

Common Grazings Review Workbook



“They (that is the grazings committee) have clear duty to act as trustees of the whole shareholders in the grazings and therefore it is their duty to act impartially and judicially, keep in view what is their paramount consideration – how the common grazings can best be administered to the greatest advantage of all of the tenants sharing in the grazings”

SCOTTISH LAND COURT

Common Grazings Review

The purpose of this workbook is to act as a checklist to help Common Grazings Committees administer their common grazings and fixed equipment. The workbook follows a stage-by-stage process which offers a logical framework to help committees identify processes and/or structures that require update, development and/or improvement.

Why is a Review Needed?

Common grazings are areas of land held in trust over which a number of crofters and other stakeholders from one or more townships hold a right to graze stock and other specified agricultural activities. There are over 1,000 common grazings in Scotland covering over 500,000ha. Each township and/or townships, is required to elect a Common Grazings Committee to act as trustees over the common grazings with a defined range of duties as set out in the Common Grazings Regulations and related crofting legislation.

Who Should Complete the Review?

There is no particular person or persons specified that should complete the review. However, it is important that the individuals chosen are representative of the active crofters in the township(s) and that the review process is seen to engage with the wider community and be as inclusive as possible. Ultimately, it is the elected, or potential members, of the Common Grazings Committee that must have ownership of the review, and it is always helpful to have them engaged in the process at an early stage. We recommend that a chairperson is appointed for the review group.

Review Group Members

Chair	
Member 1	
Member 2	
Member 3	
Member 4	
Facilitator (optional)	

Add/ delete as required

How to Use the Review Workbook

The workbook has been designed to cover a wide range of the possible activities that a Common Grazings Committee might come across in the course of its work. The workbook acts as a checklist to ensure that the Committee's role and responsibilities are clear, and all statutory and administrative procedures are followed. If some of the activities raised in the workbook are not directly applicable to your common grazing, please pass them over and move on to the next section. Additional information and support on the work of Common Grazings Committees is available from –

FAS –

<https://www.fas.scot/discussion-groups/common-grazings/>

SRUC -

<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/business-services/sac-consulting/crofting/>

Crofting Commission –

<https://www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/>

Name of Common Grazings

Review Process

Question 1	YES	NO	Action
Does your common grazings have an active Committee elected within the last three years? Note – a grant of £500 may be available to set up a new Committee through the Crofting Agricultural Grants Scheme			

Question 2	YES	NO	Action
Does the Committee have an elected Chairperson?			

Question 3	YES	NO	Action
Has a Grazings Clerk been appointed by the Committee?			

Question 4	YES	NO	Action
Does the Common Grazings Committee have a treasurer or responsible person for bookkeeping and financial records?			

Question 5	Notes and Comment
Are there other useful skills on the Committee that might be helpful with different tasks e.g., various agricultural, animal health & husbandry, financial, legal, business, professional, other etc.	

Question 6	Notes and Comment
Are there specific skills missing on the Committee and how could this be addressed?	

Question 7	YES	NO	Action
Is an Annual Meeting open to all shareholders held each year?			

Question 8	YES	NO	Action
Is the Annual Meeting open to all shareholders advertised locally and all members of the wider crofting community invited?			

Question 9	YES	NO	Action
Are members of your Common Grazings Committee elected or re-elected no later than every three years?			

Question 10	YES	NO	Action
After elections, are the Crofting Commission advised, on the form which it supplies, of your new committee members including a copy of the meeting advert in a local newspaper?			

Question 11	YES	NO	Action
Does your common grazings have a set of regulations as approved by the Crofting Commission? Note- this is a key function of the Common Grazings Committee. A draft template of the regulations is available from the Crofting Commission. www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/			

Question 12	YES	NO	Action
If the Crofting Commission has registered details of your common grazing with the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland are you content with the boundaries and registration details?			

Question 13	YES	NO	Action
Do you keep an accurate record of the common grazing(s) boundaries agreed by the crofting shareholders - (including resumptions and apportionments)?			

Question 14	YES	NO	Action
Does the Common Grazings Committee hold an accurate list of all shareholder's names, contact details and their soumings?			

Question 15	YES	NO	Action
<p>Do you keep an up-to-date record of shareholder sub-lets/short term lets and their duration?</p> <p>NB Make a record of contact information and start and end dates</p>			

Question 16	YES	NO	Action
<p>Are there any discrepancies between the details held by the Crofting Commission and those held locally by the Common Grazings Committee?</p> <p>NB you can request a list from the grazings team Grazings@Crofting.gov.scot</p>			

Question 17	YES	NO	Action
<p>Does the Common Grazings Committee contact crofter shareholders regularly to let them know of maintenance being undertaken in the common grazings?</p>			

Question 18	YES	NO	Action
<p>Does the Common Grazings Committee contact crofter shareholders to notify them of proposed improvement works to be undertaken in the common grazings?</p>			

Question 19	YES	NO	Action
<p>Does your Common Grazings Committee advise all shareholders as to their contribution to the planned works?</p>			

Question 20	YES	NO	Action
<p>Has the Crofting Commission been informed of, and approved, any planned works?</p>			

Question 21	YES	NO	Action
Does your Common Grazings Committee maintain an accurate record of the scope and expenditure on all improvement works and fixed equipment?			

Question 22	YES	NO	Action
Does your Common Grazings Committee maintain an individual financial record of each shareholders' financial entitlement arising from any resumptions and pay these out at the earliest opportunity to the shareholders?			

Question 23	YES	NO	N/A
Does the common grazings have its own construction developments, renewables and other purposeful use activities?			

Question 24	YES	NO	Action
If 'Yes' to Question 23, are such activities run through a separate structure? For example, such as a limited company and monies held in separate company accounts.			

Question 25	Six Monthly	Yearly	Ad Hoc	Never	Action
How often does the Common Grazings Committee keep the local crofting community informed of developments on the common grazing?					

Question 26	YES	NO	Action
Does your common grazings have an appropriate level of employer and public liability insurance?			

Question 27	YES	NO	Action	
Does your Common Grazings Committee have a Health and Safety policy that covers employees, contractors and volunteers?				

Question 28	YES	NO	Action	
Are all access, operational and locational risk assessments undertaken as and when necessary?				

Question 29	YES	NO	N/A	Action
Does the common grazings have a QMS and/or animal health husbandry plan agreed with a vet on behalf of its shareholders?				

Question 30	YES	NO	N/A	Action
If your common grazings hires a bull do you have an agreement on the division of the fee and management of the bull whilst he is in the township?				

Question 31	YES	NO	N/A	Action
Are all livestock records accurate and kept up to date?				

Question 32	YES	NO	N/A	Action
Does the Common Grazings Committee have a submission process in place for reporting Scottish Government returns such as IACS, agri-environment, CAGS and other schemes?				

Question 33	YES	NO	Action	
Does the Common Grazings Committee submit periodic condition and activity reports to the Crofting Commission every five years?				

Question 34

Does your Common Grazings Committee carry out any of the following activities in an informal or formal basis -

Activity	YES	NO	Would Like To
Further skills training - skills sharing, coaching etc.			
Next generation succession – getting young people involved			
Rewarding active crofters – encouraging involvement			
Improved wildlife and biodiversity – nature friendly			
Engagement with environmental improvement schemes			
Diversification into other activities - trying something different			
Others not listed above			

Question 35

Would you like additional support to do more of any of the above -

Activity	Support Needs

Question 36	YES	NO	Action
Is there any moveable machinery such as tractors, quads, toppers, boats etc owned by the common grazing?			

Question 37	YES	NO	Action
Is there a separate limited liability structure/agreement for any moveable machinery such as tractors, quads, toppers, boats etc? NB Professional help may be required to advise on this issue.			

Congratulations on Completing your Review!

We hope you have found it useful drawing up an action plan. We do appreciate that certain elements of the workbook are more relevant to some common grazings than others.

We also appreciate that in many townships much of the work of the grazings committees falls on few shoulders! We hope this workbook has helped make the process a bit easier.

The Farm Advisory Service would be pleased to receive any queries arising and would welcome any suggestions on how it can be improved.

Date of Next Review.....

(We recommend this process should be undertaken every five years)