

This message is pertinent to those Parishes containing any Common Land and/or a designated town or village green. This can be checked using the relevant layers on [DEFRA's MAGIC mapping service](#). You will need to select the 'Registered Common Land' and 'Village Greens' layers under the 'Access' heading. You may need to zoom out to see the town/village green notations.

Friends of the Lake District has a long-standing involvement with Common Land and town and village greens in Cumbria, which includes our lobbying and campaigning for their protection.

Although not a new issue, recent cases we have been involved in have increased our awareness that works are being carried out on Common Land (and town and village greens) without the proper consent or appropriate scrutiny. This includes cases where someone has secured planning consent for the works.

Sometimes people are aware that they need, and then obtain planning consent but do not realise that separate Common Land consent is also necessary. However, in other cases they are unaware, or simply press ahead knowing that there are weaknesses in the reporting and enforcement of Common Land breaches.

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This issue is relevant across Cumbria, where we have one third of all the Common Land in the country, meaning its landscape, culture, character and heritage are all heavily influenced by it.

In the Lake District National Park there is the additional dimension of Common Land being one of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. Common Land should have extra protection by virtue of the World Heritage Site being a heritage asset of international value.

It is therefore really important that where it is required, including where it is needed alongside planning consent, that Common Land consent is sought. This will help to ensure that the impacts on Common Land are given appropriate consideration. Failure to do this devalues Common Land, risks harm to and loss of Common Land and puts at risk the benefits and value it has for the landscape, our cultural heritage and for society.

We have considered what might help to improve this situation. Whilst legislative or procedural changes might be a longer-term answer, we'd like to explore some simpler but more immediate actions.

We would be grateful if those Parishes that contain any Common Land (or whose boundaries adjoin it), or a town or village green, would confirm whether or not they would be willing to support Friends of the Lake District in actions including:

- raising general awareness of the issue and why it's important to address it
- asking relevant local planning authorities to add an advisory note to relevant planning decision notices
- asking relevant local planning authorities to consider including references to Common Land in planning policies and guidance

We are not seeking financial support but rather support through measures such as sharing our relevant social media posts, letting the relevant planning authority know that your Parish supports us and agreeing that we can confirm in communications on the topic (with pre-agreed messaging) that we have your backing.

I'd be grateful if you would let me know your initial thoughts and whether or not your Parish would be willing, in principle, to support us. We'd be more than happy to meet, either in person or via Zoom or Teams, to discuss this work; please do get in touch if you would like further information.

Yours sincerely,