

UK Forums

What are UK Forums?

UK Forums do slightly different things than Mattermost - here's a summary:

Mattermost is for:

- chat, that gets lost quickly in the stream of messages
- asking someone for help
- finding a person or group

Forums are for:

- focused discussions
- asking specific questions or finding a specific topic
- searching for information easily

So, if the issue needs longer term attention, where contributions go towards making decisions, perhaps, or where differences of approach need closer examination, a **Forum Topic** can act as both a focus and catalyst for discussion. Also, you can look back through the topic's contributions to see how a decision was made - this often helps to promote ideas and help towards reaching agreements.

Getting access

Important: You should have already completed the steps outlined on the **READ THIS FIRST** page before attempting to access UK Forums. Otherwise you will not have an account to log in to.

To access UK Forums you can:

- Click on the UK Forums icon on the **Hub homepage**. It will look like this:

 discourse.png
image not found or type unknown

- Type **<https://base.extinctionrebellion.org.uk>** into the URL bar of your browser and hit Enter.

You will then see a screen that looks like this:

UK_Forum_Log_In.jpg
Image not found or type unknown

The easiest option is to click the login 'with XR UK Hub' button. Or enter your username and password (same as for the Hub) and hit Log in.

Note: We recommend adding UK Forum to your browser's bookmarks/favourites so it's easier to find in future.

Our Forums are organised in much the same way as Mattermost, but the format is not quite the same. Here's what you'll see when first you join UK Forums...

Basic Functions

Forums 'Landing Page'

When you get to the Forums '**Landing Page**' you will find a complete list of the forums you're joined to by your **Hub Group Membership**. For ease of reference, your **forums** are classified into **8 Categories** which reflect the different Regions/Nations and Working Groups (or Circles) that make up XR UK. Here's a typical Landing Page showing all 8 Categories:

Pams_Forum_Landing_Page_02_17Feb21.jpg
Image not found or type unknown

On the Landing Page, you'll find the **forums** from each of your **Hub Groups** as clickable link names in the different **Categories**. If there's a **new post** waiting for your attention, you'll see an '**unread**' or '**new**' button - click to go to the flagged post. There are several other functions, which are described in more detail below but first, let's see how you can make a reply ...

Reading and Replying to Posts

When you click on **new** or **unread**, you will be directed to the specific **topic**, where individual **posts** are listed in chronological order. If visiting the **topic** for the first time, you will see the initial **post**. If you've visited this **topic** before, you will see the **post** immediately after that visit. In the image, below, the "**17/18**" figures denote the 17th of 18 **posts**.

Forum_Post_01_10Mar21.jpg
Image not found or type unknown

You may **reply** to any individual **post**, or make an additional **post** using the "**Reply**" button. When you **reply**, you enter your text in the left hand box - and you will see how the text will be displayed when your reply is posted, to the right. This is very useful for text formatting (Bold, Italics, Markdown formatting, etc).

Forum_Post_02_28Mar21.jpg
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When you've finished your post, click the **Reply** button, below the text box, and your reply post will be added to the **Topic**. It really is that simple - and, if you need to edit, after it is posted, just click the **Pencil** icon to re-enter the text box to edit.

Now you know how to **Post a Reply**, it's time to look more closely at some **Advanced Functions** available...

Advanced Functions

Using the Landing Page

Here, we have highlighted 7 of the functions you will find on the **Landing Page** ...

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1. **Comms Links**

Click on the icons to go to Mattermost, UKCloud, XRUK's website and The Hub;

2. **Search**

Click the Magnifying Glass icon to search for keywords, etc in the Forums;

Forum_Search_Icon_20May21.jpg

3. **Main menu**

The 3 Bars (Hamburger) icon brings up the main (drop-down) menu:

Forum_Hamburger_Icon_20May21.jpg

4. **Latest**

This takes you to a list of the latest posts in all your topics in each category.

Latest_Topics_23May21.jpg

5. **Bookmarks**

This takes you to a list of the topics you have bookmarked.

Bookmarks_23May21.jpg

6. **Categories**

These include:

- Help Info & Tech
- Regions/Nations & Local
- Our Culture
- Organising
- Arts & Actions
- Media & Messaging
- Outreach & Training
- Politcal & Lobbying

7. **Forums**

These are your Hub Group forums where you can see and reply to posts in various topics.

Using my Forums

What can I see?

The 8 top-level Categories - Help, Regions/Nations, Culture, etc. - are visible to everyone but your membership of Hub Groups will determine the individual Public and Private forums that are available to you.

How do I join other Public Forums?

You can join any Public forum by searching for the associated Hub Group by clicking on the 3 Bars (Hamburger) icon in the top right and selecting 'Groups for Forums'.

This will give you the Hub Groups list, which you can search by entering text in the box at the top, or simply scroll down to find the one you want. Click on **Join** to join the group and get access to its Public forums, or click on the name for more info. See - [Find and join now...](#)

How do I join a Private forum?


To join a Hub Group's Private forums, you will have to be invited into the Hub Group, so you will need to ask one of the Group Admins to join you via the Hub.

Why Read-Only forums?

Some discussions may be read-only for most people, with only certain people able to contribute (e.g. Hints and Tips).

Help - page does not exist?

Sometimes you will see a page like this:

 You may see this because you have clicked a link, on another **Platform** like **Mattermost**, but that link goes to a Forum you are not joined to. What to do:

- If you know the Forum is **Public**, and you also know the Hub Group, you can find it yourself (see above).
- If you can't find the name of the **Forum**, then you'll need to ask the person who posted the link to give you its name and that of the Hub Group. If the forum is **Private**, this may involve you being invited to the Hub Group that owns the Forum.

Making your post.

When to start a new topic?

Before starting a new topic, it is always worth checking whether the issue has already been discussed (by looking through the previous topics) - it can be very frustrating when someone begins a fresh topic with a question that has already been answered.

Quote text from other posts?

Simply highlight the bit of text you want to quote in the source post and you will see a "Quote" button appear above your highlighted text like this:

142e1a09482c3e53b0738d07ff2f7159356d3ce5.png

If you have not yet started editing your reply click the button and the editing pane will open in the bottom half of the screen, the selected text will be inserted as a quote with the source post and contributor linked to it. You then carry on and edit your reply as normal.

If you are already editing a reply, or starting a fresh topic, then in the top half of the screen, above the editing pane, you can browse around as normal and select text from any post, and the "Quote" button will insert it in the editor for you.

Add a link to a document or image?

Links are done with [text to display] in square brackets, **immediately** followed by (https://www.fulllinktext.com/blah) in round brackets.

e.g. [Link to XRUK Website](https://extinctionrebellion.uk/) displays as: [Link to XRUK Website](https://extinctionrebellion.uk/).

Format my posts: Bold/Italic etc.?

There are simple ways to make your message more readable:

- ****bold**** displays as **bold**
- *_italic_* displays as *italic*
- ~~~~strikethrough~~~~ displays as ~~strikethrough~~
- ````typewriter style```` displays as `typewriter style`
- >quote displays as

quote

How do I alert someone to a post?

If you want to draw the attention of another member of the team to a post you are making type @ followed immediately by their username, eg '@username', and they will be notified of the

mention.

Link to another topic or post?

Simply copy the address from your browser and paste it into your new post. The Forums will automatically find the title of the topic and add that as the link text.

If you want to link directly to a particular post within a thread just copy the URL whilst the target post is on screen. The link will have a post number added to the end and will link direct to that post.

How to Move a Topic to a new Category

If you have set up a Topic and you wish to move it to another Category, here's the procedure:

1. Click the "Pencil" by the title of your first post;
2. The current Category is displayed - open the drop down menu;
3. In the Search Box, type in the text to help identify the new Category;
4. Find the appropriate Category, from the drop down menu and Select;
5. Confirm your selection by clicking the "Tick"

Move_Topic_01_23May22.jpg

How to create a Poll?

You can create simple polls directly in a post.

They are only visible to the other members of the particular forum where you create a topic (or reply) with a poll embedded. To create a poll click the cog wheel icon while editing your post and select "Build Poll"

69b6b0f6d606ddbb40d1fe9487873e80d1d694e.png

Bookmarks and Tracking

Bookmark a post to see it later?

There are three ways:


- At the bottom of each post is a line of icons:

4ff9770205f9010f7a35cac4a156cb42a77a9528.png

Click the three dots to get more options:


191eeef458fa8d39d2c61c6a90c92cc6fae4875f.png

Click the bookmark icon (circled in red in the image above) to bookmark the current **post** within the topic.

- At the bottom of the whole topic, after the last post is a row of buttons. Click the  button to bookmark the whole **topic**.
- If you have a keyboard then use the shortcut keys. First [j] to select the post - this will mark it with a red bar on the left), then [b] to bookmark the selected post. Use keys [j] and [k] to move the highlight to the next/previous post.

How do I find my bookmarks?

There are two ways:

- Click on your picture/avatar at top right and then the bookmark icon to get your most recent bookmarks list: 
- If you are on a device with a keyboard and are not currently editing then use the keyboard shortcut [g] followed by [b] to jump straight to your bookmarks page.

Follow or track a discussion?

When you are viewing a topic, at the bottom of the screen, just above '**Suggested Topics**' you will see a grey button with a coloured dot in it most likely marked '**Tracking**'.

Click on that button, and you can then set the level of alert on that particular topic.

(To stop following, select '**Muted**');


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Your Profile


You will have a 'profile' where you can set useful information about yourself that others can see, and upload a simple picture (an '**avatar**') by which others can easily identify your posts. You will also be able to set preferences for notifications and how they are sent to you.

Find and edit my Forum Profile?

Click on your picture/letter/avatar in the top right of the screen:

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Click on the person icon:

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Select 'Preferences' from the menu.

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There are several pages of preferences - listed on the left on the browser screen or in a selection box at the top on a mobile screen.

Be sure to scroll down through each page to find what you want - and remember to click the **Save** button at the bottom of the page or any changes you make will not take effect.

- Do set your Name (fullname) to something recognisable (especially if you have an obscure username) so that people who know you can find you. XRUK is an open community, we take ownership of our actions and do not hide behind alaises or masks.
- Do upload a simple picture as your **avatar** to replace the default initial-letter-in-a-coloured-circle avatar.

Change my Landing Page?

1. Go to your profile page (click on your picture/letter/avatar in the bar at the top right, then click on your name, then select 'Preferences')
2. Select 'Interface' in the menu at the left (or in the select-box that says 'Account' if you are on a mobile device)
3. Scroll down a bit and find a setting called **Default Home Page** - select your desired home page in the box from 'Categories | Latest | New | Unread' (you can't select Bookmarks as your home page)
4. Remember to scroll down to click the **Save Changes** button, or your changes won't work!

Change the page layout/colours?

The default home page shows you all of the top level Categories with their short descriptions and any forums that you are joined to in each category.

There are two alternative layouts (called 'themes') available which you can choose - you find them under 'your preferences', in the 'Interface' section.

- **XR UK Light** is the default theme with 4 columns of boxes
- **XR UK Light 3col** is the version with 3 columns
- **xxDiscourse Light** displays the categories with a selection of the recent topics in all their forums.

There are also "Dark" variants of each theme if you prefer a layout with a black background.
