



**LOCAL AUTHORITIES –
THE CASE FOR MEMBERSHIP OF
THE OPEN SPACES SOCIETY**

Information Sheet B3

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Local Authorities – the case for membership of the Open Spaces Society

To support the society's work at a national level in pressing for improved law, policy and funding to protect open space of all types in town and country.

1. We use every opportunity to press government to increase the resources to local authorities for the protection and management of common land and town and village greens. We advised Defra on the establishment of the Commons and Greens Registration and Management Association, which assists the local authorities' commons registration officers in their work.

2. We played an important role in the passage of the Commons Act 2006, but it still does not contain everything we wish. We want to strengthen further the hands of local authorities in pressing for the removal of unlawful encroachments on commons. This law was agreed in 1986 by the Common Land Forum, whose report was signed by representatives of the associations of county, district and local councils and a range of other bodies.

3. We played a major role in seeing the Countryside and Rights

of Way Act 2000 onto the statute book. This now gives the public the right to walk, responsibly, on all common land as well as mountain, moor, heath and down. It also amends the law to make it easier to register land as a new green, thereby protecting it.

To support our work in advising and assisting local community groups and individuals in your area in protecting and creating open space.

4. Many of our members are local community groups, residents' associations and amenity societies. We also have many individual members active in protecting open space at a local level. We run an advisory service to assist our members and deal with over 250 cases a year in virtually all parts of England and Wales. Almost certainly we shall be assisting groups within your territory. Each case that we take up costs us on average about £300.

To keep up to date with changes in law and policy affecting open space of all types.

5. For a number of years we have helped to run seminars and workshops on common land and

village greens. We have published a comprehensive manual on the law and procedure of registering greens: *Getting Greens Registered*

6. We follow closely the court rulings on the registration of town and village greens and report on these in our magazine *Open Space* and on our website. We advise our members and local authorities on the law and procedure for registering greens.

To keep up to date with open space issues generally.

7. Our magazine *Open Space* is produced three times a year. It includes legal advice and do-it-yourself information, analysis of recent decisions and punchy news-items. A reasonable number of additional copies are available to local authority members at a reduced price - for example, for inclusion in your departmental libraries.

To support our work on public rights of way.

8. . The society is unique among organisations in being concerned about all categories of public rights of way and representing all categories of user. We receive copies of all the proposals to alter the routes of paths, and our network of local correspondents respond to these and take up local cases on our behalf. We advise and support individuals and groups in your area in protecting and creating public paths.

9. We keep abreast of the changes

in legislation, particularly those introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and advise our members on their use and application.

To obtain a discount price on our publications.

10. Our book *Our Common Land* is the definitive work on the law of commons and village greens. *Making Space* covers the legal and planning protection of all types of open space and gives ideas for community involvement in their protection and creation, and *Getting Greens Registered* advises on the law and procedure of registering land as a 'new' green. Our book, *Rights of Way, a guide to law and practice*, is published jointly with the Ramblers' Association (RA) and is available from the RA at Blue Book, The Ramblers' Association, 2nd Floor, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW
Tel: 020 7339 8500
E-mail:
bluebook@london.ramblers.org.uk

To use our advisory service.

11. We can advise on the legal protection and management of open space. Membership entitles you to any of the information sheets available on our publications list and to further detailed advice from our members of staff.

Open space and public paths are vital to the quality of people's lives whether they live in the town or country. *Please help to support our work by joining our society.*