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19 November 2015

Dear Member

## What comes now?

We remember the past in order to grasp the future—and throughout the last year we have been recalling the society's 150th anniversary and all our achievements. Our many mentions of the anniversary in *Open Space* and our press releases have paid off: the publicity we got for it has worked.

The number of cases we have been called on to deal with has shot up to 686 so far this year: 156 more than in the previous year, a nearly 30 per cent increase. This is daunting news, but it means that we are doing our job. It shows that all over the country people who have a problem with a common, path, green or other open space turn to the society for expert advice and support. And this we give to the best of our ability and to the limit of our resources.

Our immediate tasks are a mix of the national and local.

### Nationally

- We must **persuade governments** that freedom to wander on public paths and over green space massively contributes to our well-being as a nation. A good life depends as much on a decent environment as on a thriving economy.
- **Wales is electing its parliament** next May. We have to persuade as many candidates as possible, in all parties, to sign-up to our manifesto for access and open space in town and country.



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



Charity no 1144840 Registered in England and Wales, limited company no 7846516

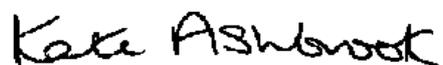
## Locally

- Our volunteers are researching and gathering evidence in order to discover thousands of **missing paths** and record them before the government imposes its cut-off for such claims in 2026. This is detailed, time-consuming work. We help by passing on hard-won experience or suggesting to inexperienced claimants how to wring the most information from old maps and archives.
- In some counties—alas, not all—the law enables us to claim ‘**lost commons**’ for the registers, and the public access that goes with them. This is frequently unfamiliar work for local members and the town and village societies which seek our aid. Nobody understands the problems better than we do. Our help is crucial.
- There is the new and still vague category of **Local Green Space** which must be defined to include all those much-loved patches of green (and sometimes not-so-green) that people cherish. We have the information and the expertise: these are at the disposal of those who are trying to make this designation work for the public good.
- And **village greens** continue to demand our specialist know-how. We advise on how to register them and secure rights of recreation on them, both tricky fields legally and administratively. (Only six months ago we prevented a change of law in Wales which would have devastated the prospects for registering more greens there.)

This all adds up to a vital and growing workload. We have to lobby parliamentarians; respond to consultations and draft briefings on parliamentary bills; run workshops and training days; draft, check and send accurate advice to members, tailored to their particular and unique circumstances.

The work costs time and of course money. That is why I am asking you to help secure the future of our cause by giving now to our ‘**What comes now?**’ appeal, a Christmas present to the future freedom and refreshment of us all.

Yours sincerely



Kate Ashbrook  
General Secretary

***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.***



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