

Welcome to TGO Challenge East 2026!

This document contains everything you need to know about the inaugural TGO Challenge (TGOE) East event. Within you will find: an overview of the event, how to apply, the entry requirements, and lots of useful information from application and route selection all the way through to the event start. All hyperlinks in this document are in a blue font and underlined.

If you haven't already done so, please read the [TGOE East 2026 Terms and Conditions](#). The [TGO Challenge website](#) also gives lots of information relevant to TGOE East participants and has a dedicated [TGOE East section](#). If you can't find the answer to your question within these pages or on the website, the [TGOE East Coordinators, Mick & Ali](#) are always happy to help.

[TGOE East 2026
Terms and Conditions](#)

[TGOE East webpages](#)

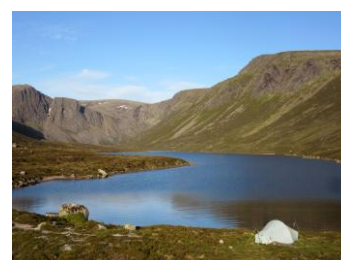
So, what's it all about?	2
When is it?.....	2
How do I apply?.....	2
What experience do I need to enter TGOE East?	2
How does it work?	3
What are the rules?.....	4
Where do I start & end, and what are the routes?.....	4
How do I choose a route?	5
What information will I get about my allocated route?.....	6
What can I expect during TGOE East?.....	7
What preparations are needed for the walk?.....	7
What accommodation and resupply options are there?.....	9
How do I withdraw from the event?.....	9
Can I get a refund or defer my place?.....	9
Can I change to a full TGO Challenge place?.....	10
How is the safety on the event organised?	10
What hazards may I encounter?.....	11
Where can I walk and camp in Scotland?.....	12
How do I communicate with Coordinators and other Challengers?.....	12
A few words from our sponsors.....	13



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Click an index title
to jump to section.



Photos: Tim Day, Tim Robinson, Graeme Dunsire

So, what's it all about?

[The Great Outdoors Challenge](#) started in 1980. It is a demanding, self-supported walk coast-to-coast across Scotland completed within in 15 days in May. It is not a competition, a race or a running event. It aims to encourage fellowship amongst walkers, fostering a friendly atmosphere in which participants can explore and enjoy Scotland's wild and remote places as well as the company of other Challengers. It is an event aimed at experienced backpackers and hillwalkers, who plan and execute their own route across Scotland.

The TGO Challenge can seem a big step up for those who have experience only of walking waymarked routes, have limited or no experience in Scotland, find the route planning daunting or lack confidence in their own skills. Some more experienced backpackers may be reluctant to spend two weeks precious annual leave on an event without having a taste of it first, so we aim to accommodate them too.

TGOC East is a shorter version of the main Event, with pre-set routes, aimed at bridging the experience gap to the main event, helping less experienced participants gaining the skills and know how needed for a future successful TGO Challenge crossing, and for all to get a feel for the unique and wonderful event that is the TGO Challenge.

When is it?

TGOC East 2026 will take place from **8am Thursday, 14th May to 5pm Friday, 22nd May**, coinciding with the second half of the TGO Challenge allowing participants to mix with Challengers.

How do I apply?

The TGOC East Entry Form will be made public on the [TGOC website](#) when entries open at **noon on Saturday, 29th November 2025**, and will close at **noon on Saturday, 28th February 2026**. Entries for the event are on a first-come, first-served basis with a reserve list operating if it is oversubscribed.

[Enter TGOC East](#)

What experience do I need to enter TGOC East?

To qualify for a TGOC East place you must meet the following criteria:

- **TGOC Challenge crossings:** You have not previously completed the main TGOC Challenge event.
- **Experience:** You have completed, within the last 5 years, a multi-day backpacking trip, in a wild environment, of at least 2 days/1 night. The trip must have involved at least 16km (10 miles) walking each day while carrying your equipment.
- **Navigation:** You have the ability to navigate, including using a compass, and be able to read a suitably detailed map (such as Ordnance Survey - paper or digital).
- **Fitness:** You have the ability to carry personal and camping equipment, and a minimum of 3 days' provisions.
- **Self sufficiency:** You have the capacity to be self-sufficient in remote areas where help may not be easily accessible, including suitable first aid skills.
- **Assessing Risks:** You have the ability to assess and deal with issues encountered and adverse weather (wind, rain, occasionally snow, and excessive heat), including crossing unbridged river/burns and other obstacles that present themselves along the way.

Please note that if you are walking as part of a group, all group members, not just the group leader, must have these skills. If you are uncertain that you have the appropriate your skills, please contact the TGOC East Coordinators.

[River crossings](#)

[Navigation](#)

[Ordnance Survey Maps](#)



TGOC East Coordinators:

Mick Blackburn - 07714 329917 & Ali Ogden – 07786 628105

How does it work?

November to February

- 1) **Complete the [Entry Form](#) and review the [Terms and Conditions](#).** This requires your personal details, whether solo or part of a group, as well as information on your backpacking experience.
- 2) **Experience review** -The Coordinators will review your application to ensure you meet the entry criteria and grade your experience level. Within 3 working days you will receive an email which does one of the following:
 - Offers you a place, lets you know what route grades are available to you, and requests payment.
 - Offers you a place on the reserve list.
 - Requests more information about your experience.
 - Explains why your entry has been rejected.
- 3) **Pay for your place** via the link provided. Your place will be reserved for you for 7 days.
- 4) **Select your route and start date preferences** - On receipt of payment you will be emailed a copy of the [Route Options Table](#), the link to the [Route Preference Form](#) and information on which of the routes are available to you. You have 2 weeks to return this to the Coordinators.
- 5) **Review your route** - Within 3 working days you will be allocated one of your preferred routes (subject to availability). You will receive an email including:
 - a Route Sheet.
 - The GPX files.
 - a Route Information Guide.
- 6) **Accept or decline your route** – inform the Coordinators within 10 days. If you decline, we will need to discuss other options with you.

March/April

- 1) **Read the Final Details**, this document, sent to you by email, contains contact information on Challenge Control, your TGOE East number, information on the TGO Challenge/TGOE East Safety Process, a full list of Challengers taking part in both events, and other safety and hazard information.
- 2) **Complete the online, mandatory In Case of Emergency (ICE) Form** requiring you to provide Emergency Contact data, a Health Declaration, and GPS Tracker data (if you choose to carry one).
- 3) **Complete the Pre-booked Accommodation Form**, which lets Challenge Control know of your pre-booked accommodation, which may be used by Challenge Control if there are concerns about your welfare.
- 4) **Respond to the communication check** by Text or WhatsApp, when requested, from the phone you will use during the Event to the Challenge Control text number.

May

Go for a walk - all your planning and preparation is complete! You just need to go out there and walk your route.

- 1) **Sign out from your start point** by Text, WhatsApp or a phone call to Challenge Control.
- 2) **Call from your Phone-in Points** - don't forget to make your scheduled calls to Challenge Control. You can Text or WhatsApp, but we love to hear your voice and find out how you are doing.
- 3) **Dip your boots in the North Sea** then come to Challenge Control (at [The Park Hotel](#), Montrose) with a beaming smile and sign the finish register. You've done it! Pick up your TGOE East T-shirt and certificate, share your experience with other Challengers and maybe attend one of the [Celebratory dinners](#). (Please note the cost of the dinner is **not** included in the entry fee.)

June

- 1) **Start planning your TGO Challenge route!** Completing a TGOE East crossing qualifies you for the TGO Challenge for the next 2 years. We hope you now have the confidence to plan your own route. [TGOE Coordinators Sue & Di](#), will be there to help if needed, as will your new friends in the Challenge Community.



TGOE East Coordinators:

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What are the rules?

There are relatively few rules. The most important are that you must:

- Walk every step, following your allocated route between the start and finish dates. This means if you need to take transport at any point during the event, you must return to the same point before continuing for your walk to be valid.
- Maximum group size of 4 people – solo walkers are welcome.
- Carry a mobile phone with you during the event (and know how to use it) for safety reasons.
- Ring or message Challenge Control from the 4 mandatory Phone-in Points.
- Familiarize yourself with and observe the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) and the [Bothy Code](#) and the principles of [Leave no trace](#) camping.
- Treat the landscape, those who live and work there, fellow Challengers and other visitors with respect and kindness.
- Dogs are not allowed on TGOE East. Human friends, who do not have their own place, may join you for a few days but not your entire route.

A few more [Dos and Don'ts](#) (some relevant to the main TGO Challenge event only) to help you gauge the spirit of the event can be found on the [TGO Challenge website](#).

[Scottish Outdoor Access Code \(SOAC\)](#)

[Mountain Bothies Association - Bothy Code](#)

[Leave No Trace Camping](#)

Where do I start & end, and what are the routes?

There are eight start points for the routes from Dunkeld in the south to Inverness in the north. All are situated on or near the A9 trunk road allowing easy access by car, train or bus and with good links to the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness airports. The route end points are on the east coast of Scotland at locations popular with those on the main TGOE event and have bus or train services available (with an occasional short walk) to take you to Montrose, where you sign the finish register.

All TGOE East routes are preset, with most start points having more than one route option, and differ in difficulty, terrain and duration. Overall, there are 20 route options available, which are graded by level of difficulty as follows:

- **Grade 1** - generally a low-level, straightforward route mainly using established tracks and paths, with perhaps a small amount of pathless terrain.
- **Grade 2** - generally a low-level route, using established tracks and paths, but may include: occasional unbridged river crossings requiring Foul Weather Alternative (FWA) routes, some pathless terrain, potential obstacles (e.g. deer fences) and perhaps one or two of the easier tops.
- **Grade 3** – whilst also making use of tracks and paths, this is a more demanding, often higher-level route taking in several tops and/or some tougher terrain with extended pathless sections. Careful navigation is required.
- **Grade 4** – a demanding, generally higher-level route and/or a route with significant difficult terrain where going can be slow, requiring careful navigation, especially in poor weather. There may be multiple FWA requirements due to the nature of the route.

The TGOE East routes do not generally follow lines you will find in guidebooks or on websites, so you will not find too many helpful signposts or waymarks. Where possible we have used paths and tracks walked by the Coordinators or the TGO Challenge vetting team in recent years. Over the summer and autumn of 2025 we have reced some sections where our knowledge is more distant. However, things can change since we last had



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Challenger feet on them - gates we found open may be locked, bridges may be washed away by winter storms, landslips may obscure paths, and new tracks and fences constructed. In addition, conditions on the day may make sections we have found easy going become difficult. We warn of significant river crossing, but in severe weather even minor burns may become hazardous. So, whilst our GPX files, routes sheets and information sheets should be a useful guide you need to be able to adapt to what you find on the day on the ground.

The [Route Options Table](#), which summarises all the TGOC East routes, can be found at the end of this document and on the [TGOC website](#), and provides information on the following:

- Start and end points.
- Duration and possible start dates.
- Route descriptions (including Foul Weather Alternative routes).
- Daily distances and ascents.
- Levels of difficulty.
- Known hazards.

[Route Options Table](#)

[Route Summaries Webpage](#)

You will be notified which grades of routes you can apply to walk after your Entry Form has been reviewed, but there will be plenty of choice for all levels of experience.

How do I choose a route?

There are a few things that you need to consider before you delve into the detail:

- **Route Grade.** Make sure that you only select routes from the grades of route available to you, as notified by the Coordinator.
- **Solitary or sociable?** Most of the routes provide the chance to meet up with others on TGOC East as well as Challengers on the main TGO Challenge. A few of the routes are less frequented by other Challengers and can prove more solitary.
- **Duration of crossing.** Remember it is not a race! The timescales for each of the routes should allow you to complete your walk without going too far outside your comfort zone.
- **Start Date.** Routes that have a duration of 8 days have start dates restricted to the first Thursday or Friday only, whereas other routes (6 or 7 days duration) allow start dates of Thursday to Sunday.
- **Rest day.** It may be possible to tailor your route to have a rest day, should you wish to include one.
- **Distance and ascent.** From our experience 20–25km (13–16 miles) per day is enough for most people. The Route Option Table has information on the daily distances and ascents, so you can quickly see which are the 'big' days and which are more gentle.
- **Accommodation.** You will need to wild camp on all of the routes, but some allow you more opportunities to have a roof over your head or a campsite with facilities than others. See [here](#) for information on popular TGOC accommodation and resupply spots and the [Special Offers](#) page for accommodation at The Park Hotel in Montrose

Once you have decided on your preferred route (and back-up choices) you need to let the Coordinators know via the Route Preference Form, a link to which will be sent to you on payment of the Entry Fee. We will endeavour to allocate your top choice to you, but may have to allocate one of your back-up choices as we also need to take into account the numbers applying for each route.

[Accommodation](#)

[Resupplies](#)

[Special Offers
inc The Park Hotel](#)



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What information will I get about my allocated route?

Within 3 days of submitting your Route Preference Form you will receive by email:

- A **Route Sheet** for your allocated route, which gives a description of each day's walk including distance and ascent figures, (see an example of a day in Figure 1 below)
- A **Route Information Guide** including a written route description, overnight halt point options, re-supply points and other supporting information, (see an example of a day in Figure 2 below).
- The **daily GPX** files for each day and any Foul Weather Alternatives routes, which can be overlaid by you onto a digital map (see an example of a day using Outdoor Map Navigator (OMN) in Figure 3 below). We will provide you, on request, with a 8-month licence for OMN for this purpose.

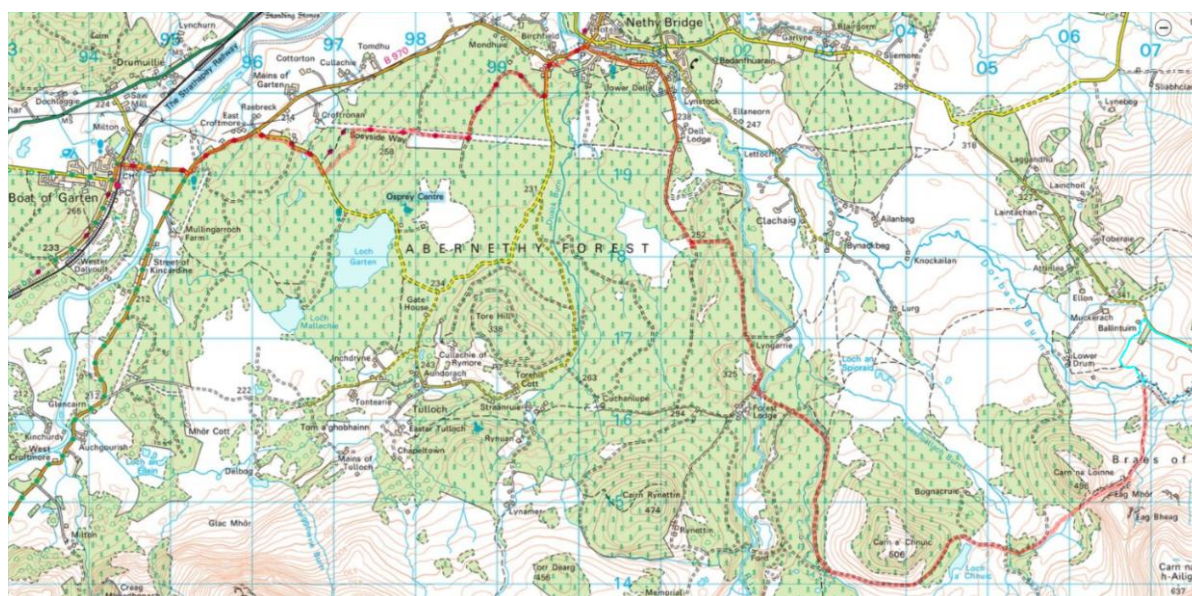
Date (Main & FWA)	Route Description	Distance (km)	Ascent (m)	OHP & GR.	High Day?
Thu 14 th May Main	(PIP1) E on Speyside Way to Nethy Bridge, track S past Dell Lodge and Lyngarrie to Forest Lodge - cross R. Nethy on bridge at NJ 022 163, track E to Loch a' Chnuic, on path past Eag Mhor, then N to camp S-side of Dorback Burn	23	350	Dorback Burn. NJ 070 164	N
Thu 14 th May FWA					

Example of one day of Route Sheet

Day	Comment
Day 1	<p>Starting out from Boat of Garten (don't forget to call Challenge Control to let them know you are setting out) on the Speyside Way through the Abernethy Forest, you'll quickly find yourself arriving in Nethy Bridge where there is a store (for those forgotten items) and a café to refresh yourself for the way ahead.</p> <p>Next it's back, south, through the forest and then east into the Braes of Abernethy, all on good tracks and paths, for a wild camp alongside Dorback Burn, where we are assured there's a 'small but ideal pitch' (see photo).</p> <p>Accommodation: Tonight's room is supplied by yourself. Water is available from Dorback Burn and was reported as 'surprisingly clear', but things do change.</p> <p>If you wish to walk on into tomorrow's route by about 4kms, then it looks like there should be a good place to pitch around Letteraiten, where, from aerial photography, there's a farm ruin to the south of the track.</p>



Example of one day from Route Information Guide



GPX track of day above shown in red



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Now you have the route details, take your time to go through the route. If you think it is too hard for you (or the least experienced person in your group), let the Coordinators know by email or give one of them a ring. We both know the TCOC East area well and will be able to advise on an alternative.

The routes sheets, information guides and GPX files have been created by Mick & Ali purely for the use of TGOE East participants. Please do not share them with anyone other than your team members and emergency contacts. We are happy for you to write about your experience on social media, in blogs or on video, but please do not publish any of these documents or files.

What can I expect during TGOE East?

As with any multi-day backpacking trip, TGOE Challenge East is a serious undertaking with Scotland's climate and terrain throwing in some extra challenges:

- **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 some areas travelling at 2-3km an hour is good going with a full pack.
- **Navigation:** You need to be capable of navigating accurately, sometimes over pathless ground, using a map and compass – whether physical or digital. There are few waymarked paths; some paths marked on the map are not evident on the ground, and some newer tracks on the ground may not be yet on the map!
- **Climate:** Scotland's climate is notoriously unpredictable. High winds and heavy rain are common. Depending on your route, you may 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, which may push you onto your Foul Weather Alternative (FWA) unless you have winter skills and equipment, and occasionally fresh snow fall at lower levels. It can also be hot and sunny!
- **Changes of plan:** For those routes that may be impassible during bad weather, a Foul Weather Alternative (FWA) route option is provided in the supplied Route Sheet, so expect to be flexible.

[Guide to Scotland's Terrain](#)

[Navigation and Maps](#)

[FWAs](#)

What preparations do I need to do for the walk?

The following sections provide information on preparing yourself and your equipment, selecting maps and arranging accommodation.

You and your equipment

As the TGOE East is an event for those who have a reasonable level of experience in backpacking, we do not provide an exhaustive equipment list. However, for your safety, we would highlight that each participant should carry the following items, all of which need to be suitable for Scotland's climate including driving rain and high winds:

- Backpacking tent or suitable shelter.
- Sleeping bag and mat.
- Cooking equipment.
- Waterproof, warm and windproof clothing.
- Emergency rations for at least one full day.
- Maps, compass and whistle.
- First aid kit.
- Smart phone.

You don't need to be super-fit to backpack in Scotland, but you do need a reasonable degree of fitness and a good dollop of determination. **It is your responsibility to ensure you are fit enough to participate and tackle the route that you have selected.** We do not require written proof of your fitness, but if you have any longer-term illnesses or injuries, we strongly advise that you discuss them with your doctor or nurse, making sure they are aware of the nature of the TGOE East.



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The fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the event, so preparation is key. The best way to prepare is to get out there and walk with a Challenge-sized pack whenever you can, whatever the weather. Try and fit in some backpacking trips too – a chance to familiarise yourself with new equipment, test that old equipment is still serviceable and to practise those wild camping skills. It's not ideal to find out your latest purchase really doesn't suit you on day one of your walk!

Maps for TGOE East

We do not supply maps for your crossing, so you need to source your own. Open-source mapping has improved significantly in recent years and is used by many planning tools and platforms. However, there are still significant limitations, in particular, no facility to calculate UK Grid References (see below) and not showing hazards such as crags. For this reason, we only consider the following suitable to navigate in the Scottish Highlands:

- [Ordnance Survey](#) 1:50,000 maps are recommended as they give sufficient detail in mountainous areas.
- [Ordnance Survey](#) 1:25,000 maps can be useful as they give more detail such as field boundaries.
- [Harvey Mountain Maps](#) 1:40,000 are designed for walkers and mountaineers but only cover a small proportion of the TGOE East area.

Large scale maps such as road maps and Google Earth can be used to get an overview but must not be relied upon during the event.

Outdoor Map Navigator (OMN)

Our digital mapping sponsor, OMN, provide a free, 8-month licence for their digital mapping system, which includes access to OS mapping, so that you can upload the GPX files provided to view on your digital systems (computers, smart phones, smart watches etc.), as well as print hard copies of the route for primary or secondary use as appropriate. Once you have paid your Entry Fee, you can email us to request an access code to get your free, 8-month licence.

You will find videos on the [TGOE YouTube Channel](#) that show you how to use the OMN application and how to upload/download GPX files with OMN (and other digital mapping software applications).

Paper maps or digital maps? The choice is yours but whichever you use, they need to be up to date and you need to know how to interpret and use them. You should always carry a backup, be it paper or digital. For example, many Challengers will use digital mapping on their phone but carry paper printouts in their pack. Be aware that there are many parts of the TGOE East area where there is no mobile internet signal. Therefore, **if using a digital mapping app, you must download all relevant maps for use offline**. Sheet maps, printouts and digital downloads should cover sufficient territory to allow for diversions necessitated by extreme weather or injury.

Ordnance Survey Grid Reference system: Challenge Control uses OS maps for all mapping requirements and uses the associated OS Grid Reference (GR) system to establish accurate positions on a map, as do the Mountain Rescue Teams. If you are unfamiliar with this GR system, there's a video on the [TGOE YouTube Channel](#) that explains it. There are free mobile phone apps that you can download, which give a readout of your current position, based on your phone location services, in various formats, including OS GR system - search for 'Grid Ref UK' in your mobile app store.

[Maps and Navigation](#)

[Using OMN YouTube](#)

[OS Grid Reference YouTube](#)



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What accommodation and resupply options are there?

Where can I stay?

The Route Sheet will identify Overnight Halt Points (OHP) for each of your days. These will be either wild camps, bothies (a free to use, rudimentary hut) or campsites. However, you can always opt to stay at a hotel, hostel, B&B etc. when the OHP is in or near a town or village. The cost of overnight accommodation is **not** included in the Entry Fee and you will need to make your own bookings at any paid accommodation, including campsites.

If wild camping, 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. Please choose where you camp carefully, making sure you are well away from roads and occupied buildings, and practise leave no trace camping. Please **do not light fires** other than in a bothy grate or stove. See [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) for advice on wild camping.

The Route Information Guide will provide you with specific advice on accommodation and resupply option for each OHP.

[Accommodation
Inc. Wild Camping, & Bothies](#)

[Mountain Bothies
Association \(MBA\)](#)

Where can I pick up resupplies?

Both the TGO Challenge and TGOC East are self-supported expeditions so support or back-up crews very much contravene its spirit. However, you do not need to carry all you need for the duration. Most Challengers resupply every 3–4 days. Supplies can be bought along the way or posted, with the owner's permission, to booked accommodation. The Route Information Guide provides information on resupply points along your route. See the Special Offers page on the [TGO website](#) for discounts.

Please note some items such as gas canisters, cannot be carried on aircraft or sent in the post or by courier, so may need to be bought on arrival.

[Resupplies](#)

[Special Offers](#)

How do I withdraw from the event?

If you have to withdraw from the event, then let us know:

- **Before the event start:** If you have to withdraw prior to starting the event, just notify the Coordinators by email or phone.
- **During the event (in an emergency):** If you have an emergency during the event and require emergency services call 999, but inform Challenge Control as soon as possible.
- **During the event (non-emergency):** Challenge Control in Montrose and let them know as soon as possible that you are having to retire from the event. They provide a sympathetic ear and will also help you if you need to get advice on the best route out as well as information about transport services. However, please remember that you are responsible for making your way to safety.

Don't forget that if you have already booked accommodation for your route, you need to let them know of your cancellation.

Can I get a refund or defer my place?

Refunds and deferrals are made in accordance with the TGOC East Terms and Conditions. If you are having difficulties with your application, route selection etc. and need more time, advice or to discuss your options, just give us a call or drop us an email and we' be happy to help. The fundamental options are:



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- You have a 14-day cooling-off period starting from the date of payment of the Entry Fee, during which you are entitled to a full refund.
- If we cannot offer you one of your nominated route preferences, then you are entitled to a full refund.
- If you decide, within 10 days of receiving the completed Route Sheet, GPX files and Route Information Guide from us for your allocated route, that you consider the route allocated is not acceptable, you will be entitled to a deferred place for the following year, or a refund of the Entry Fee minus an administrative charge of £20.

[TGOE East 2026](#)
[Terms and Conditions](#)

Can I change to a full TGO Challenge place?

Yes, you can change to the full TGO Challenge, as long as:

- You have enough experience to qualify for a TGO Challenge place – remember the entry criteria are higher.
- If there are still places available on TGOE 26 and you change your mind before 31st January 2026.
- If you have received your TGOE East allocated route, you should not use it as part of your TGO Challenge route, but you can take inspiration from it.
- You agree to pay the top-up fee as a TGO Challenge place costs more than a TGOE East one.

How is the safety on the event organised?

Challenger safety is our paramount concern. We adhere to strict safety protocols throughout the process. The following points provide an overview of the main safety points.

- **Application review:** Each application is reviewed by the Coordinators, at which point the grade(s) of routes applicable for an applicant is decided. Please ensure that your declared experience is accurate and truthful. We rely on your honesty and are pleased to help if you need guidance.
- **Challenge Control:** The staff at Control are all very friendly and are there to help you if you need advice, guidance or just a chat! They are all experienced Challengers and are likely to have first-hand knowledge of your route. So, if you need to contact them in between Phone-in Points (PIP) for any reasons, don't worry - just call them. Contact details will be in the Final Details document, released in the spring.
- **Phone-in Process:** The Phone-in process is the core of our safety system - it allows us to know where you are, when you got there and how you are. It also allows us to pass on any useful information to you that may arise during the crossing. Failure to check in on the designated day/place may result in concern at Challenge Control and possibly a referral to Mountain Rescue. It's a good idea to put your PIPs in your phone as reminders – it saves time, effort and sometimes embarrassment. You will need to contact Challenge Control at each of your 4 nominated PIPs during your crossing.
- **Trackers:** We strongly recommend the use of GPS trackers, especially for solo participants, as they give you 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. 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. Not sure about carrying a tracker? Take a look at [Caburn's story](#) from 2023 - it might just persuade you . . .
- **Personal responsibility:** We try to make sure that all the data we supply is accurate. Nevertheless, there are always circumstances that change the nature of the walk due to weather, bridge failure, flood water, forestry work etc. Therefore, you must rely on your own skills to get round these issues. The Coordinators post information on the [Access News](#) page on the website of any known issues.

[Safety](#)

[Challenge Control](#)

[GPS Trackers](#)

[Road Walking](#)



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What hazards may I encounter?

You should be familiar with the hazards of remote and mountainous terrain. We will warn you of hazards we know about in the Route Information Guide, but some are unpredictable, and things can change on the ground since the route was assessed:

Climate:

Scottish weather is gloriously unpredictable, which is why the FWAs are important. A forecast beyond 48 hours ahead is at best an educated guess so you need to be prepared for all possibilities. Both the [Mountain Weather Information Service \(MWIS\)](#) and [Met Office](#) provide daily weather forecasts.

- **Wind.** You may choose to take an FWA because of rain, but high wind speed is more likely to make it a necessity. You need to ensure your shelter and clothing are up to Scottish conditions.
- **Rain.** Combined with wind, at some point you will experience Scotland's speciality of horizontal rain! Good waterproofs are essential.
- **Cold.** Overnight temperatures can be subzero in May even in the glens. Snow and ice are common on the hills and may force you to retreat to your FWA. Windchill can be significant at all altitudes.
- **Heat.** It can be hot and sunny too. Know the signs of heat exhaustion and how to avoid and treat it.

River crossings:

- Heavy and persistent rain can turn a burbling burn into an uncrossable raging torrent. We will warn of burns known to be difficult in spate, but in the worst of conditions, even minor side streams can suddenly become major obstacles.
- Forging unbridged rivers is one of the biggest hazards on the Challenge. You must know how to do it safely. River crossing advice is available 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 better crossing point or putting your tent up and waiting are often safer options.

Deer fences and gates:

We will warn you, when possible, of high deer fences, but some may have appeared since we last walked your route and gates may have been locked. You are entitled under the access code to climb over them but take care when you do.

Road walking:

In places, especially as you approach the East Coast, some road walking is unavoidable. Be aware of traffic especially on roads that have blind bends, narrow or no verges, and fast traffic that is not expecting pedestrians. If you are from overseas, remember the UK drives on the left side of the road.

Water:

Generally abundant in Scotland but it can become trickier to source after prolonged dry spells. We advise you select water sources carefully and treat all water by boiling, filtering or by purification tablets.

Animals:

The main risks that Challengers encounter from wildlife during the event is from:

- **Ticks** are common in the Highlands, particularly in long grass or heather which can transmit [Lyme Disease](#). [Tick removers](#) are an essential part of your first aid kit. If you develop a rash or fever in the days or weeks after TGOE East you should consult a doctor as soon as possible.
- **Cattle.** If encountered use an alternative route if possible. If not, proceed slowly and quietly giving them as wide a berth as you can. Be particularly cautious of cows with calves and, of course, bulls.
- **Capercaillies** are highly territorial large bird that can react aggressively to people. The one in Glen Tanar can cause the need for a long diversion. Please follow any diversion signs.
- **Adders** are our only venomous snake and are relatively shy. Bites are uncommon and rarely cause long term problems.



TGOE East Coordinators:

Mick Blackburn - 07714 329917 & Ali Ogden – 07786 628105

Where can I walk and camp in Scotland?

In Scotland, you can go on to most land to enjoy the outdoors – as long as you behave responsibly. When you are enjoying the outdoors, you must follow the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) (SOAC). Please make yourself familiar with this code.

SOAC applies to hills and moors, forests and woods, beaches and the coast, rivers and lochs, parks and some types of farmland. There are also some common-sense exceptions, including houses and gardens, other buildings (including farms) and their yards or compounds, school grounds and places which charge for entry.

To comply with the SOAC, we ask that you avoid passing through farmyards and anything that could be considered a garden or grounds and that you camp away from inhabited buildings. In recent years “fly camping” by roads has become an issue for many communities. Whilst not technically outwith the Access Code we ask that you avoid this where possible especially on the outskirts of towns and villages.

How do I communicate with Coordinators and other Challengers?

The main communication methods are:

- **Email:** We prefer email as the primary means of communication. We will use the email address you have given on your Entry Form, so please let us know if this changes. Please add tgoceast@gmail.com to your address book and mark it as a “safe sender” to avoid messages from us being blocked by your server or landing in your spam filter. It may take up to 3 days to respond to some emails, so if you have not heard from us within 5 days please contact us again.
- **Phone:** If you need to discuss any issues too complex for an email, you can contact one of the Coordinators by phone – details in the footer and on the [Contacts](#) webpage.
- **Social media:** The TGO Challenge has an active Facebook group which you are welcome to join. Please don't use this for queries via aimed at the Coordinators.
- **During the event:** Once the TGOE East event starts on Thu 14th May, the way we communicate will change: instead of contacting the [TGOE East Coordinators](#) – it will be via TGO Challenge Control (who will be located in Montrose), and who have different, dedicated phone numbers contactable via WhatsApp, Text as well as voice calls. Full information will be given in the Final Details, which will be circulated in the Spring.
- **Data privacy:** We will never share your contact details with anyone, without your permission.

Important Note for all Participants

All those participating in The Great Outdoors Challenge East 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 have provided vetted routes and offered guidance on them, but ultimately participants must rely solely on their own skills and judgment and carry out their own evaluations of risks encountered. Participants are responsible for ensuring they are sufficiently fit and have suitable skills and equipment for the event. Participants are deemed to accept the inherent risk of mountain walking and agree to participate in The Great Outdoors Challenge East 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 stated here and in the [TGOE East 26 - Terms and Conditions](#). Participants must accept that Scotia Challenge Ltd, the TGOE Coordinators and Volunteers shall not be liable for any damage, loss, injury or death which may arise from participating in The Great Outdoors Challenge East, other than that caused as a result of our negligence.



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A few words from our sponsors...

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

[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.



Darn Tough

Surveys show that [Darn Tough](#) are the number one brand worn by 'Thru hikers' in the USA tackling some of the toughest trails in the world. Exceptional durability, comfort, top performance in a huge variety of conditions and of course the Legendary Lifetime Warranty make Darn Tough socks the top choice when planning an epic. Made with a blend of Merino wool, nylon, and Lycra for excellent moisture wicking and temperature regulation, durability and fit, the socks are constructed with tightly packed terry loops to offer blister preventing cushioning where it's needed. When planning your kit for the TGO Challenge, put a pair or two of Darn Tough socks on your essentials list and if you make it to the East Coast there will be a fresh new pair for you free of charge in the finishers pack as a thank you from us for completing the UK's own epic 'Thru Hike'.



TGOC East Coordinators:

Mick Blackburn - 07714 329917 & Ali Ogden – 07786 628105