGF group” - but are led by CGF Steering Group members and have an important role to play to deliver the CGF Framework for Delivery.

Current CGF Linked groups are:

- Advocacy (via ADMG/ScotLINK liaison group (delivers advocacy)
- ADMG Chairs Group (Via ADMG)

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

The Common Ground Forum Network individuals:

Pre-requisites to becoming part of the network

- have a connection with the upland deer management sector in Scotland;
- are committed to work in the spirit of the Our Common Ground Accord;
- agree that their email address can be used by CGF Project Manager/Steering Group to send them updates on the work of the Forum

Once part of the network

- are encouraged to contribute to, or become involved with activities of the Common Ground Forum's sub-groups that play a large role delivering the Forum's Framework for Delivery
- positively promote the Forum and its aims within their own organisations and networks;

The Common Ground Forum SCIO members, in addition to the above:

- become members by submitting an application to the SCIO Board to be approved by the SCIO trustees
- have the power to elect trustees and attend the annual AGM
- make an active contribution to shape the Forum's strategy and work e.g. by becoming part of the Steering Group or its sub-groups

Signatories to the Our Common Ground Accord:

- are organisations or businesses that have a connection with the upland deer management sector in Scotland;
- have a representative on the Common Ground Forum Network;
- are committed to work within the spirit of the Accord as an organisation
- promote the Accord to their staff/members to encourage them to work within the spirit of the Accord;
- inform their organisation's staff, volunteers, supporters etc. about the Forum and relevant activities as appropriate;
- are listed on the Common Ground Forum website.

2. HOW TO JOIN

Process for joining the Forum's Network

Individuals can join once they have confirmed:

- they fulfil the pre-requisites to becoming part of the network mentioned above;
- they have read, and agree to, these ToR.

Process for becoming a SCIO member

Individuals can become members of the charity once:

- they have confirmed the points listed above
- their application to become a member of the SCIO has been approved by the Board
- they have confirmed they will be actively and regularly involved in developing the SCIO's strategy, delivery plan, and delivering the work itself (i.e. on the Steering Group or in the sub-groups)

Process for signing up to the Accord

Organisations, businesses and groups can become signatories to Our Common Ground Accord by:

- committing to working within the spirit of the Accord.
- confirming they have read, and agree to, these ToR.

MORE INFORMATION

www.thecommongroundforum.scot