



SPONSORED BY

**ULTRA
LIGHT** OUTDOOR
GEAR



TGO Challenge – EVENT DETAILS 2023

Welcome to the 43rd Great Outdoors Challenge. It may be a little premature to say the Covid-19 years are behind us, but we are confident that we can now largely return to the TGO Challenge's pre-pandemic numbers and format. We are working on the principle of not fixing something that isn't broken. However, there were some positives from the last few years which we will keep and there is always the need to incorporate improvements and innovations.

Please read this document regardless of how many times you have participated. Whilst some of it is aimed at first time Challengers, many sections are relevant to experienced Challengers. If you haven't already done so, please read the [TGO23 - Terms and Conditions](#) before confirming your place and use the checklist on page 19 before submitting your route.

The coordinators will help with any queries but, before you contact them, please check the information you seek is not within these pages. Clicking on any [blue text](#) will give you additional information. Useful contact information and phone numbers can be found in the [Resources](#) section of the website.

INDEX

OUTLINE OF THE CHALLENGE			
What to expect – terrain, navigation, climate, shelter	2	Travel and accommodation – including Hostelling Scotland, Ault-na-Goire, Cougie, Callater and Tarfside	11
Communication	2	GPS trackers	13
		Resupplies and trail food offers	13
PLANNING FOR THE CHALLENGE		Medical information and emergency contacts	13
Skills	3	Animal hazards	13
Equipment	3	Completing you crossing, including dinners	14
Maps	3	Withdrawals and cancellation	14
Timeline	3		
Boundaries	4	COMPLETING THE ROUTE SHEET	
Start points	4	How to complete the route sheet	14
Type of route	6	Sample days	15
Finish points	7	Deferred routes	19
Foul weather alternatives (FWAs)	7	Checklist	19
River crossings	8		
Road walking	8	VETTING PROCESS	
Ferries	9	Vetters' role	20
Resources – books, blogs, websites	10	Vetter comments	20
Access	10	Revisions	20
Paths, tracks, bridges and fences	11	KEEPING IN TOUCH	
		Websites, message board and social media	20
		Reunions	20

Please open the Event Details and the Route Sheet PDF in Adobe Acrobat Reader.



It will make them easier to use and print. Click [here](#) to download it for free.

AN OUTLINE OF THE CHALLENGE

The Great Outdoors Challenge is a demanding, self-supported walk, west to east, across Scotland. It is neither a competition or race nor is it a running event. It aims to encourage fellowship amongst walkers fostering a relaxed atmosphere in which participants can enjoy Scotland's wild and remote places as well as the company of other Challengers. We ask everyone, however hard they drive themselves, to respect the non-competitive principle.

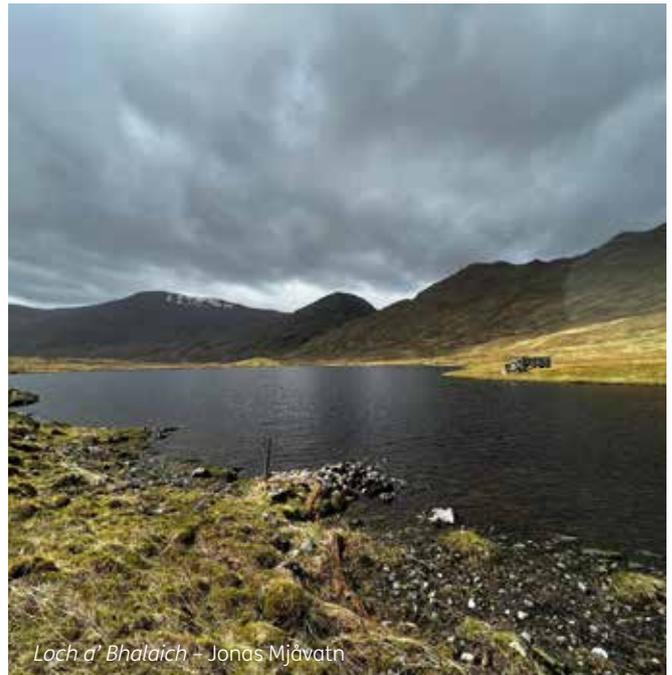
There are no pre-set or advised trails – planning your own route is what makes the Challenge unique. Some devise routes that include summits and ridges whilst others walk mainly through the glens (valleys). No special merit is attached to a higher-level crossing – all successful Challengers receive the same certificate.

There are few rules. The most important is that every step is walked, except for some ferry crossings, within the Challenge boundaries between the start and finish dates. This means if you need to take transport at any point you must return to the same point for your crossing to be valid. We ask that the [Access](#) and [Bothy](#) codes are followed, due respect is given to the landscape, including those who live and work there, and to fellow Challengers. A few more [Dos and Don'ts](#) to help you gauge the spirit of the Event can be found on the website.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Any multi-day Scottish backpacking trip is a serious undertaking, and the Challenge should be approached as such.

- ❑ **Terrain** – If your main experience of mountainous areas is in England, Wales or overseas, you may find the terrain much tougher than you expect. Be prepared for rough, often wet, pathless ground. In many areas travelling at 2-3km an hour is good going with a full pack. Vetter Colin Crawford's [Notes on Scottish Terrain](#) and [Sabine Zawadski](#) and [Dean Read's](#) vlogs show the kind of terrain you are likely to encounter.
- ❑ **Navigation** – You need to be capable of accurately navigating by map and compass. Unlike Continental Europe or North America, you will find few paths waymarked, and some marked on the map are not evident on the ground. Conversely there are paths and estate tracks that aren't on the map . . .
- ❑ **Climate** – Scotland's climate is notoriously unpredictable. High winds and heavy rain are common. You are likely to face unbridged burns (streams) which can be impossible to cross safely in spate (high water) necessitating long diversions. There is often significant snow cover on the mountains, requiring winter equipment if you plan a higher route, and occasionally fresh fall at lower levels. It can also be hot and sunny!



Loch a' Bhalaich - Jonas Mjvatn

- ❑ **Shelter** – The Challenge is designed to be a backpacking event so you should carry a tent or other suitable shelter. Whilst you might visit a town or village every few days where you can find accommodation, you should expect to be wild camping much of the time.

INTERACTIVE MAP

Mick Blackburn has created an interactive map. This shows much of the information in these pages and can be viewed by clicking [here](#). Please note it is not hosted on the TGO Challenge website.

COMMUNICATION

We will use the email address given on your entry form so please let us know if this changes and mark newtonmorehostel@gmail.com as a "safe sender" to ensure you receive everything. Please note @btinternet addresses sometimes block our mail without showing it in a junk folder. If you have an alternative email address, please use it.

All emails are acknowledged, usually within 48hrs, so if you haven't had a response, please contact us again.

If you do not have an email address or are not comfortable receiving information this way, please ring us and we will arrange an alternative.

- ❑ **Coordinators** – Sue & Ali are your contacts at newtonmorehostel@gmail.com or by phone on 07786 628 105 / 07769 952 085.
- ❑ **Vetters** may give their contact details with their comments. Please copy the coordinators into any communications regarding your route.
- ❑ **Other Challengers'** contact details cannot be given out, but the coordinators can pass on a message from you.

PLANNING FOR THE CHALLENGE

The Challenge needs a lot of preparation, which can be a little daunting if this is your first crossing. In common with other events, you need to prepare yourself and your equipment, but the unique aspect of the Challenge is designing your own bespoke route. This can be time consuming, at times frustrating but ultimately immensely satisfying. Like a good wine your route needs time to mature so don't leave it until the last minute – start early and let it evolve. You might find [Rich Jones' "preparation ponderings"](#) blog post helpful.

SKILLS

You, and any teammates, should already have the following skills:

- Ability to navigate across pathless, rugged terrain using map and compass – whether digital or manual. You must not be solely reliant on GPS.
- Be able to carry personal/camping equipment with a minimum of 3 days provisions.
- Previous experience of backpacking including 'leave no trace' wild camping in an environment with no facilities.
- Capacity to be self-sufficient, including first aid skills, in remote areas where help may not be easily accessible.
- Be able to assess and deal with adverse weather (wind, rain and occasionally snow and sun!) including unbridged rivers/burns in spate.

If you lack any of these please speak to the coordinators. It is best to be honest with yourself (and us) at this stage. We will do all we can to help you prepare a route that is within your capabilities but, if necessary, your entry can be deferred until 2024 to give you time to gain these essential skills.

EQUIPMENT

We assume that all applicants are experienced backpackers and do not need an equipment list. However, for your safety, the following items should be carried:

- Tent or suitable shelter and sleeping bag
- Cooking equipment
- Waterproof and windproof clothing
- Emergency rations for at least one full day
- Maps, compass and whistle for each member of the team
- Suitable first aid kit
- If snow conditions prevail, an ice axe (and the skills and experience to use it) is essential for higher-level routes.

Timeline

Below you will find a list of important dates and deadlines:

- 2nd November** – start dates will be allocated and new entrants informed of their luck in the draw on or before this date.
- 4th November** – routes can be submitted for vetting. Please don't send them before!
- 21st November** – closing date for payments. Unpaid places will be offered to those on the reserve list.
- 14th December** – last chance to withdraw without losing your entry fee.
- 17th January** – route submission deadline for Challengers who have completed 5 or more Challenges (or groups containing such a Challenger).
- 21st February** – deadline for route submissions for all other participants.
- Early April** – Final Details (including details of start/finish arrangements) and medical/emergency contact forms circulated.
- 12th April** – deadline for returning medical form.
- 11th May** – Participants starting on this date have until 5pm, Thursday 25th May to sign out in Montrose after completing their crossing on the east coast.
- 12th May** – Participants starting on this date have until 5pm, Friday 26th May to sign out in Montrose after completing their crossing on the east coast.
- 13th to 18th May** – later starters are welcome but must still finish by 5pm Friday 26th May.
- 23rd to 26th May** – celebration dinners, maximum 100 people per night, will be held at the Park Hotel.
- 26th May** – TGOC23 finishes promptly at 5pm.

The deadlines will be strictly observed and only extended in truly exceptional circumstances.

MAPS

Whether you use physical or digital maps you should use the most up-to-date editions. Whatever you chose as your primary means of navigation you need to carry a backup. If using digital maps on a phone, as these can fail or run out of power, you should also carry either printouts or a second separate device. If using physical maps, you should carry spare copies or a digital device in case your maps get lost or damaged.

Important Note for all Participants

All those participating in The Great Outdoors Challenge do so at their own risk, in accordance with the spirit of the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#), which states:

“There is a longstanding legal principle called ‘volenti non fit injuria’ which means that a person taking access will generally be held to have accepted any obvious risks which are inherent in the activities they are undertaking.”

We might offer advice on routes, but ultimately participants must rely solely on their own skills and judgment. Participants are responsible for ensuring they are sufficiently fit and have suitable skills and equipment for an arduous two-week backpack. Any Challenger who has ongoing medical problems should obtain medical advice before taking part, ensuring the medical professional is aware of the nature of the Event. Participants are deemed to accept the inherent risk of mountain walking and agree to participate in The Great Outdoors Challenge at their own risk. Participants are strongly advised to consider personal accident insurance.

By participating, Challengers agree to abide by the rules, conditions and spirit of the Challenge, as summarised here and in the [TGOC23 – Terms and Conditions](#). They must accept that Scotia Challenge Ltd Event, the coordinators and vetters shall not be liable for any damage, loss, injury or death which may arise from participating in The Great Outdoors Challenge, other than that caused as a result of negligence.

Sheet maps or printouts and digital downloads should cover sufficient territory either side of your route to allow for diversions necessitated by extreme weather or injury.

There are many parts of the Challenge area where there is no mobile internet signal. If using a digital mapping app during the Event please ensure you have downloaded all the relevant maps for use offline.

- ❑ OS 1:50,000 [Ordnance Survey Landranger](#) maps are recommended to both plan and walk your route. Your vetter will use these maps.
- ❑ OS 1:25,000 [Ordnance Survey Explorer](#) maps can be useful for planning as they give more detail (eg field boundaries)
- ❑ [Harveys 1:40,000 and 1:25,000 maps](#) are excellent maps designed specifically for walkers but do not cover the entire Challenge area.
- ❑ **Large scale maps** such as road maps and Google Earth can be used when planning to get an overview but should not be relied upon during the Challenge.

We consider only OS (and Harveys maps where available) to be suitable for walking the TGO Challenge. Please ensure any device you rely upon for navigation supports these.

Please only use names found on OS 1:50,000 maps on your route sheet as these are the main maps used by vetters and Challenge Control.



Map reading – Kasia Grabska

THE GREAT OUTDOORS CHALLENGE PERIMETERS

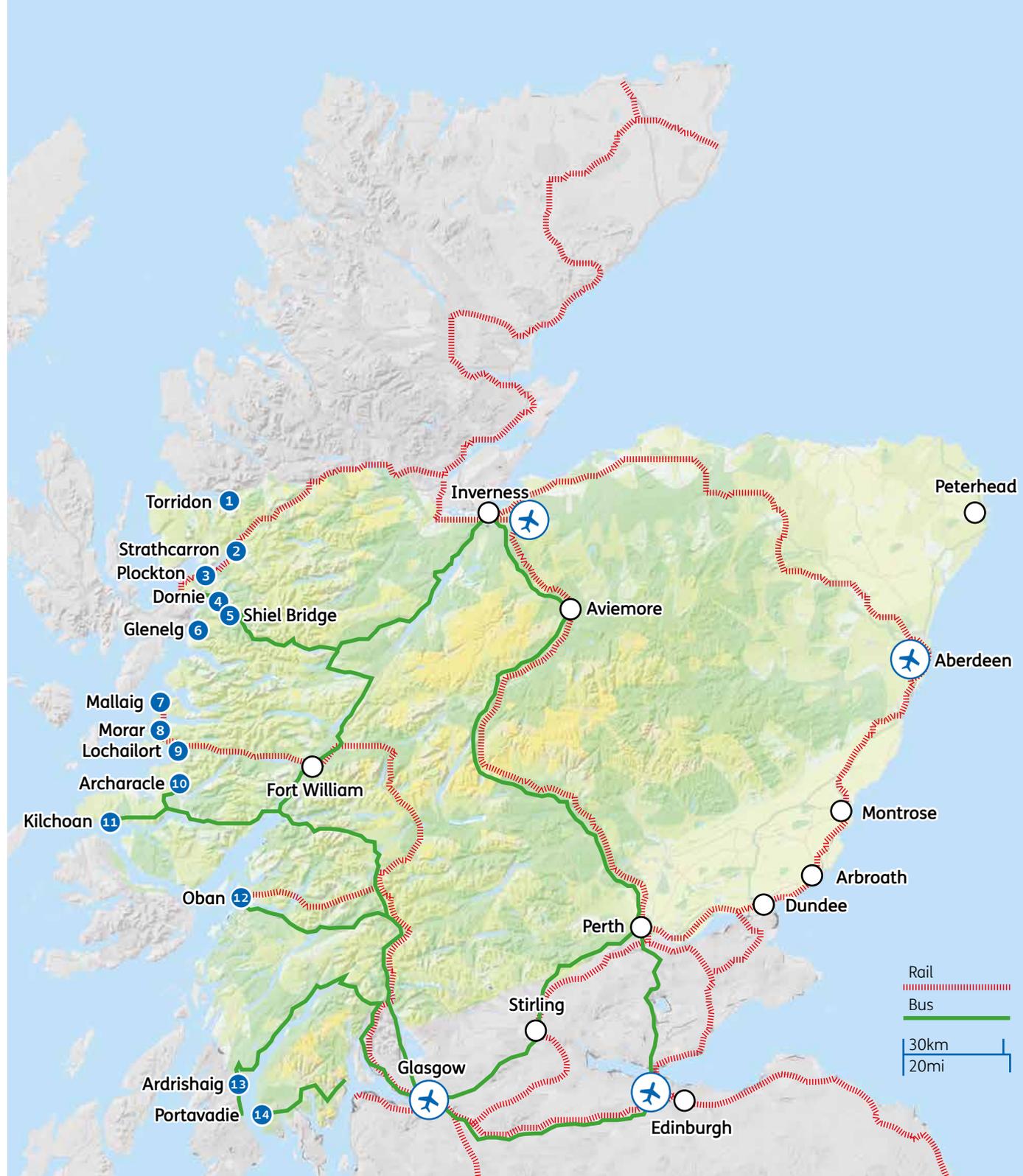
- ❑ **West** – Western seaboard of mainland Scotland from Torridon south to Ardnamurchan Point, across to eastern Mull (Dervaig to Srathcoil), then by Oban (including Kerrera and Lismore), down coast to Crinan, the Crinan Canal to Ardrishaig, across Loch Fyne to Otter Ferry, south to Portavadie.
- ❑ **South** – Mainland coast around Kyles of Bute, Firth of Clyde and Loch Long to Arrochar, Tarbet, south along Loch Lomond to Rowardennan (to include Ben Lomond), east following Duchray Water to Aberfoyle, Rob Roy Way to Callander, A84/A920/A9 to Doune, Dunblane and Perth, north side of Tay Estuary to Arbroath.
- ❑ **East** – The eastern seaboard from Arbroath to Fraserburgh.
- ❑ **North** – North coast from Fraserburgh to Inverness, north shore of the Beaully Firth (but not Moray Firth) to Muir of Ord, A832/A896 to Achnasheen, Kinlochewe and Torridon.

START POINTS

- 1 **Torridon Youth Hostel** – 01445 791 284
- 2 **Strathcarron Hotel** – 01520 722 227
- 3 **Plockton Hotel** – 01599 544 274
- 4 **Dornie Hotel** – 01599 555 205
- 5 **Kintail Lodge Hotel, Shiel Bridge** – 01599 511 275
- 6 **Mrs Davidson, Taobh na Mara, Glenelg** – 01599 522 310
- 7 **West Highland Hotel, Mallaig** – 01687 462 210
- 8 **Morar Hotel** – 01687 462 346
- 9 **Lochailort Inn** – 01687 470 208 Currently closed but plans to reopen Spring 2023
- 10 **Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle** – 01967 431 224
- 11 **Kilchoan Hotel** – 01972 510 200
- 12 **Oban Youth Hostel** – 01631 562 025
- 13 **The Grey Gull Inn, Ardrishaig** – 01546 606 017
- 14 **Portavadie Marina** – 01700 811075

[Click here](#) for further information about rail, bus and air links.

5 newtonmorehostel@gmail.com
07786 628 105 or 07769 952 085
www.tgochallenge.co.uk



OUTDOOR MAP NAVIGATOR

We are delighted to announce **Outdoor Map Navigator**, established as Anquet Maps in 2001, as the TGO Challenge's digital mapping partner. They are offering all Challengers



- (including current subscribers) a 7-month free subscription to their OS Premium Service, which includes:
- ❑ Streamed access to the latest 1:50k and 1:25k OS HD maps on PCs and Macs.
 - ❑ Maps can be downloaded for offline usage on Android/ iOS smartphones and tablets.
 - ❑ Facility to plan and edit your TGO23 route, distance and ascent figures and share files with teammates, coordinators and vetters.
 - ❑ Facility to print maps for your TGO Challenge route and other adventures.
 - ❑ Read more about Outdoor Map Navigator at www.anquet.com
 - ❑ Upgrade from 7 months of OS Premium to a year of OS Premium Plus for just £15.
 - ❑ The free subscriptions will be issued to Challengers who accept their TGO23 place in early November. Existing subscribers' renewal dates will be extended by 7 months.

Outdoor Map Navigator are also supporting the TGO Challenge by providing route vetters with a long-term service. We are extremely pleased to be able to offer our loyal and long-suffering team something other than profuse thanks!

STARTING YOUR CROSSING

Picking your start is as good a place as any to begin. Each start point gives a very different experience and more detailed information on each can be found [here](#).

The start registers are mostly held by small family-run hotels or hostels, usually in their reception areas. Please consider using them for food or accommodation before you start as they have supported the TGO Challenge for many years. Like many other hospitality businesses, their trade has been hit hard by the pandemic, staffing shortages and the current financial squeeze. As a result, some establishments are no longer open all day. **Should your start point be closed when you want to set off, you will be able to sign out by texting Challenge Control.**

Regular Challengers are encouraged to use different start points on each crossing and to explore lesser used starts such as Acharacle, Ardrishaig, Glenelg, Morar, Portavadie and Plockton.



Start days will be allocated when places are confirmed in early November, taking account of any preference given on your entry form. Should a start day be oversubscribed a draw will take place. Those starting on Thursday 11th May or Friday 12th May will have 15 days to cross with those starting later having a shorter period. **As a trial for 2023, we have dropped the start time of 9am so you can start at whatever time suits you.**

WHAT TYPE OF ROUTE?

- ❑ **Higher or lower level?** On your first crossing, unless you have significant backpacking experience in Scotland's hills, we recommend a lower-level route. If you have suitable experience and want to take in some hills you will be asked to provide a Foul Weather Alternative for each high day. FWAs can be used as an easier alternative on the day even in good weather!
- ❑ **Solitary or sociable?** You can plan a route where you hardly meet a soul or a more sociable one visiting some of the towns and villages that have taken the Challenge to their heart. Many people mix and match periods of solitude with a taste of the famous Challenge camaraderie.
- ❑ **Themes and highlights.** It is worth looking for places you might want to visit before you start detailed planning, marking them on a large-scale map to see which are feasible to connect. Some Challengers have picked themes in the past e.g. linking drove roads, castles or even searching out tea rooms!
- ❑ **Duration of crossing.** Remember it is not a race! Unless you are constrained by work or family commitments, why hurry? Make the most of Scotland's magnificent wild places and savour them.
- ❑ **Distance and ascent.** From our experience 18–25km (12–15 miles) per day is enough for most people. You need to allow for the nature of the ground and ascent for each day – some 15 km days can be extremely arduous.



Weather near Johnshaven – Ian Cotterill



The Five Sisters of Kintail – Dima Zlotnyk

WHERE TO FINISH?

You can finish anywhere on the East Coast between Fraserburgh and Arbroath. If you need some ideas, see Roger Smith's [Guide to Finish Points](#). After reaching the east coast **all participants must report in person to Challenge Control at the Park Hotel, Montrose to sign out** but you may use motorised public or private transport to get there.

THE PARK HOTEL

The Park Hotel offer reduced bed and breakfast rates to TGO Challengers.

- Single room – £95.00
- Double or twin room – £105.00
- Superior room – £110.00
- Camping – £15 to pitch in the garden with access to a shower. Breakfast available for £12.50.

These rates are only bookable through www.parkmontrose.com or by phoning the hotel directly.

PHONE IN POINTS

You will be asked for a minimum of four phone in points during your crossing from where you will ring or text Challenge Control. This is the core of our safety procedure. Failure to phone in on the designated day may result in concern at Control and possibly a referral to Mountain Rescue. It is important they are:

- Places with reliable mobile reception or access to a landline, ideally in towns or villages
- Not on summits or ridges –you might not be there if taking your FWA
- Not your start or finish point
- Ideally no more than 4 days apart
- Please note that coverage maps provided by phone companies are often over optimistic. This year we have made Challenge Control's [phone in list](#) available. Any places listed will be accepted as a phone in venue, but others will be considered if there is likely to be a good mobile signal or access to a landline.

FOUL WEATHER ALTERNATIVE (FWA)

You must provide a foul weather alternative when your route crosses high ground that is pathless or exposed. The need for a FWA is not solely defined by altitude. The nature of the terrain, duration of walking at an exposed height and whether a clear path is evident, all have a bearing, as does the experience of the Challenger(s). However, routes over 900m always need one whilst routes under 500m usually do not, unless there are un-bridged burns and rivers that may be impossible to cross safely in spate. A FWA may need to be more than one day long – for example Jock's Road and the Lairig Ghru both need multi-day FWAs.

FWAs need serious thought and are often the hardest aspect of route planning. Inadequate or missing FWAs are the main reason for routes requiring revision. There are some routes where FWAs are mandatory (see list below) but in other situations the need may be more nuanced. Please do not be upset if you are asked for additional FWAs. It is better to have a plan B for when conditions are dire, and it is easier for Challenge Control to anticipate where you might be if there are concerns about you.

FWAs are always required for the following routes:

- Lairig Ghru
- Summit of Mount Keen (bypass path acceptable)
- Jock's Road
- Fords of Avon
- Kilbo path
- Carn an t–Sagairt Mor path/Dubh Loch route
- Any Munro (hills over 3000ft/913m) or Corbett (hills over 2500ft/762m) summit.

While slightly lower routes, such as the Corrieyairack Pass, are acceptable, extreme weather can render them impassable. Common sense has to be applied during the Event and on occasions you may have to wait for weather or water levels to subside.

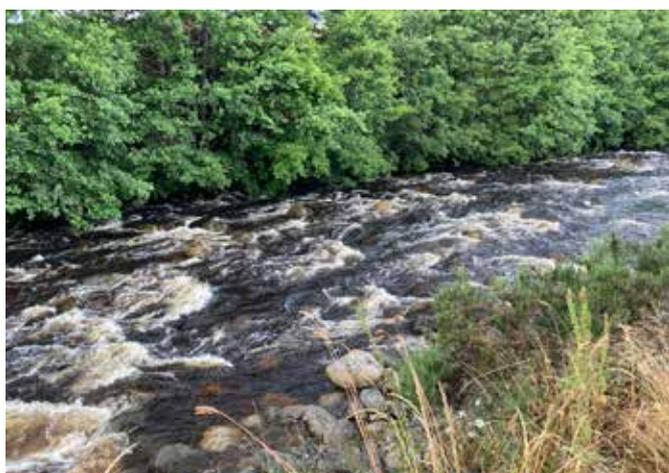
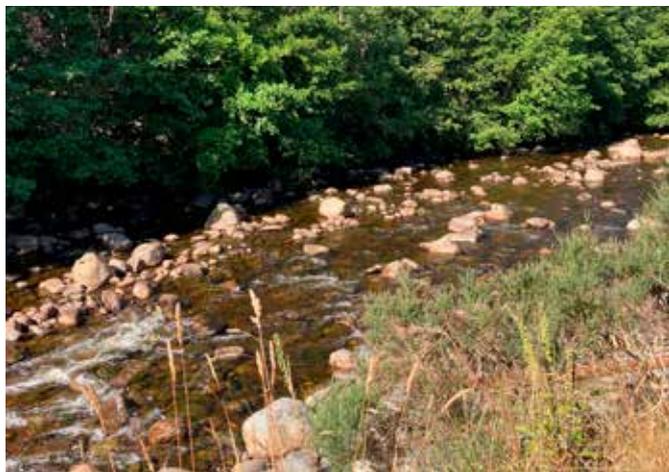
The weather doesn't have to be bad to use your FWA – it can also be a Feeling Weary Alternative! You may have to use it in good conditions if there is snow and ice on the tops and you do not have winter equipment. If you deviate significantly from your main route or FWA you should let Challenge Control know your new plans as soon as you have a phone signal.

RIVER CROSSINGS

The persistent rain at the start of TGOC22 brought into sharp focus how an unbridged river can change from a gentle burbling burn to an uncrossable raging torrent. Vettors may warn of burns known to be difficult in spate in their comments, but they cannot know of all hazardous crossings, and, in the worst of conditions, even minor side streams can become major obstacles.

Fording unbridged rivers is probably one of the biggest hazards on the Challenge and you should know how to do it safely. Click [here](#) for river crossing advice from Mountaineering Scotland. As a rule, if the water is above your knees, you probably shouldn't be in it. Although frustrating, diverting in search of a safer crossing or putting your tent up and waiting (rivers go down as quickly as they come up) are safer options.

Newtonmore's River Calder a few days apart.



Loch Katrine – Les Silkowski

ROAD WALKING

We advise you keep this to a minimum as it is tough on the feet and joints. Some minor roads, such as those running through Glen Lonan and by Loch Arkaig, are hard to avoid but in many places, there are alternatives if you look for them. Please avoid long stretches on A roads which often have blind bends and fast traffic that is not expecting pedestrians on sometimes narrow verges. If your route contains excessive road walking or takes you on particularly dangerous roads, you may be asked to revise it.



Glen Morrision – Alan Bellis

FERRY CROSSINGS

You may make an initial boat journey to reach another point on the coast, or cross, but not travel along, large bodies of water such as Loch Ness and Loch Linnhe. Possible crossings are listed below. These may need to be prebooked:

1 Mallaig to Inverie

Western Isle Cruises (01687 462 233) offer regular sailings. They will use their larger boat on busier crossings if it is available.

2 Dalelia to Polloch

Crossings of Loch Shiel can be arranged with Izzy Buchan and John Macaulay – dalilea@outlook.com or 01967 431 253.

3 Camasnagaul to Fort William

Lochaber Transport - for bookings contact Dougie Robertson, 07826 695 160. This ferry does not operate on Sundays.

4 Corran Ferry

Sailings every 20–30 mins across Loch Linnhe from 6:30 am (8:30 Sun) to 9:20pm – no need to book.

5 Lismore ferries

Calmac (0800 066 5000) from Oban to Lismore and **Argyll and Bute Council** (01546 605 522) from the north end of Lismore to Appin.

6 Tarbert (Loch Fyne) to Portavadie

Calmac (0800 066 5000). Runs hourly from 8am to 6pm. This can be used to access Portavadie prior to the Challenge.

7 Tarbet (Loch Lomond) Inversnaid and Rowardenan

Cruise Loch Lomond (01301 702356) offer waterbus services across Loch Lomond.

8 Drumnadrochit to Inverfarigaig

The ferry usually runs from Temple Pier (NH 528 300) on the north side of Urquhart Bay to Inverfarigaig (NH 518 237) around 8am and 5pm. Gordon Menzies plans to pass the Challenge ferry to another skipper but will step in again if needed so a service should be available. If planning to use the ferry please note on your route sheet in the box provided and we will update you when we have more information.

Other crossings (commercial ferries or private hire) are possible but please check the route is acceptable with the coordinators before making firm bookings.



GORDON MENZIES

For as long as most Challengers can remember Gordon Menzies has transported them across Loch Ness. Far more than just a means of getting to Inverfarigaig, tales of mythical and real creatures, ancient and more recent history, visiting ducks and Gordon's dry wit have made it a highlight of many crossings. He plans to retire from the tourist side of his business but will keep his boat and continue his work with oceanographic equipment research. If he can't find someone else to run the Challenge ferry this year, he will help us out once more. In case 2022 proves to have been his final year may we wish him a very long and happy semi-retirement – we have a feeling his love of Loch Ness means he will never fully retire!

A Brief History of the Challenge

The idea came from writer and mountaineer Hamish Brown. He had crossed Scotland on foot himself and felt that similar crossings could be accomplished and enjoyed by others within the framework of an organised non-competitive event.

In autumn 1979 Hamish presented the idea to Roger Smith, then editor of The Great Outdoors magazine, and the first Event was held the following Spring. Since then it has become a hillwalking institution. That the Challenge has been held every May since 1980, format unchanged, is a tribute to Hamish's original concept. It has been sponsored by TGO magazine since the outset but was originally known as The Ultimate Challenge after the first co-sponsors, Ultimate Equipment Ltd. The only years in which a full Challenge was not held were 2001, when an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease led to severe access restrictions (a partial crossing from Strathspey to the east coast was arranged) and 2020 when the Event had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. In 2021 the Challenge was postponed to June due to ongoing Covid restrictions resulting in a smaller, socially distanced but successful Event.

Hamish was one of five people who completed all of the first 10 Challenges, the others being Bill Robertson, Bob Dawes, Ron Reynolds and Dave MacArthur. Bill completed his 33rd crossing in 2016. Graham Brookes became the second person to achieve 30 crossings in 2022. The oldest participant so far was Jim Taylor who completed his 20th crossing in 2014 at the age of 91, surpassing the record of fellow nonagenarian Jack Griffiths.

To date, 3,675 people have participated in the Event. A total of 10,543 crossings have been attempted and 9,253 have been completed which is a success rate of 88%. A remarkable achievement for a remarkable event.

Roger Smith acted as coordinator for two decades, steering it from strength to strength. After retiring in 2011 he maintained a close association acting as consultant and a member of the valued team of vettors until 2021. Roger was succeeded by former TGO deputy editor John Manning, who has ten crossings to his name. After three years John handed the reins to Sue Oxley and Ali Ogden who first met on the Challenge in 2004 and have both completed multiple crossings. They have been joint coordinators since 2014 and, as directors of Scotia Challenge Ltd, acquired the TGO Challenge in November 2020.

RESOURCES

You can get inspiration from lots of sources but here are a few suggestions. There are more in the [resources](#) section of the website.

BOOKS

- ❑ [Scottish Hill Tracks](#) (Scotways) describes Scotland's rights of way and is a good place to start when planning your route.
- ❑ [Scotland by Chris Townsend](#) (Cicerone) gives a comprehensive guide to all the mountain ranges in the Challenge area. Chris is the gear editor for TGO and a regular Challenger himself.
- ❑ [Hostile Habitats – Scotland's Mountain Environments by Mark Wrightham and Nick Kempe](#) (SMC) is a guide for walkers to Scotland's wildlife and landscapes.

CHALLENGERS' BLOGS

You can find accounts of recent crossings [here](#) and some older accounts at [Doodlecat](#). By all means visit some places you have read about but please don't copy a route in its entirety. The Challenge is all about producing your own personal bespoke route.

WEBSITES

- ❑ [Where's the path](#) – OS maps and aerial photography side by side – a very useful planning tool.
- ❑ [Geograph](#) – access to photos for individual grid squares – a good way to get an idea of the terrain and scenery you may encounter.
- ❑ [Walk Highlands](#) – mainly day routes but useful if you are incorporating some hills.
- ❑ [Core paths](#) – particularly useful when trying to avoid stretches of road walking in lowland areas as it shows many newly adopted paths which may not yet appear on OS maps. Core Path networks can be accessed through local government websites.
- ❑ [TGO Challenge website](#) – there is plenty of helpful information on the website.

If you are still struggling for ideas or how to connect places talk to the coordinators who can give you some suggestions. The fine detail, though, will still be up to you.

ACCESS

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act gives a general right of responsible access to open countryside in Scotland. There are exceptions such as the vicinity of buildings, industrial sites, airports, railway lines and military areas. The Act includes a right to wild camp responsibly, away from buildings, for one or two nights. The rights and responsibilities are explained in the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#).

Access may be temporarily restricted for reasons including forestry operations and the construction of hydroelectric schemes or windfarms. Any reasonable notices should be followed for your own safety. The coordinators will post information on the [Access News](#) page on the website on any known projects.

There is a longstanding, generally good, relationship between landowners and hillgoers in Scotland. We ask you to help us preserve and foster this by showing due consideration to the land and its people. Those who live and work on the land should be treated with respect regardless of your views about the job they may do. In general, if camping on farmland or near houses please ask for permission.

Please be scrupulous about disposing of litter and [human waste](#) properly, leaving 'no trace' at wild campsites and keeping bothies clean and tidy. This is becoming a major problem in Scotland – let's not add to it.

Within the context of 'freedom to roam' there are a number of places where we would ask you to observe local requests:

- ❑ **Glen Feshie.** The estate requests camping be confined to the area around, or to the south of, Ruigh-aiteachain Bothy (NN 847 928).
- ❑ **Balmoral Estate** request no camping around Loch Muick and Spittal of Glenmuick because of the specific characteristics and sensitivities of this area. You may camp in the vicinity of the bothies at Gelder Shiel (NO 256 905), Glas-Allt Shiel (north side of Loch Muick, NO 275 825) and Shielin of Mark (NO 335 826).
- ❑ **Glen Lee.** Dalhousie Estates request there should be no camping on or near the shores of Loch Lee, which is often used for night fishing.
- ❑ **Glen Mazeran.** The estate requests Challengers do not walk past Glenmazeran Lodge. Please take the right fork at NH 744 227, cross the river and drop to the minor road at NH 748 224.

[PATHS, TRACKS, BRIDGES AND FENCES](#)

Paths are marked on the map with single dashes (---). Unlike continental Europe or North American trails, they are not normally waymarked and may be indistinct or even absent on the ground. Most are not maintained and may be rough and wet.

Tracks are marked with double dashes (==) and are usually suitable for all terrain vehicles. They are generally evident on the ground and vary from well-constructed dirt roads to rough cart tracks. Bridges may be lost in winter storms, and we may not be aware of damage, particularly in remote areas, before the Event. If a bridge is absent or unsafe you must be prepared to use your initiative to find a safe crossing point or divert your route. Information regarding damaged bridges on popular routes will be posted [here](#).

Fences can be unexpected obstacles. Deer fences are commonly over 2m high and may require a diversion if you can't find a gate or climb over. Electric fences have appeared in the eastern highlands over the last few years. There are supposed to be regular crossing points, but these may take some time to locate.

[TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION](#)

Travel. The [travel](#) and [start point](#) pages of the website should point you in the right direction.

Wild camping. This is what the Challenge is about! We strongly advise that you carry a tent and those not planning to camp should also carry a shelter in case of emergencies. When choosing your equipment bear in mind sub-zero temperatures are common in May and your shelter needs to be capable of withstanding gale force winds and heavy rain. The reputation of wild campers has been sullied in recent years by litter, fire rings and human waste being left at popular spots. Please choose where you camp carefully, making sure you are well away from roads and occupied buildings, and practise leave no trace camping, so the TGO Challenge is not adding to this problem. Please do not light fires other than in a bothy grate or stove.

Bothies are basic shelters open to all. They are a valuable resource offering welcome refuge in adverse weather, many of which are maintained by the [Mountain Bothies Association](#) so please consider supporting the organisation. There are also many non-MBA estate bothies which are open to walkers.

Campsites marked on maps may no longer exist or accommodate tents and those that do may require pre-booking. Some (e.g. Aboyne Loch Caravan Park) may make special arrangements for Challengers and others may drop their minimum 2 day stay so it is worth a polite enquiry even if the website is discouraging. Bear in mind many may not be open until the Spring for enquiries. There is usually high demand for pitches at Braemar, Ballater, North Water Bridge and Montrose.



Camp by Loch Mullardoch – Björn Besse

Braemar Caravan Park Mike and Peter have kindly reserved all their small tent pitches for Challengers from 18th to 21st May so these are not available online. Pre-booking is advised by phone (01339 741 373) stating you are a TGOC23 participant. Overseas participants may email info@braemarcaravanpark.co.uk if it is difficult to call.

Ballater Caravan Park A discount is available to Challengers but to access this you must book by phone - 01339 755 727.

South Links Caravan Site, Montrose is run by Angus Council. Bookings can now be made [online](#).

Dovecot Caravan Park at North Water Bridge. Bookings can be made in advance - 01674 840630 or adele@dovecotcaravanpark.co.uk

B&Bs and hotels. Most villages and towns offer a choice of accommodation. Details of many can be found on websites and apps such as [Visit Scotland](#) (01387 245 550), [TripAdvisor](#), [Booking.com](#) and [AirBnB](#). Please note remote buildings named on the map as 'Lodge' do not usually provide accommodation.

Hostels.

Hostelling Scotland (0345 293 7373) offers Challengers a 12% discount on bookings 9th-30th May at hostels in the Challenge area. This does not include the affiliated hostels on their website. Quote code **TGO23** when booking.

Scottish Hostels is a network of independent hostels many of which are regularly used by Challengers.

Most accommodation providers give a warm welcome to Challengers but there are a few which have gone the extra mile to help us in past years, some opening their doors especially for the Event.

❑ **Ault na Goire, Errozie**, NH 544 229 – the Sutherlands offer a great welcome along with camping. They will be offering food but pre-booking is essential preferably by email to janet.sutherland@talk21.com, alternatively ring 01456 486 711. They are happy to hold resupply parcels if informed by phone or email in advance.

❑ **Callater Lodge**, NO 178 844 – Bill Duncan will open Callater Lodge for Challengers once again but will not know until the Spring whether he can offer food along with the usual very warm welcome.

- ❑ **Cougie Lodge**, NH 242 212 – Melanie and her family (melaniejpstrang@hotmail.com or 07773 491 262) will be welcoming Challengers for food, accommodation and camping.
- ❑ **Dalwhinnie** – The Loch Ericht Hotel and Snack Shack (01528 522331) allow camping in their grounds as well as providing meals and rooms. Lee at the **Old School Hostel** will hold resupply parcels and has supplies of gas and meths for sale. Please book beds with him directly, dalwhinniehostel@gmail.com, for a better price than on commercial booking platforms.
- ❑ **Mar Lodge, west of Braemar** offer hot drinks and biscuits in the Stables. They will also hold resupply parcels, though cannot take any responsibility for them.
- ❑ **Newtonmore Hostel** – We are not sure if we will still be running the hostel in May but will hold re-supply parcels at one of our homes if needed and a cup of tea and piece of cake might also be on offer.

TARFSIDE

St Drostan's Hostel will be open from **late afternoon Friday 19th to breakfast time Thursday 25th May**. In recent years, the numbers here had increased to such a degree that it had become a victim of its own success. The new arrangements to alleviate this worked well in 2022 so will be continued. There was still a good degree of sociability in Tarfside without exhausting the volunteers or overwhelming the locals.

- ❑ **NO MAIN MEALS OR ALCOHOL PROVIDED** either for those staying in the hostel or camping on the playing field. **Everybody intending to stay at Tarfside needs to carry their own main meals.**
- ❑ Light refreshments – teas, coffees, cakes, scones etc. during the day from 9am to 9pm.
- ❑ There is no mobile signal in Glen Esk (though a new transmitter is planned) and an unreliable phone box. St Drostan's volunteers will pass on your name and Challenge number to Control via the hostel phone.
- ❑ Please note re-supply parcels **cannot** be sent here.
- ❑ Hostel beds available on a first come, first served basis at **£35** per night.

Tarfside is special part of the Challenge, but it is important that numbers do not escalate again, or it risks becoming unsustainable. So please don't go there on every crossing. If you visited in 2022, we ask that you look for an alternative route to the coast this year.



CHALLENGE COMPANIONS

Friends and family may join you for a few days or visit at planned stops but must not act as back-up crew. Unfortunately, to maintain good relationships with those working on the land, dogs are not allowed on the Challenge.

GPS TRACKERS

We recommend the use of GPS trackers, especially for solo participants, as they give a means of summoning help in an emergency where there is no mobile signal and those with two-way communications can also reassure Control and relatives should you fall behind schedule but not need assistance. However, they are **not a substitute for the phone in system** which is an essential part of the TGO Challenge's safety system. Please note Challenge Control will not monitor GPS tracker maps routinely, only looking at them if a phone in has been missed or concerns have been raised about your welfare. You must have someone at home following your progress. Details of any devices carried and who will be monitoring them will be requested in April.

RESUPPLIES & TRAIL FOOD

The Challenge is a self-supported expedition so support or back-up crews very much contravene its spirit. However, you do not need to carry all you need for two weeks. Most Challengers resupply every 3–4 days. Supplies can be bought along the way or posted, with the owner's permission, to booked accommodation. Please note **some items** such as gas canisters cannot be sent in the post or by courier. Some shops and hospitality businesses have closed or limited their opening hours due to staff shortages so please check before relying upon them.

This year all three trail food suppliers are offering a 20% discount.

Base Camp Foods offer applies to food, drinks, and energy products (excluding already discounted bulk buys) with a minimum £30 spend. Discount code **TGOC202023**.

TentMeals – produce vegan meals and will give a 20% discount. Discount code: **TentMealsTGO23**.

Mountain Trails – Food on the Move have a specific webpage for Challengers [here](#). Discount code: **TGOC23**.

Further details of all offers on the TGO Challenge website [special offers](#) page.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

In April each participant will be asked to provide a medical declaration including details of any long-term injuries and conditions. It remains your responsibility to ensure you are fit enough to participate. This information will only be passed on to the appropriate services in the event of an emergency.

You will also be asked to nominate an emergency contact who will be Challenge Control's first port of call if they are significantly worried about your welfare e.g. a missed phone in or known injury. They do not need to be your next of kin, but it is important this person:

- consents to be your emergency contact.
- knows that you are participating in the TGO Challenge and are not themselves a 2023 participant.
- is available by telephone during the Event and is comfortable conversing in English.
- has details of your outer clothing colour, tent make/colour etc.
- has a photo of you that can be passed to the emergency services.
- holds contact details for anyone else who should know if there are concerns about you.

ANIMAL HAZARDS

Scotland doesn't have much wildlife that can harm you.

- Adders** are our only venomous snake but are relatively shy. Bites are uncommon and rarely cause long term problems.
- Ticks** are small blood sucking arachnids common in the Highlands, particularly in long grass or heather. They tend to seek out dark moist areas of skin. **Tick removers** are an essential part of a Challenger's first aid kit. Ticks can transmit **Lyme Disease** which, although easily treated in the early stages, can cause longstanding problems if left untreated. **If you develop a rash or fever in the days or weeks after the Challenge you should consult a doctor as soon as possible.**
- Cattle** may be encountered, mainly in lowland areas. Use an alternative route if one is available. If not, proceed slowly and quietly giving them as wide a berth as possible. Be particularly cautious of cows with calves and, of course, bulls.
- Midges** are rarely a problem in May. If we have a warm spring, you may encounter some in sheltered spots especially near water.



Scurdie Ness – Anna-Maria Wedlich

FINISHING YOUR CROSSING

Once you have dipped your toes in the North Sea **you must come to Challenge Control at The Park Hotel, Montrose to sign out** and receive your certificate and T-shirt. You may use public or private transport to get there – no need to walk any further.

The smaller 2021 and 2022 Challenge dinners proved popular so we will be offering three equally sized celebratory meals from Wednesday 24th to Friday 26th May seating a maximum of 100 people. There will be some words about TGOC23, toasts and plaques presented to those completing their 10th or 20th crossings on all three nights. If there is sufficient demand, there will also be a smaller gathering on Tuesday 23rd May. **At each dinner priority will be given to those who have completed their 2023 crossing that day and volunteers.** Those receiving plaques may bring one guest. Challengers planning to finish on a different day and other relatives and friends can only be accommodated if there are spare places.

WITHDRAWALS AND CANCELLATION

You can withdraw on or before 14th December 2022 without losing your entry fee. After this date it cannot be refunded or deferred. If you withdraw from the Challenge, for any reason, please let us know as soon as possible. Places cannot be transferred to another person.

The Event cannot be insured against cancellation, so this risk must be shared with Challengers. We will of course try our best to ensure TGOC23 takes place but if, for any reason, it has to be cancelled everyone with a 2023 place will be offered a 50% discount in 2024.

More details in the [2023 - Terms and Conditions](#).

COMPLETING YOUR ROUTE SHEET

Once your route has been planned you need to submit it to us on a 2023 Challenge Route Sheet. This is central to how the Challenge is organised, so it needs to be clear, concise and accurate. We cannot accept routes presented in any other form or on a route sheet from a previous year.

The 2023 route sheet is available as a:

- Word document** – if possible, please use this version as it can be easily annotated for use at Challenge Control. Apple Mac users and those using Open Office or other alternatives to Microsoft Word may find the formatting is altered. If you cannot get it back into the two-page format the Coordinators will adjust it once the route has been signed off. Please submit these as Word documents and not PDFs.
- Editable PDF** – this is an alternative if the Word version doesn't work for you.

If you cannot complete either of the versions above, you can handwrite your route sheet and send it to the coordinators as a scanned email attachment (no photos please) or by post.

When completing the route sheet bear in mind who will be using it:

- You and your group** as an aide memoire summarizing each day's route and when you are due to phone Challenge Control.
- Vetters** use it to trace your route when they assess it.
- Challenge Control** – if worried about you it is their first port of call.
- Emergency Services** if a search is initiated.

No jokes please – they might amuse us or your vetter but may not seem so funny if the sheet is being looked at by the emergency services . . .

The next four pages explain what is needed in each section and why and gives examples of how to present each day's route.

GPX FILES

As an experiment for TGOC23, to see if it aids the vetting process, we are inviting those who use digital mapping to give access to their GPX files. Please ensure:

- There are individual files for each day and, when needed, a FWA.
- Each file's title includes the day and date (e.g. Fri12 Main or Tue16FWA).
- Files are kept in a cloud-based folder that can be shared (e.g. Dropbox, Google Drive).
- A link to the folder is included at the bottom of your route sheet.

We require the same amount of route description and ascent/distance figures on the route sheet as usual. If it works well, we may be able to reduce the information required in future years as the system evolves. Please **DO NOT** send GPX files as email attachments – they are time consuming to download and take up considerable space.

Start/finish points

Date you plan to sign out.
 Date you plan to reach the coast – not date you will report to Challenge Control (if different).
 Information used when preparing start and finish lists.

Name(s) – Group leader first

Mobile phone number(s)

Dinner request(s)

Please indicate dinner preferences for each person.

TGO CHALLENGE 2023 ROUTE SHEET					
	START POINT:	FINISH POINT:	Name(s) – group leader first	Mobile phone number to be carried during the Event	Dinner – Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri or none
	DATE:	DATE:	1.		
			2.		
			3.		
			4.		
Page 1	DAILY ITINERARY WITH FOUL WEATHER ALTERNATIVES (if needed) See planning notes and use the checklist before submitting to the coordinator. Routes with insufficient detail or FWAs will be rejected.			DISTANCE (km) & ASCENT (m)	OVERNIGHT HALT (name & grid ref.)
THU 11th MAY	FWA:				

Main route

Not an essay! - concise and clear so it is easy for your vetter and Challenge Control to use. See examples.
 Place names with a small amount of description – limit the use of linking words e.g. “follow”, use compass points e.g. N, SE for significant changes of direction
 Use only place names on 1:50k OS maps as these are what vetters and Challenge Control use.
 Keep grid references to a minimum using only when no place name is available. When essential use the two prefix letters and only give 6 figures – e.g. NN 185 462.
 Grid references take much longer to locate than place names and require more vetters time to check them.
 One main route only – no multiple variations (exception is escape routes from ridges or summits to FWA).
 Alternative routes cause confusion and take more of the vetters’ valuable time.
 Highlight any significant summits over 600m (eg Munros, Corbetts, Grahams) in **bold**.

FWA

Should link to and from main route.
 For multiday must be contiguous with previous days FWA and may need a second FWA if main route covers high/exposed ground on subsequent days.
 Need to have a FWA for any time you might be on high/exposed ground (see planning guide)
 Can get complicated! Talk to coordinators if stuck.

Ascents and distances

Metric figures only.
 Distance to nearest whole kilometre.
 Ascent to nearest ten metres.
 Ascent is total of all climbs during the day and is never 0!
 Accurate figures show you have planned carefully and taken in to account the effect of distance and ascent on the length of your day.

Overnight halt point

Wild camps/ bothies

Place name and six figure grid reference (e.g. Glen Loyne NH 092 055).
 No need to state “wild camp” – it’s usually pretty obvious!

Villages/towns.

Name of town/village – no grid reference needed.
 Type of accommodation (hotel/hostel/ B&B/campsite) if known.
 Name and phone number of any establishment already booked.
 If bookings are made after submitting your route please let us know details.
 Place names rather than just grid references give Control a quick overview of your route. We realise you may stop short or continue further along the following day’s route.
 Accommodation details are useful if Control need to trace you. We will check with them before worrying your emergency contact.

FRI 26th MAY							
FWA:							
PHONE IN POINTS: minimum FOUR, maximum SIX - need to be reliable mobile reception or wi-fi / landline available						PLANNING METHOD: Please state if manual (eg OS map and contour counting) or digital (eg Anquet, Memory Map)	
DATE		LOCATION		DATE		LOCATION	
1.				4.			
2.				5.			
3.				6.			
GPX files: If you have GPX files to share with your vetter/Challenge Control please provide a link to a shared file (eg Dropbox, Google Drive) below. Each day and FWA should be a separate clearly labelled file:						Loch Ness Ferry Y/N If using, please book with Gordon Menzies as per Event Details and specify below: Date: AM or PM:	



GPX files

Optional: provide a link to a cloud based folder of GPX files. Each day and FWA should be a separate file clearly labelled including the day and date.

Loch Ness Ferry

Please indicate if planning to use the ferry. Give date and time if appropriate.

Planning method

State whether manual (eg map and string/wheel) or digital (Anquet, MemoryMap etc.).

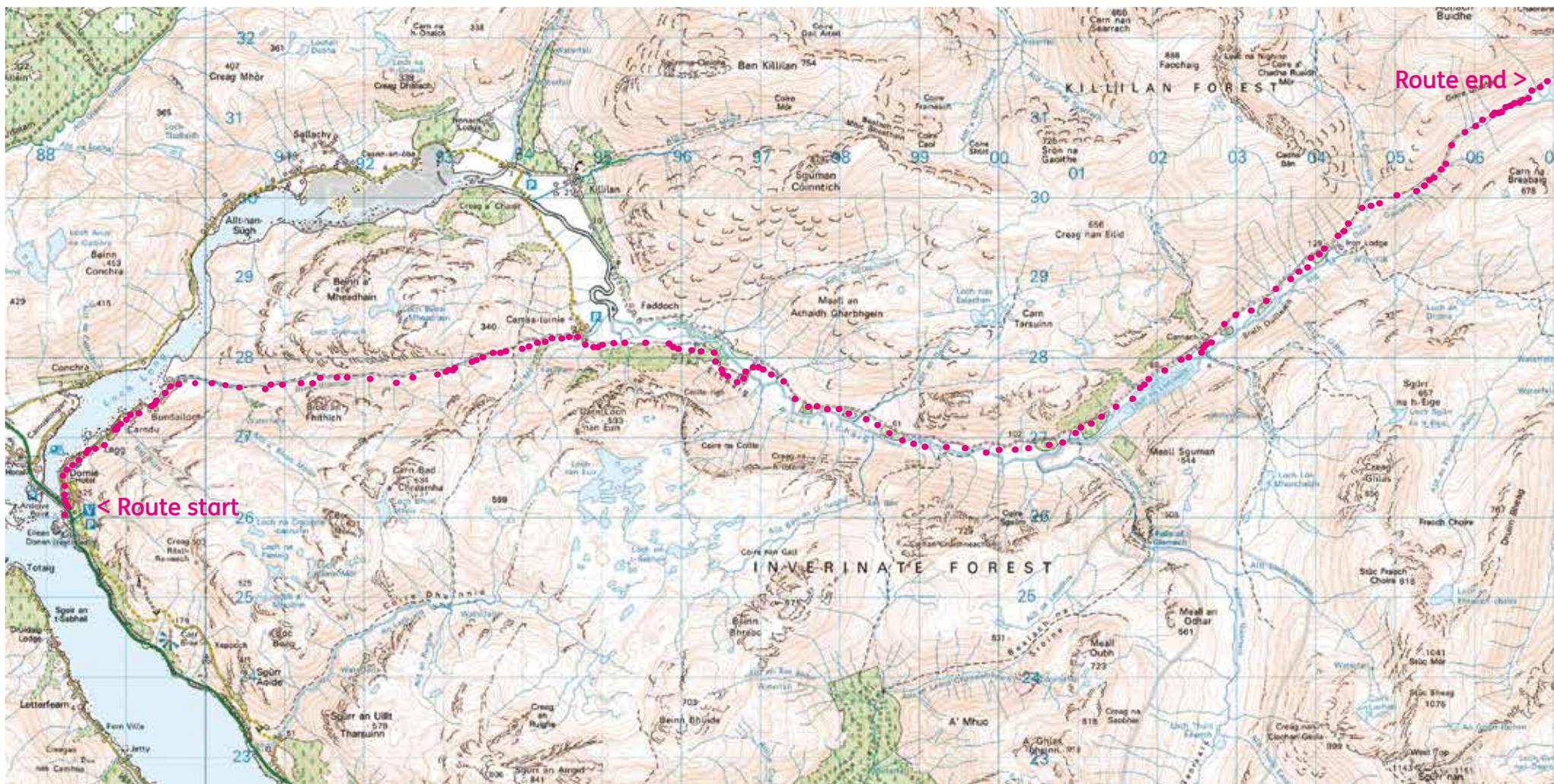
Digital methods usually give higher ascent figures so your vetter needs to know when assessing your figures.

Phone in points

Minimum of 4, maximum of 6.
No more than 4 days apart.
Solo walkers/ high level routes encouraged to phone informally between official phone ins.
Check if on the phone in list. If not should be where mobile signal is likely or landline available.
This is our primary safety system.
Control will have sleepless nights if you can't phone or forget!
Sometimes difficult to identify 4 days on high routes – discuss with coordinators if problems.

Sample days

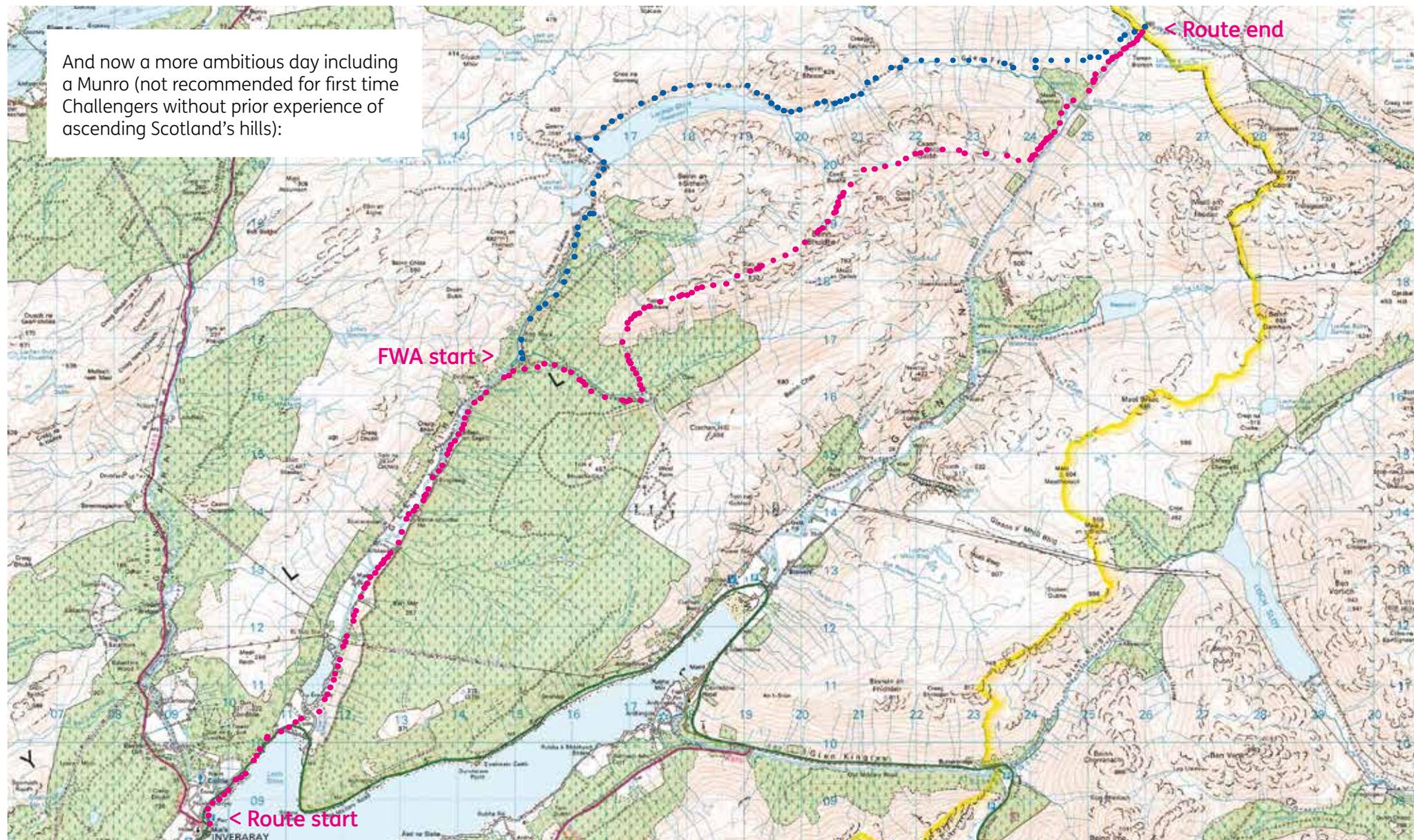
Firstly a relatively simple day from Dornie:



FRI 12 th MAY	Dornie – minor road Bundaloch – path E River Glennan to Camas-Iuinie and Glen Elchaig – bridge at NG 968 278 –track E then NE to Iron Lodge – path NE to Loch Mhoicean	22	710	Loch Mhoicean NN 068 313
	FWA: Not required			

COMPLETING YOUR ROUTE SHEET – SAMPLE DAYS

And now a more ambitious day including a Munro (not recommended for first time Challengers without prior experience of ascending Scotland's hills):



SUN 14 th MAY	Inveraray – road N - track E side Glen Shira then track ESE from NN 158 164 to ascend firebreak at NN 172 160 – Toma'Phioaire – ridge NE to <u>Beinn Bhuidhe (M)</u> - E to Glen Fyne then NE by Allt Chaluum – camp near track end Allt nan Caorainn	26	1220	Allt nan Caorainn NN 260 224
	FWA: As above to Elrigbeag then track Glen Shira to dam – N shore Lochan Shira – N bank River Fyne then contour 350m to campspot as above	28	490	As above



SUBMITTING YOUR ROUTE

Once your route sheet is complete, please use the checklist below before sending it to the coordinators at newtonmorehostel@gmail.com. If you do not have access to email, post it to TGOC Coordinators, Newtonmore Hostel, Main Street, Newtonmore, PH20 1DA.

We acknowledge all routes so if you have not heard from us within 2 days (5 days if posted) please contact us by phone or text on 07786 628 105 / 07769 952 085.

If there is any essential information missing or the route is difficult to follow, you may be asked to adjust your route before it is allocated to a vetter.

We try to allocate your route to a different vetter each year. The exception is for a route that is the

same or similar to one previously vetted but not yet walked. It saves valuable vetting time if the previous vetter assesses any changes so please make this clear on submission.

DEFERRED ROUTES

If your place has been deferred from 2020/21/22, it is your choice whether you start from scratch or resubmit the previously planned route.

If using a previously vetted route, please transfer it on to a 2023 route sheet highlighting any changes in a different colour. (This isn't possible with the editable PDF so please tell us which days involve changes in your covering email.) Your route sheet will be reviewed, and your previous comments updated.

ROUTE SHEET CHECKLIST

Format

- Only 2 pages
- No boxes removed – (size of empty boxes can be reduced if needed).
- Mac users – do not send as a “Pages” document. Please convert to .docx or .pdf.
- Use only place names found on 1:50,000 maps.
- Deferred routes – highlight changes in a different colour.

Start/Finish Points

- Places and dates tally with the written text.

Names

- Names of all group members
- Numbers of any mobiles to be carried. If you are buying a UK SIM on arrival, please state here and inform the coordinators of new number on arrival in UK.

Dinner Requests

- Please indicate your preference in the box provided and refer to the paragraph FINISHING YOUR CROSSING.

Distance and ascent

- Required for all days and FWAs.
- Distance to nearest 1 km.
- Ascent to nearest 10m.
- Metric measurements only.

Grid references

- Use two prefix letters and only six figures (eg NH 068 312).
- In main description use only when a place name is not available.

Main route

- Only one please (escape routes from ridges or summits to FWAs are acceptable).
- Clear concise description (see examples).
- Highlight any summits over 600m (e.g. Munros, Corbetts and Grahams) in bold type.
- Use mainly place names and grid reference only where needed for clarity.

FWAs

- Suitable FWAs are provided – see list and advice on page 7.
- Each FWA (or section of multiday FWA) appears under the relevant day and has distance and ascent figures.
- Multiday FWAs give overnight halts and, if appropriate, link to/from the main route.

Overnight halts

- Town/villages – name of place and establishment you intend to use (if known)
- Wild camping – description and 6 figure grid reference with prefix letters (eg Loch Mhoicean NH 068 312)
- No need to state “wild camp” – it's usually obvious!

Ferry Crossings

- Please indicate in the box provided if you plan to use the Loch Ness crossing.

Phone in points

- Minimum 4, maximum 6.
- Maximum 4 days apart if possible.
- Do not include your start or finish points.
- Give place and date – use day of arrival not following morning.
- Only where mobile signal or access to landline.

GPX files

- If including, please follow guidance on page 14

VETTING PROCESS

However well you have researched your route there are always some nuggets of information that cannot be gleaned from a map or the internet. This is where the vetters come in. They are all experienced Challengers with a vast knowledge of Scotland's hills and glens. Some have been professional guides or involved in mountain rescue in the past, others have explored the Highlands for their own pleasure. All will offer advice that is well worth considering.

VETTERS' ROLE

Our vetters are volunteers who give their time for free. It takes a minimum of three hours to vet a straightforward route but can take several days for a complex one. They aim to assess your route for:

- Feasibility** – including the suitability of FWAs and phone-in points.
- Safety** – taking into account your previous experience.
- Accuracy** – checking distances and ascents are accurate and reasonable and the route description can easily be followed by Challenge Control.
- Advice** – they may make suggestions to enhance your crossing.
- Revisions** – telling you if any revisions are advised or required.

Where possible they will comment on things that may not be evident on the map such as bridges that may be missing or in a poor state, new estate tracks and bothies. **However, your route is unique, so they cannot have knowledge of every step. Things may have changed on the ground of which the coordinators and vetting team are unaware. Whilst we try to keep up to date with information on popular routes the accuracy of information given cannot be guaranteed.** Getting across Scotland in one piece is your responsibility, not your vetter's. You need to use your initiative along the way. If you find things differ from the map or the advice given, please let us know for future reference.

VETTER COMMENTS

Your vetter will return comments to the coordinators who, after reading them, will send them on to you. Vettors work at different speeds so this may take up to two weeks. Please acknowledge receipt of your comments. Every year a few go astray so if yours have not arrived within 3 weeks of submission please contact the coordinators.

REVISIONS

If your vetter requires you to make changes, or you choose to alter your route, your adjusted route sheet must be resubmitted to the coordinators. Please highlight (ideally in another colour) the changes you have made.

- Required revisions.** Please resubmit your route within 4 weeks of receiving your vetter's comments.
- Voluntary revisions.** If you choose to take some of your vetter's suggestions or need to adjust your route for any reason, please send us a revised route sheet as soon as possible.
- Accommodation details.** Please let us know of any planned accommodation that was not on your original route sheet.

The coordinators may sign off minor changes but for more complex revisions will pass your route back to the vetter for their assessment.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

There are a variety of ways in which you can keep in touch with other Challengers as well as Challenge news.

CHALLENGE WEBSITE

Go to www.tgochallenge.com where we will post updates on the [Challenge blog](#),

SOCIAL MEDIA #TGOC23

Follow @TGOChallenge on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or tgo_challenge on [Instagram](#). You may also want to join our TGOChallenge Facebook group.

MESSAGE BOARD

Challengers can swap ideas and ask questions [here](#). There is a wealth of experience in the Challenge Community and someone is likely to have the answer to your question but please do not ask for a complete route! We ask that you use your real name, not a pseudonym, and respect other users.

REUNIONS

We have Reunions in northern England in April (organised by Alan Hardy) and Scotland in October (organised by Kirsten Paterson) details of which can be found [here](#).

The [Hill and Mountain Walking Club](#) was formed in 1989 by Challengers and welcomes new members. They hold regular meets throughout the UK and abroad, offering the chance to meet up with Challenge friends as well as taking in a few hills.

TGO CHALLENGE SUPPORTERS

Ultralight Outdoor Gear

Ultralight Outdoor Gear was founded to provide backpackers with real choice when it comes to their gear and to present more information than is available elsewhere about each piece of kit. We use as much of the gear as we can and tell our online visitors honestly what we think, the stuff we don't have time to use gets examined at our offices and we give our verdict on it all, product by product.

You'll also find articles about backpacking routes around the world, the latest gear technology, how to choose products from the wide ranges available and other useful articles on subjects like food, winter backpacking, essential kit etc.

We are passionate about backpacking, especially in wild places.



Outdoor Map Navigator

Established as Anquet Maps in 2001, Outdoor Map Navigator has provided a digital mapping platform to outdoor enthusiasts for over twenty years.

The desktop and mobile apps provide access to the latest OS 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 maps. Routes can be created and edited on desktop or mobile devices, exported as GPX files, stored in Anquet's cloud and synced to other devices. Users can download maps for use without an internet connection. The mobile apps also show your current position, including a grid reference, and allow tracklogs to be recorded.



The Great Outdoors Magazine

The Great Outdoors is the UK's longest-established hiking magazine. We have been inspiring people to explore wild places for more than 40 years.

Through compelling writing, beautifully illustrated stories and eye-catching content, across a range of platforms, we seek to convey the joy of adventure, the thrill of mountainous and wild environments, and the wonder of the natural world. We're here to help you make the most of your time in the hills and mountains.

As well as stunning photography and top class writing, we are famous for the rigour of our gear reviews. Our reviewers are the country's most experienced team of testers – including world-renowned backpacking experts and long-distance walker, Chris Townsend – and we always ensure gear is put through its paces in challenging mountainous environments. Our essential skills advice is written by top outdoor instructors, guides and experts.

Our roster of contributors ranges from established outdoor writers and authors to younger, up and coming voices who reflect a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts.



For those who are unfamiliar with Scotland here are a few Gaelic/Scots words that might be useful.

abhainn = river
allt = stream
bailie = farm, township
baine = pale
beag = small
beag-dhonas = imp or pixie
bealach = col
bearn = pass, gap
beinn = hill/mountain
bhuidhe = yellow
camus = beach, bay
clach = stone
cnoc = hillock
coille = wood
creag = crag

dearg = red
doire = wood
drochaid = bridge
druim = ridge
dubh = dark/black
eas = waterfall
eilean = island
fear/ban-sgrùdaidh = vetter
feith = stream
fiacail = toothed ridge
fraoch = heather
gairm-chatha = challenge
garbh = rough, stony
geal = white
gleann = valley

gorm = blue
grianan = sunny place
iolair = eagle
lairig = pass
liath = grey
linne = pool
lochán = small lake
madadh-allaidh = werewolf
meall = rounded hill
mhor/mor = large
moine = moss, bog
monadh = upland moor
morghán = shingle
odhar = dappled
pait = hump, knoll

rath = hill-fort
ruadh = russet
seanachas = legend
sgor/sgurr = pointed peak
slug = mire, morass
socach = snout-shaped hill
spate = high fast water
sron = shoulder
stob = peak
strath = wide valley
stuc = conical hill
uamh = cave
uaine = green
uisge = water
uisge-beatha = whisky