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Dear Member

150 years—and still fighting

A century and a half ago, on 19 July 1865, a small group of activists met to form the Commons Preservation Society. Their aim was to protect London's threatened commons from enclosure, exploitation and development. Led by George Shaw-Lefevre, later Lord Eversley, the society saved countless commons, by direct and legal action. Today that organisation is the Open Spaces Society, fighting for commons, greens, open spaces and paths throughout England and Wales.

In those 150 years we have helped to achieve great things—the recording of all commons and public paths, tougher laws to protect commons from encroachment and paths from obstruction and closure; the right to walk on all commons and to ride on many; the registration of land as town and village greens. The list is impressive. But, despite all this, our spaces and paths are under more pressure than ever.

For instance:

- We are campaigning to prevent the Welsh Government from changing the law to stop people from registering as greens any land which is earmarked for development.
- We are trying to ensure that the Infrastructure Bill will not allow commons and open spaces held by public bodies to be handed over for development.
- We are endeavouring to make sense of the government's Local Green Space designation, to enable communities to protect their much-loved spaces in local and neighbourhood plans.
- We are engaged in reclaiming 'lost commons', and thus public access, where the law allows it.
- We must follow up all the landowner statements which prevent people from claiming rights over land.
- We must get the definitive path-maps up to date before the government imposes its guillotine in 2026, little more than a decade away.



The Open Spaces Society 25a Bell Street Henley-on-Thames RG9 2BA



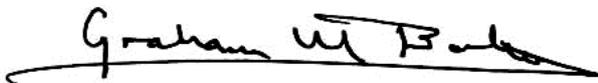
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We have taken up **530** causes this year on behalf of our members, giving expert advice and publicity, and the number of cases is increasing all the time. All this work makes enormous demands on the time and skills of our staff.

And of course, we must celebrate our 150th anniversary year, 2015. We are planning a number of events to mark our distinguished history: keep an eye on our website <http://www.oss.org.uk/our-150th-anniversary/> to see our programme unfold.

We have no government or commercial funding; we rely on our members and supporters to finance our vital work. Please do so by giving to our 150th anniversary appeal. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



Graham Bathe
Chairman

PS Please send your cheque to Open Spaces Society, FREEPOST (RG1344), Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 2BA or visit our website <http://www.oss.org.uk/make-a-donation/>. Thank you.

