

Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons

Enabling a
shared future
for all

PRESS RELEASE

Thanks to National Lottery players some of our best loved places in the uplands of England will be better looked after. Through a partnership of 24 organisations we will empower those who graze common land, the commoners, to better manage them to restore peat, create habitats for birds and butterflies and improve the quality of access for public health, well-being and enjoyment.

Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons has been awarded a £1.9 million grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund towards their £3 million delivery phase which will run for three and a half years until 2024. Our Common Cause is a partnership project run by the Foundation for Common Land with the National Trust as the accountable body. We will work in Dartmoor, Shropshire Hills, the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District.

Commons are brimming with nature, history and culture. As importantly all common land has open access for everyone to enjoy for recreation. Commons are seven times more likely to be designated for nature and you are four times more likely to find an ancient monument there. The reason is that the ancient system of collective pastoral grazing has protected these sites from the plough but recent policies and pressures have threatened this heritage and now only 3% of England is common land.

“Through Our Common Cause we will enhance both nature and culture as well as the health and well-being benefits from commons,” said Julia Aglionby, Executive Director of the Foundation for Common Land. “We will enhance collaboration between those who manage commons and enabling more people to visit, enjoy and understand commons. Under the banner of #Commons4Tommorrow we will actively improve the archaeology, biodiversity and carbon storage capacity of commons as well as the cultural heritage of this unique system of land management; commoning.”

David Renwick, Director, England, North at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “Common land gives us a window into how generations gone by managed land in a communal way – sharing what nature and the landscape provided for people living in or around them. Tradition, memories and folklore developed around how these spaces were stewarded, and these practices live on today giving us a sense of what



it might have been like hundreds of years ago. However, they can also teach us a lot about how we can use this land now – sharing the vast benefits our landscapes and nature can provide, be it food, fibre, flood alleviation or boosting our wellbeing. The shared benefits we get from our natural capital and how land managers can deliver these for their communities, are now more relevant than ever as we seek new approaches to paying for them to be delivered. Thanks to National Lottery players, who have highlighted nature as especially important to them, we are extremely proud to invest in the innovative ‘Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons’ project”.

Mike Innerdale, Regional Director for the National Trust commented; “Common Land brings a raft of benefits to people living locally and the millions visiting from afar. Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons project will help us collectively do this better for us all, both now and into the future.”

Notes to Editors

About the Foundation for Common Land

The Foundation for Common Land is a Registered Charity, which works for the public benefit

- To conserve the cultural landscapes delivered by commoning and the management of common land
- To promote the conservation of the physical and natural environment by supporting the responsible and sustainable pastoral use of common land
- To conduct research into commoning and common land issues
- To educate the public about commoning and common land

For more information see www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk

Commons are land owned by one person over which others, the commoners have rights to graze their livestock

National Trust – The Accountable Body

The National Trust, England and Wales’ largest conservation charity is acting as the Accountable Body for Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons. The Accountable Body’s role is to have responsibility for and manage the finances and cash flow of the project and to employ the staff who are then seconded to the Foundation for Common Land. This role is critical in enabling a diverse partnership of many organisations to come together and deliver more than the sum of their parts.

Notes about the Project

A partnership of 24 organisations has been working together over the last three years to develop this project and has contributed financially and in kind to make this project a reality. Major grants have also been awarded from Esmée Fairbairn and Garfield Weston Foundations as well as many smaller grant giving trusts. The partnership members are:

Foundation for Common Land and National Trust plus; Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Dartmoor Commoners’ Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Devon Wildlife Trust, Duchy of Cornwall, Federation of Cumbria Commoners, Friends of the Lake District, Heather Trust, Lake District National Park Authority, Moorland Association, National Farmers’ Union, National Sheep Association, Natural England, Open Spaces Society, RSPB, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, South West Water, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, University of Cumbria



Work will begin in early 2021 to support projects as diverse as butterfly conservation, managing bracken, restoring peat bogs and planting trees. Farmers will be supported future proof their commoning systems, enhance environmental land management and bring school children from disadvantaged communities to their commons to learn about food, farming and the environment.

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **Inspire, lead** and **resource** the UK's heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future. www.heritagefund.org.uk.

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