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27 November 2019

## Defending commons, green spaces and paths

The society maintains a special legal fund to enable us to support our members fighting legal cases in defence of commons, green spaces and rights of way around the country. The fund, which was created through your generosity, has been exhausted because there are so many threats facing our precious spaces and paths.

We must now replenish the fund, and we ask your help to do so.

In the last couple of years we have backed some significant cases. We have supported the Moorside Fields Community Group in Lancaster who are fighting Lancashire County Council all the way to the supreme court, not only to save their precious, 13-hectare meadow from development, but also to establish an important legal precedent—that the holding of land by a council for educational use is not incompatible with its enjoyment by local people as a village green. The decision is imminent. We hope the local people win; they could not have fought this without us.

We part-funded a barrister for the Friends of Freeman's Wood, also in Lancaster, at the public inquiry into their application to register threatened open space as a green; the developers were also legally represented, so the friends needed a lawyer. And we have helped the Friends of Finsbury Park, on the edge of the City of London, fight the commercial exploitation of their peaceful green lung by the noisy annual Wireless Festival. Sadly, they lost in the appeal court and were refused leave to appeal to the supreme court—but it was a fight that had to be fought. And, of course, it cost money.

CAMPAIGNING  
SINCE 1865

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




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It is vital that we should support our members in fighting cases which, were it not for our help, they would have to abandon. When they ask for help, their application goes to the legal subcommittee of our trustees which considers it against set criteria. For example, we ask if the issue is of more than local significance? Is the chance of success more than 50 per cent? Does the case have local support? We are careful to spend the money wisely and always we seek to uphold the claims of communities against land-grabbers.

Please ensure that we can continue to back our members in their battles for our green spaces and paths by replenishing our legal fund.

Yours sincerely



Kate Ashbrook  
General Secretary

**PS:** *We are pleased to accept donations to this appeal as follows:*

1. *Online at <https://www.oss.org.uk/how-you-can-help/appeals/>*
2. *By bank transfer to Account: 00100021 Sort Code: 20-39-53*
3. *By cheque in the post using the enclosed envelope.*

**PPS:** There are also cases which arise from our own initiative: these are funded separately. For instance, you generously backed our appeal to fight the Leigh Common case in the high court. Thanks to you and our legal team, the developers decided to back down before the case reached the court; they also paid our costs, so we did not spend the money we raised. That money has been saved and we shall use it to fight cases which we take on ourselves from the centre. That money is separate from the legal fund which is ring-fenced to support members' cases.

Thank you



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