

The Gathering 2025



Summary Report





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Reflections from GAT Co-Chairs.

The Gathering brought to life the ambition, urgency and shared purpose that define the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN). The conversations we shared underscored how vital it is to lead boldly, invest wisely, tell powerful stories of impact, and work in true partnership to deliver lasting change. ‘Thinking nationally, acting locally’ isn’t just a phrase—it’s a movement we felt through every session. We’re proud to carry that energy forward and, through the Green Action Trust (GAT), play our part in driving projects, processes and partnerships that will unlock the full potential of this national development and make a big difference to the lives of people in the communities that need it most. Our heartfelt thanks go to all the attendees, speakers, the GAT team, and CSGN Ambassador Mark Beaumont for their involvement.

Heather Claridge and Angus Bodie – Green Action Trust Co-Chairs

Summing up The Gathering.

Words from the CSGN Ambassador.



A welcome from GAT staff awaited all who attended The Gathering

I was struck by the enthusiasm to not just stay throughout the day, but to properly engage in the conversations and workshops. My thanks to all. From the front of the room, with my job to keep us on time and to top and tail each speaker, I could read the room, see the engagement, and hear the challenge. There was frustration, and concern, but also clear ideas and pragmatism. What I heard above all was the want to create a different future and to look after people and the natural environment across central Scotland.

In my closing remarks, I raised the challenge inspired by what/three/words, the well-known app which is about 'place.' Given that we are all inspired by place and the power of partnership to create better places, my challenge was what/three/things can we each do each day that makes the biggest difference. Not what 100 things, not what endless tasks, but what/three/things can we each do that is relevant to process. My tip is that one of these should be a phone call, a relationship in the real world, and not just another email – a human connection that allows you to share, to be challenged and ultimately to collaborate.

Whether you are new to the CSGN or not, you are very welcome to lean on the network and get support with any problems that you might not be able to crack by yourself.

Thanks again, and we look forwards to the next Gathering.

Words of Inspiration from our Speakers.



Diarmuid O'Neill



Mike Berners-Lee



Heather Claridge



Simon Parsons

Our keynote speakers: Diarmuid O'Neill, Director of Environment and Forestry at Scottish Government; Mike Berners-Lee, author and founder and director of Small World Consulting; Heather Claridge, Strategic Spatial Planning Group Manager for Glasgow City Region (GCR), and Simon Parsons, Director of Environment, Planning and Assurance at Scottish Water, all brought their particular expertise and wisdom.

The need for strong and truly inclusive partnerships, making connections and for impactful story telling came through strongly. Diarmuid challenged us to better communicate the impact of our work to influence policy and bring about change. He reminded us that environment or economy is a false dichotomy and we need 'both and'.

Mike, of course, was clear on the scale and severity of the 'polycrisis' we face, and said that we will solve the interconnected problems by working together, or we won't solve them at all. Heather and Simon shared inspiring examples of place-based projects highlighting the need to involve local people and to think creatively in order to have a positive impact on the environment.

You can find the speakers presentations here ;

- [Mike Berners-Lee: Climate and Nature - local action in a big picture context](#)
- [Heather Claridge: Local action, national impact - partnering to create places for people, climate and nature](#)
- [Simon Parsons: Nature calls - delivering greener solutions](#)

Important Conversations at the World Cafe.

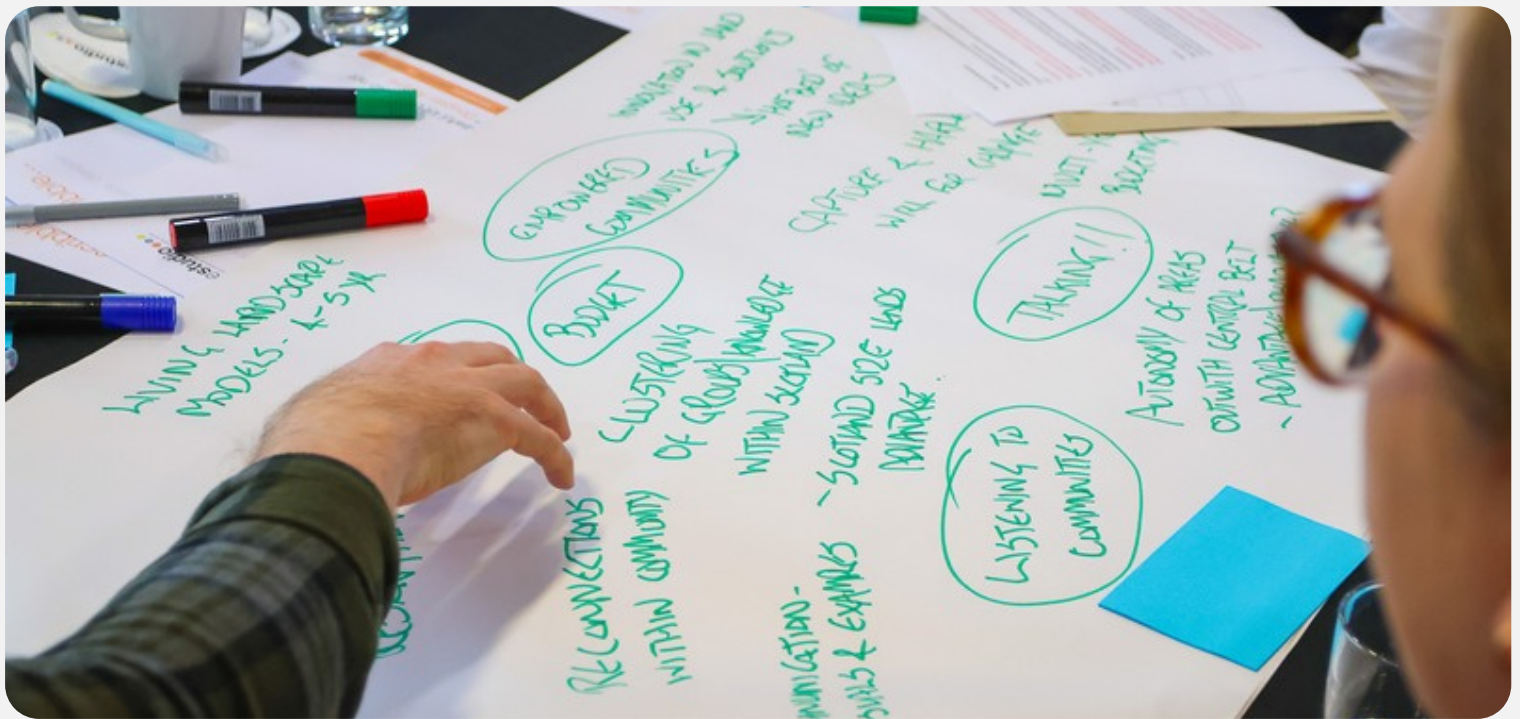


From your knowledge and experience, what is working well that we can build on?

If we are to make real progress in restoring nature and addressing climate change, from your experience, what challenges and barriers do we need to acknowledge and address? Where are there opportunities for growth, innovation and collaboration?

What support, resources or structures will help us sustain momentum to really address nature restoration and climate change? Who can offer these and what will you/your organisation contribute?





Some common aspects about what the CSGN could address were harvested from the conversations:

Building relationships and partnerships was a crucial aspect of the CSGN, with people seeking guidance as to how to do this better and how to link with other sectors.

Funding was a fundamental topic. Potential issues to take forward include: how to develop a business case; what funding is available and can this information be collated and better disseminated; the need to review funding processes; and developing project ideas.

Project development. There was an appetite in the room for bigger and bolder projects.

Communications in many guises was discussed. A desire to develop storytelling based on data and evidence was identified along with a need to reframe narratives to make our cause more accessible and gain support.

Peer learning. A need for networking, sharing experiences and learning from existing projects was highlighted.

Community and stakeholder engagement was considered essential in all areas of work, with a requirement for learning about good practice and opportunities for peer learning requested.

Advocacy and more liaison with Scottish Government across multiple policy areas was a clear need expressed. To break down siloed thinking and integrate the benefits of nature projects across society.

Better liaison with other sectors including agriculture, housing and youth, and better coordination with academics was desired.

Education and training. Questions were asked about how to incorporate nature skills training within other industries in order to incorporate nature consciousness and practice outwith the “nature” silo.

Developing the CSGN network. There was expressed a need to examine different working models and frameworks to deliver the vision of the CSGN, across all partners.

Taking all this information, GAT is embarking on a series of engagement activities with the delegates of the conference and the wider CSGN network to dive deep into these topics, in order to build a network that meets the needs of those working to implement it.



The wisdom and ideas generated from the room was beautifully captured by visual facilitator, Clare Mills, from Listen, Think, Draw.

Gathering Ideas at the Marketplace



Curiosity drives us, and the Marketplace of Ideas gave delegates the chance to learn more about the work of some of the CSGN partner organisations and find out how colleagues are tackling similar issues. It gave an additional opportunity to rekindle the network, share ideas and information about activities and look for future new project partners.

We are grateful to our stallholders: **Climate Forth, Climate Forests, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, NatureScot, Scottish Power Energy Networks, Small World Consulting, The Leven Programme** and **Woodland Trust** for their time and commitment in presenting such interesting projects and programmes.



Learning Together in the Workshops.

The 4 workshops people participated in were:

- [Landscape carbon tracking](#)
- [Inclusivity and creativity in community engagement](#)
- [Delivering for nature and climate at landscape-scale](#)
- [Nature Finance and the CSGN](#)

These were an opportunity to drill down into particular issues and learn from one another. The above hyperlinks will take you to the presentations.

Some key feedback to consider includes:

- with regards Nature Finance, create an interface between members and investors and facilitate cross-sector working;
- create a community engagement framework;
- facilitate the creation of and sharing of case studies;
- opportunities to visit other projects in the CSGN for learning and networking;
- the CSGN has the potential to be a collective and coordinated force.

Thank you to everyone who led and facilitated the workshops, particularly to our external leaders: Small World Consulting (SWC), SEPA and Forth Environment Link. Feedback from the Landscape Carbon workshop is already feeding into SWC's research to help people make informed decisions about carbon management.



Thanks from the CSGN Programme Manager



The most powerful things about the CSGN network is the **people**. People who care about their places, innovate new way of delivering solutions, share, collaborate and drive change. It was great to connect to many of you at the Gathering, really turning the CSGN into a live network.

It was good to remind ourselves of the transformative vision of the CSGN and how it is being realised through a network of green spaces that are restoring nature, mitigating climate change and enriching people's lives. But beneath that, is a green network of people without whom plans and programmes could not be fulfilled, nor visions become reality. The excellent CSGN video and the many lively conversations throughout the day reminded us of that. [Watch the CSGN video here.](#)

The CSGN can be a network to share knowledge, spark new ideas, find collaborators, develop new projects, source new funding or simply be inspired and remotivated. It is those ideas that have sprung from The Gathering that we will utilise to build what is needed for the CSGN network.

To address the big challenges, means reconnecting and learning across the Network. The future is something we can shape together. To do so, we are asking what you need to build a CGSN Network, made up of a diverse group from different disciplines and organisations, but united by a shared purpose. The Gathering was only the start of that conversation.

It takes a team to bring together an event like the Gathering.

So, a special thanks to the small but perfectly formed planning team in GAT as well as all colleagues who made up the GAT support team on the day. To our GAT Co-Chairs, thanks for their kind words and support and to our Ambassador, Mark Beaumont, for his inspirational and thoughtful interventions throughout the day.

Our CEO Tom Campbell ensured the celebratory moment for GAT was memorable. Of course, it was our esteemed speakers who really set the scene for us and thanks to all who contributed to the workshops and marketplace.

But mainly, thanks to all of you for coming, for your time your experience and your willingness to participate and share. Let's continue these connections in different ways in the coming months.

What you told us about the Gathering

We appreciate the valuable feedback from everyone who completed our evaluation forms, posted on social media, or gave suggestions for future events. Delegates appreciated, for example, the mix of activities and the opportunity to network, learn from others and take part in facilitated discussions. These are elements we will build into future events.



There seems to be overwhelming support for holding another event next year. Things we'll be thinking about for future events based on feedback include if there is a way to include site visits, and can we expand the audience to those sectors, groups and organisations beyond the environmental sector.



Thank You!

Next Steps for the CSGN

Let's keep up the connections and the conversations!

- **Ongoing engagement**

We've listened to what you said and formulated an engagement plan which we'll be rolling out over the winter. Please look out for news of events, workshops and online surveys. These activities will include opportunities to explore some of the themes raised, such as funding, community engagement and communications. They will also include discussions on how you would like the CSGN to function and ways we can continue to improve partnership working across the network.

- **LinkedIn Group**

Survey responses suggest that LinkedIn is the most commonly used social media tool in the network. So, to help us all stay in touch, learn from one another and network, we have set up a collaborative members-run LinkedIn group called **CSGN Network**.

[Join the Group](#)



- **CSGN Gathering 2026**

We really appreciate all your positive feedback. **We're planning to hold a CSGN Gathering in Autumn 2026.** Follow us on social media for any updates. Suggestions for a venue would be welcomed!





During the Gathering, we took the opportunity to congratulate GAT and its predecessor organisations for 40 years of Bringing Change to Life. Our CEO, Tom Campbell, presents the cake with the CSGN Ambassador Mark Beaumont.

The Central Scotland Green Network is driven forward by the Green Action Trust, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) No SC015341, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

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