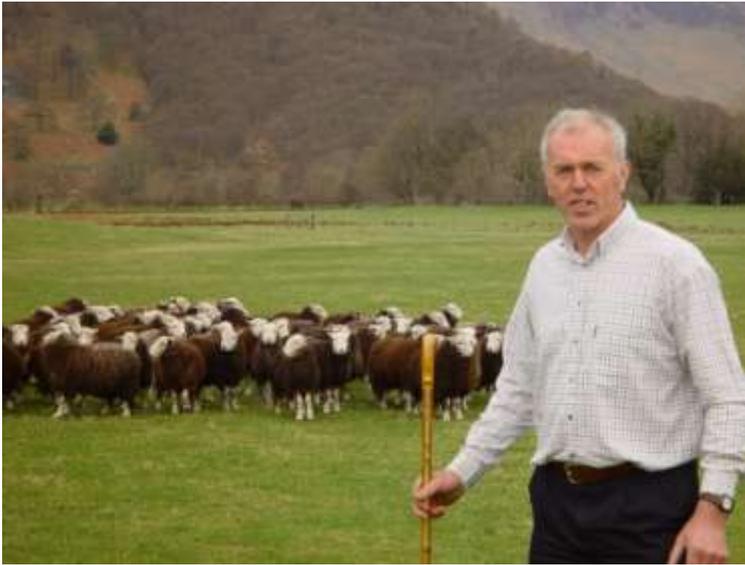


Federation of Cumbria Commoners

Affiliated with Lancashire & Northumberland
Newsletter Summer 2014



Looking Forward,

I am writing this as the new Chairman of the Federation of Cumbria Commoners. Having been involved with the Federation from its very early days, it's an honour to become its latest Chairman, but also a little nerve wracking, because I realise what a fantastic job the previous Chairs have done.

On behalf of you all I would like to thank our out going Chairman Dave Smith, for all his energy and effort and leadership, and it's really good to know Dave is still going to be on the Committee, and close by when I need advice.

Your Federation is so lucky to have such a dedicated Committee, who give all their time for free, to give Commoners a voice, that can make a big difference to important issues. We are also very fortunate to have someone as expert as Viv Lewis as our administrator, who I am sure will help to keep me on the right track.

The weather has been kind to us this spring and summer so far, and I hope it gives

you all the chance to get good crop for the forthcoming winter.

Please get in touch with the Federation if you have any issues that you think we can help with.

Joe Relph, Chairman.

A portrait of Caldbeck Common, Cumbria

This article has been written by Tim Cartmell, Secretary of Caldbeck Commoners' Association.

Caldbeck Common has not changed its boundaries since it was first registered as a common in July 1967 under the Commons Registration Act 1965. At that time it was assessed to be 3726.75 hectares by the County Council land agent. Today the RPA tells us it is 3996.63 hectares making a difference of 269.88 hectares or 667 acres.

We, the Commoners' Association, get told from time to time that the area is different for different purposes, but we have no easy means of verifying the information and no-one can explain why the figures change. Had we been submitting the wrong figure **on our SPS returns we would have been penalised, but for a common it is the RPA's** responsibility to get the area right and allocate that area between the eligible grazing rights holders.

You would also have thought that the number of livestock units (LUs) worked out from the rights registered in the Commons Register for Caldbeck Common would remain constant. This is not the case and the following are some examples of how things can change when converting different rights to LUs.

In 2012, we questioned the way RPA calculated lambs (when specifically mentioned on the commons register). It transpired that RPA policy says that lambs are equivalent to sheep in terms of LUs. The norm on Caldbeck Common for rights registered as interchangeable is 4 sheep to one cow. This is based on the norm when rights were the original registration of rights between 1967 – 1970 of 4 sheep rights or 1 cow to the inbye acre. The RPA use the formula of 1 cow = 1 LU and 1 sheep/ lamb = 0.15 LUs. As a result farmers with interchangeable rights can maximise their SPF common land allocation by claiming for cows rather than sheep. Also split rights with Mungrisdale Common are now area apportioned.

Currently a right to graze a cow is now worth 0.874 of a hectare or just over 2 acres of our common, and a right to graze a sheep is worth about a third of an acre.

Caldbeck common is within the Lake District National Park and is part of the Skiddaw massif and Skiddaw Group SSSI. It is in “unfavourable recovering” condition. In 1999, there were 34 active graziers. This has declined to 26 today. There are another 60 people holding grazing rights who do not use them. In 1999, there were about 10,800 ewes on the common. The Foot and Mouth outbreak saw the vast majority culled. In 2003, the Commoners’ Association signed up to a 10-year ESA/WES agreement which allowed a maximum of 4,783 ewes on the common, the equivalent of a 55% reduction compared to pre-FMD stocking rates. Today, the maximum number of ewes allowed under the HLS Agreement signed in 2013, is 4,595 (for August and September). Many of the graziers doubt whether these reduced stocking rates will help to achieve overall “favourable condition” as the under-grazed, or rather un-grazed areas of white grass now seem to account for a very large proportion of the common. While this is apparently of little or no interest to Natural England, to the commoners they represent areas of wasted grazing. The sheep prefer the sweeter areas and are moving down the fell as there are not enough sheep grazing the common to hold them in their hefts.

Eighteen hectares were fenced off and planted with trees under the previous ESA/WES Agreement. Another 21.48 hectares of woodland will be established under the current HLS agreement. The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) owns the greater part of the common and is undertaking the HLS-funded capital works including new fencing, tree planting and works to preserve the archaeological remains. They often call on their volunteer workforce to help with these capital works. Their Ranger has instituted an annual bird survey.

The LDNPA are an active owner member of the Caldbeck Commoners’ Association. Every January they organise a meeting between owners and representatives of the commoners on Caldbeck, the neighbouring Uldale common and Natural England to decide which events (hound trails, orienteering, hang-gliding, sponsored walks etc) should be given permission. Currently, they are reviewing their view of “favourable condition” having heard the arguments of the commoners.

Caldbeck common is becoming increasingly busy with walkers and runners and those interested in industrial archaeology. Two hundred years ago it would have been busier still, when the various mines and their infrastructure were in operation. It was often said in the past that “Caldbeck and the Caldbeck Fells are worth all England else” because of the extensive range of minerals to be found in the area. We wonder what the modern ecologist would have thought of the mining industry, had he or she been alive and working then.

News from the committee

AGM: it seems a long time since we held our AGM on 7th March at Newton Rigg. For those of you unable to attend here is a short summary.

Over 100 people attended the Federation's 10th Anniversary AGM. The Federation was started by commoners 10 years ago and is run by commoners. We have grown steadily over the years and our membership manages nearly 20% of the common land in England. This makes the Federation a force to be reckoned with and one of the very few authentic bodies speaking for the commoners of the country.

Our outgoing chairman Dave Smith, told the audience that Federation works hard to **make sure the commoners' voice is heard by Defra, Natural England and all the** various agencies and conservation bodies involved in common land at a national, regional and local level. The other side of our work is to inform members about pertinent issues that affect commoning via our newsletter and website. We also explain to the outside world how hill farmers manage common land and its role in their hill farming systems.

After the AGM, George Monbiot, environmentalist and journalist was given the opportunity address the meeting before being joined on the top table by a panel of speakers to take questions. The panel members were Dave Smith (Chairman), Julia Aglionby (committee member), Will Rawling (Chairman Herdwick Breeders Association and Farmer Network) and Will Benson (young commoner). Despite taking a position very far from any of the commoners in the room, the audience showed Mr. Monbiot a great deal of respect and listened carefully to his opinions.

Mr. Monbiot claimed the deforestation of the uplands and stocking the hills with sheep increased flood risks, caused an ecological disaster and was directly related to a lack of wildlife on the hills. He believes that re-wilding would be good for the environment and the county. He said he was not advocating forcing people off the hills to re-wild them, but he would like to see incentives to support re-wilding.

Will Rawling said the landscape had evolved as a working environment, producing self-replacing flocks of sheep that produce high-quality protein from low-quality grazing. Farmers are protecting upland landscapes and delivering a huge amount of public and **environmental goods through environmental stewardship schemes. There isn't a common in Cumbria that doesn't have an environmental scheme of some sort** and hundreds of hectares of woodland have been planted recently.

Young commoner Will Benson asked Mr. Monbiot “Surely rain causes floods, not sheep?” in response to his theory that sheep cause flooding. The audience applauded.

There was a general feeling among the meeting’s attendees that Mr. Monbiot’s comments over recent months had been ‘counter-productive’ to improving collaboration between farmers and Natural England. He was asked several times during the Q&A session to give a fairer representation of hill farmers in the media, including his Guardian newspaper column.

The meeting probably didn’t change minds, but commoners did get to see and hear the views of one of hill farmers’ most outstanding critics. His views are finding favour within the conservation movement and the general public. We have heard his arguments, we now need to sharpen ours.

Federation gives a qualified welcome to 90% increase in moorland payment: the Federation has been lobbying hard with Robin Milton, Chairman NFU Upland Committee, the Foundation for Common Land and other hill farmers' organisations to get the Moorland payment increased and we have been successful.

Defra Secretary Owen Paterson announced that under the new Common Agricultural Policy the moorland payment will be approximately **£57/hectare (€70/hectare)**. This is an approximately 90 per cent increase to the moorland rate. The Severely Disadvantaged Area and lowland rates are set at around £200/ha. These payments will start in 2015.

This is qualified good news for commoners. Around 97% of Cumbria's common land is above the moorland line. However, for many hill farms on common land the loss of ULES monies will slightly outweigh gains in the increase in the Moorland rate and Severely Disadvantaged Area rate.

Private meeting with Owen Patterson, Secretary of State, Defra: The Federation took part in an afternoon meeting in early May hosted by committee member Carl Walters. This was a private meeting, we set the agenda and a small number of farmers were invited to attend and put forward their views. We had in-depth discussions on the following topics:

- The moorland payment uplift: on the one hand we welcomed this extra money, **but on the other we provided examples of how this uplift doesn’t quite** compensate for announced withdrawal of UELS;
- Farm succession: we gave examples of the barriers young farmers/ commoners face when trying to get a foot on the hill farming ladder and a concrete example of a planned farm succession on a tenanted farm that has just started;
- New Environmental Land Management Scheme NELMS (successor to ELS/HLS):

we asked the Minister ensure that NELMS is properly “commons proofed” and requested that commons currently in UELS schemes are priority candidates for the new “mid-tier” NELMS.

- RPA inspections: we gave an example of a full RPA inspection being conducted during lambing and urged the Minister to instruct PRA not to hold inspections during the lambing period.
- Grasmere Common: one of the affected graziers explained to the Minister that **the commoners’ application to UELS is being blocked by the owner, Lowther Estate Trust** and this is denying them access to much needed money. We hope this situation will be resolved soon.
- Bolton Fell Moss: a couple of farmers adjoining the Moss explained their concerns over the compulsory purchase of the moss by Natural England
- We re-iterated that broadband speeds are still very slow in many oarts of Cumbria, making it difficult to fill in and submit paperwork on-line
- We requested the Minister to consider a partial re-coupling of payments to real farm activity. We want to see farmers rewarded for what they do, not just for the amount of land they have under their control

Thanks once again to Carl Walters for hosting the Minister on his farm during lambing.

Meeting Mike Rowe, Defra Deputy Director for the uplands and sustainable land management: We have had the opportunity to meet Mike twice in recent months and talk to him about commoning and hill farming in general. We have stressed that it is the shared agricultural management of commons by hill farmers grazing their sheep that has kept the land open for centuries, conserved the wildlife, archaeological features and traditional farming practices. Although our commons provide more public benefits than any other farmland in England and Wales, the future looks uncertain. The commons most at risk are those with the fewest commoners and measures are needed to support these commoners continue grazing their livestock on the common.

We are asking Defra to improve its uplands policy making process, by engaging with hill farmers right from the start and truly valuing and taking into account their local knowledge, experience and insights. We think he is getting the message.

Natural England has appointed a principle specialist on commons - Pippa Langford

We welcome the news that Natural England has created a new post of Principal Specialist on Commons, which came into effect on 1st April. The new role will give common land a higher profile within Natural England and will bring together the

multiple interests in commons: agriculture, biodiversity, landscape and public enjoyment. **The postholder is Pippa Langford, formerly Natural England's Manager in People and Access.**

On taking up the post Pippa said: **'As the new lead on commons for Natural England I will be working with commons stakeholders to help conserve and enhance commons. Natural England recognises that commons, derived from traditional farming systems, are very special places for wildlife, landscape and millions of people. We also recognise that working on commons is often complex, so another part of my new role will be to support our local advisers in their work on commons.'**

Pippa is coming to Cumbria in July to meet commoners.

Federation has taken another step towards setting up a Commons Council for Cumbria

Since the passing of the 2006 Commons Act the Federation has taken an interest in setting up an umbrella Commons Council for Cumbria. The Federation was involved in the national Shadow Commons Council Project 2008/09 with Julia Aglionby (H& H Land) undertaking the work. In 2011, the Federation, again with Julia Aglionby, successfully bid to deliver the DEFRA funded pilot project to prove *prima facie* (1) substantial support for a commons council in Cumbria. The other pilot areas were Brendon (Exmoor) and Bodmin (Cornwall).

Twenty nine commoners' associations took part in the consultation process, with over 400 people attending meetings to find out more about a Commons Council for Cumbria. We sent out voting papers to 799 people. Fourteen commoners' associations, covering 30,156 ha (nearly 30% of Cumbria's common land) voted to join a council if one was established. These results demonstrated that there was sufficient support to take the process forward and we sent our report to Defra.

We then paused the process as we thought it would be prudent to watch and learn from the Brendon pilot project. As a single common land unit, Brendon was going through a simpler process and very likely to become the first statutory commons council in England. We have followed their progress with interest and the Brendon Commons Council came into being on 1 April 2014. They are now considering rules they need to put in place to oversee the agricultural management of their common.

We decided we needed to complete the process, otherwise any momentum gained would be lost. In late May we submitted an extensive proposal to the Secretary of State to set up a Commons Council for Cumbria. The document is nearly 50 pages

long and can be found on our website. It includes information on Cumbria's common land and highlights the fact that Cumbria's commons remain an economically important asset for sheep farming (unlike many commons elsewhere), while delivering a range of significant public benefits including public access, landscape, recreation, sites of important wildlife and archaeology, sources of water and carbon storage. The report goes on to provide details of how the proposed Commons Council might work and analysis of the previous consultations.

We are now asking the Secretary of State to allow Cumbria to take this consultation to the next stage and establish a commons council by order made under Section 27 of the 2006 Act. If the Secretary of State is convinced that we have demonstrated *prima facie* substantial support for a commons council in Cumbria, then there are still a number of steps to achieve as follows:

1. Defra will draft an establishment order based on our proposed structure with Cumbria divided into five areas for the purpose of representation as follows: East Fellside; Howgills; North Lakes; South Lakes; Central Lakes
2. Defra will instigate another round of consultation on the draft establishment order
3. Defra will consider the consultation responses, they must take particular note of the responses from the following people:
 - persons who have rights of common over the common;
 - persons with a right over, or who occupy, the common (other than rights of common); and
 - persons who have a legal function related to the maintenance or management of the common.

So there still is a long way to go.

All the relevant documents can be found on our website and we will update you on our progress via the website and this newsletter. If you want further information, please get in touch with Viv Lewis (Administrator).

- (1) *prima facie* denotes evidence that would be sufficient to prove a particular proposition.

The Commons Act 2006

Cumbria has been chosen by Defra as a new pilot authority for the implementation of Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006. It will be finally possible to update the grossly out-of-date common land registers and mistakes made nearly 50 years ago corrected. Land incorrectly registered as common land can be deregistered and there will be a

mechanism for rights held in gross (i.e. not attached to land) to be brought up-to-date.

It has never been more important to ensure that your entries are updated. If you have gained rights or extinguished them, but have failed to amend the registers, do not miss the boat now.

Act now to preserve your commons rights

The Issue: did you update the Commons Register when you bought, sold or swapped land with commons rights?

The Commons Act 2006 has the potential to affect ALL those who own rights of common and, if not acted upon, may result in those who currently own rights of common right, losing some of their rights if the Commons Register has not been accurately updated to record transactions between registration of rights in 1965/1970 and the 1st June 2005 when the no severance rule under the Commons Act 2006 came into force.

If such transactions are not registered within the next two to three years then the commons rights set out in Column 3 belong to the owners of the land set out in Column 5 irrespective of what happened between 1965 and 2005.

The time frame

The Act provides for a “transitional period” to register previously unregistered transactions between 1965 and 2005.

In Cumbria this “transitional period” will begin in October 2014 and is likely to be for a period of 2-3 years, during which all commons registers should be updated to reflect the current position.

You can also correct any inaccuracies in the Register prior to the beginning of the transitional period.

Whose job is it to record previous transactions?

Yours. You have to look after your own rights.

Advice and Action

CHECK THE REGISTER AND ENSURE THAT YOU OWN ALL THE FIELDS IN COLUMN 5 OF EACH OF THE REGISTER ENTRIES UNDER WHICH YOU CLAIM TO OWN RIGHTS. **If you don't you could well lose rights. If you find you don't own all the land in column 5, and you don't do anything about it, you certainly will lose rights.**

REMEMBER – when the transitional period ends the rights attached to the land will belong to the owner(s) of the land set out in Column 5, NOT the person named in Column 3.

Why may the register not be a true record?

There are many reasons why, despite your acquiring land with commons rights attached, the Register may be inaccurate and those rights may be lost. The example below give some guidance.

Farmer A registered 300 rights to 80 acres in 1970 (equals 3.75 rights to the acre). In 1990 he retired and sold his 80 acres in 4 lots:

- Lot 1: 30 acres sold with all the rights to Farmer B
- Lots 2– 4 totalling 50 acres were stated not to have rights with them.

The Commons Register was not altered, and shows all the 80 acres in column 5.

Farmer B claims the 300 rights for single farm payment purposes and has entered them into the UELS/HLS agreement on the common. There is no problem at present, because since 1970 there has been no requirement to alter the register.

But, if Farmer B does nothing he will lose 187 of his 300 rights when the transitional period ends. The 30 acres he bought will have 113 rights (30 acres x 3.75 rights per acre). The other 50 acres will have 187 rights (80 acres x 3.75 rights per acre). They will in law belong again to the owner(s) of the land in column 5.

What must Farmer B do to rectify the situation?

He must register the 1990 transaction. He will need copies of the deeds entered into at the time. He will then find himself the owner of 113 rights attached to his own 30 acres shown in column 5 under a new register entry, and 187 rights may be shown as owning in gross under a second new entry, (detached from the land to which they formerly attached in 1990).

Does Farmer B have to wait until the transitional period starts?

No. The sooner he does it the better, because the rules prior to the transitional period coming into force are more relaxed about the evidence required to amend the Register.

Help and Advice: For further advice speak to Viv Lewis, Administrator. If you need help sorting out amendments to your register entries you can obtain it from a solicitor or land agent, or from Tim Cartmell and Rachel Bauer (advisors in all commons matters), whose contact details can be obtained from Viv Lewis.

Commons Registration Service

As a Commons Registration Authority under the Commons Registration Act of 1965, Cumbria County Council is responsible for maintaining the registers of Common Land and Town or Village Greens, covering the whole of Cumbria and including areas within the two National Parks. The registers are available for public inspection, free of charge.

The Cumbria Registration Service provides:

- Copies of Common and Town or village Green registers and plans (£10 per register unit)
- Searches of the registers for rights/ land with rights attached/ farms/ names
- Processing of application to amend the commons registers
- Free viewing of the registers and plans at their offices in Carlisle by appointment

Contact: Commons Registration Service, Cumbria County Council, Lady Gillford's House, Petteril Bank Rd, Carlisle CA2 3AJ. Tel 01228 221026/ 01228 226168 Email: commons.registration@cumbria.gov.uk

New Bovine TB regulations for cattle grazing on common land

Although the pre-movement testing change for moving cattle on and off commons land is unlikely to affect many Cumbrian farmers directly (as the change in law only applies to holdings that are on annual testing), TB isn't just a problem that is somewhere else. The following article written by John Waldon (Chairman Dartmoor Commoners Council) explains what it means to commoners in the South West.

From 1 July 2014, cattle grazing on common land, in those parts of England (1) where annual herd TB tests are currently required, will be subject to new regulations; all cattle moving onto a common and moving off from a common will have to have a pre-movement test and a post-movement test. The new regulations are set out in Defra guidance note:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/bovine-tb-information-notes

Previously such movements have been exempt from such tests but the exemption was removed on the 30 June 2014. However to reduce the impact of the regulations on cattle graziers, staff from Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) have been working with commoners on Dartmoor to devise a plan that provides sufficient information to enable risk assessments for a common to be undertaken. If the risk assessment suggests the risk of transmitting the disease is low then the programme of testing might be reduced or some of the testing not required

to be undertaken at all.

These TB Control Plans will be required for all commons in the area of annual testing and will have to include sufficient information to inform a risk assessment. The Dartmoor TB Control Plan is in three parts; Part 1 provides information relevant to all of Dartmoor, Part 2 relates to a specific common and Part 3 provides guidance to individual cattle graziers on what information they will be required to provide. Such an approach, in three parts, will not be suitable for all commons and usually only Part 2 and 3 will be relevant. This model is made available to help other commoners and **Common's Associations prepare their own plans. (this will not affect Cumbria)**

A TB Control Plan will have to provide the names and CPH numbers of all the graziers with cattle on that common, the numbers of cattle, area of common and details of its **boundaries. Other information will be required including details of any "Holding Areas" (2).**

For all those commons that fall into this area and are grazed by cattle it is essential that the Association or cattle graziers contact their local AHVLA office and read the Defra notes. Without a TB Control Plan all cattle movements on and off the common will require TB movement testing. The Dartmoor TB Control Plan was written by **farmers, AHVLA, Dartmoor Commoners' Council and the Dartmoor Hill Farm Project.**

If you would like to see a copy of the plan, please contact Viv Lewis.

Notes:

(1) The area of England where the regulations apply include all the South-West, parts of Southern England and Western counties. See <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/documents/bovine-tb/pti-map.pdf>

(2) A Holding Area is part of the farm where cattle from the common can be held isolated from any other cattle on that holding.

Bovine TB – your views and actions matter.

This article was written by Stephen Plant, senior policy advisor, Bovine TB Programme, Defra.

It's fair to say that a number of us in Defra don't get out to farms as much as we would like, and certainly not as much as many farmers would want (although not where an inspection is concerned...).

We're being encouraged to visit farms more often and I jumped at the chance to go on a hill farming course organised by the Foundation for Common Land and came to

visit the Penrith area. A group of Defra staff from a range of backgrounds (policy, legal and delivery agency) came to experience the delights of the fells for two days in March.

For me, this was the best course I had been on so a big thank you to the organisers (Veronica and Viv) and to the two farmers (Stephen Lord and David Noble) who kindly allowed us to visit their farms and kept us well fed. Not only was the course informative on hill farming practices generally - it was an opportunity to discuss openly the very real challenges facing hill farmers, which was eye opening, and for Defra staff to explain the pressures the Department faces too. I took away a real sense of dedication to the future success of hill farming amongst the farmers, in spite of the uncertainties around what the future holds.

Given the diversity within the farming industry, it's all the more important that Defra staff get on-farm and engage with farmers directly to better appreciate the impacts that such changes have on day-to-day farming businesses. Of course we do also consult on new measures to get a better handle on what these impacts are. A commonly held view is that consultation is window dressing for what is a done deal and that nothing changes as a result – that is not the case.

Your winter newsletter noted that the Federation had responded critically to a Defra consultation on a proposal to remove the pre-movement testing exemption for movements to and from common land. A few concerns were shared by a number of respondents to our consultation: how it is often impossible/unsafe to TB test cattle **on common land; the potential adverse implications for graziers' businesses (who would have to pay for the testing);** and the environmental damage that could be caused if cattle numbers reduced on the commons. We responded positively to these concerns – cattle moved off common land can be tested back at the home farm and provided a robust TB control plan is place some movements of cattle may be permitted without a TB test. I hope this shows that your views are taken into account and we do value your time in responding to these consultations so please continue to engage with us.

Although the pre-movement testing change is unlikely to affect many Cumbrian farmers directly (as the change in law only applies to holdings that are on annual **testing**), **TB isn't just a problem that is somewhere else. You may be aware that a serious TB breakdown has affected the Cumbria area recently. Whilst it's not yet clear** what the source of the breakdown is (investigations are continuing), farmers need to remain vigilant and take appropriate steps to protect not only their herds but also their neighbours. The new industry-led initiative on risk-based trading is one of the important steps introduced to provide farmers with more information about cattle

they are thinking of buying (<http://www.nfuonline.com/news/latest-news/bovine-tb-and-risk-based-trading/>). We would also urge farmers to think isolating and post-movement testing cattle before introducing them into the main herd. There are other practical steps that you can take to protect your herd (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/disease-control/bovine-tb/protecting-herd/>). Keep an eye out for other events in your area on biosecurity measures.

The Government is determined to work in partnership with the farming community to stop the spread of this devastating disease. By taking these steps, along with the other control measures that we have available, we hope to achieve our aim of recognising the North West as officially TB-free within the next few years.

News from the Foundation for Common Land.

The last few months have been a really busy time for the Foundation; Hill Farm Training, Better Outcomes, SPS, Moorland rate and NELMS negotiations, roll out of the Commons Act. I've changed my roll from Chairman to Executive Director and aim to spend 2 plus days per week on Foundation business. We have a Steering Group drawn from across Great Britain and aim to offer support for commoners and the management of common land to increase the public benefits from common land. Our web site is a good source of information www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk and do follow us on Twitter @4commonland

We have been reviewing our Hill Farm Training Scheme for Conservation Professionals which has been funded by the Princes Countryside Funder, Leader and the Duchy of Cornwall. Over 120 people have been on courses in Cumbria and Dartmoor. The purpose has been to encourage those working in nature conservation roles to learn about the practicalities of hill farming so improve the delivery of environmental schemes. Feed back has been very positive and we have run several bespoke courses for Defra and Natural England where they have paid to come on the courses. A big thanks to our farmer trainers including Cumbrian commoners Joe Relph, Tom Lorains, Alan Alderson, Harry Hutchinson, Stephen Lord and David Noble and Cumbrian co-ordinator Veronica Waller.

We have applied for funding to Princes Countryside Fund to run similar courses in Wales and Scotland.

Another big project has been convening 'Better Outcomes on Upland Commons' The aim of this is to get 15 partners from farming, sporting, wildlife, water, access to work better together in upland areas. How can we move forward with the 80% we do agree about rather than fixate on the 20% of issues we disagree on. We have looked at five case studies across England to see what works well - the Attributes of Success. Our

sites are Dartmoor Forest, Long Mynd, Bampton, West Arkengarthdale and Danby. So many common findings mostly boiling down to quality of communications and mutual respect of different peoples interests. We are now considering how we can roll this work out in a practical sense to deliver change. The report will shortly be on line.

The negotiations for the new Basic Payment Scheme have been most time consuming and while sometimes frustrating with endless meetings we are delighted that the Moorland Rate has been confirmed at £56 per ha which will compensate for the loss of UELS as people's agreements run out. This was not an easy gain but essential for commons. We pushed Defra to analyse the impacts of not making the increase and this showed 87% of commoners would be worse off if the increase didn't happen. Also commons stewardship agreements in the future are likely to be for ten years while the norm will only be five years. Group application supplements will remain and Defra is also looking at linked agreements for farms entering the mid tier scheme (think of it as a midway point between UELS and HLS).

The big news for Cumbria is the roll out of the Commons Act Part 1 from October. It is really important all commoners check their entries as it is likely in the future that to claim BPS you will need to have made a declaration on the Commons Register to demonstrate the right to use common rights. We will release more information on this soon.

Finally as some of you may have heard I have accepted a post as a non-executive Director of Natural England. It is an exciting time for Natural England and I am a strong believer that Natural England's schemes need to work for farmers, land owners and commoners if they are to deliver for conservation. My mission is to try and make that a reality.

If you have any queries on Foundation business please do not hesitate to contact myself (julia@foundationforcommonland.org.uk or Viv Lewis viv@foundationforcommonland.org.uk)

Many congratulations to Julia for your appointment to the Natural England Board. It is great to have two Cumbrians on Natural England's Board as Julia will be joining Will Cockbain.

According to Natural England's website, the Board has "corporate responsibility for ensuring that Natural England fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Secretary of State. The main roles of the Board are to establish Natural England's strategy, approve direction and review performance of the organisation". We know you'll both keep flying the flag for hill farming and commoning.

Federation of Cumbria Commoners Committee 2014

Chairman	Joe Relph	Lakes South Central	01768 777675
Vice Chair	Jim Campbell	Co-opted	01931 713412
Committee			
John Atkinson		Lakes South West	01229 885663
Ernest Coulthard		Kirkby Stephen	01768 371926
Harry Hutchinson		Howgills	01539 620635
Carl Walters		Lakes North Central	01931 713248
Duncan Ellwood		Lakes West	01946 841344
John Rowland		Lakes North	01768 779246
Dave Smith (Treasurer)		Eastern Fells	017683 61333
Vacant		Crosby	
Pauline Blair		Non-regional	01946 861630
William Steele		Non-regional	01786 341436
Ian Gorst		Lancashire co-opted	01524 770509
Charles Raine		Northumberland co-opted	01434 609000
Robert Benson		Owner Rep co-opted	01931 712577
Julia Aglionby		Co-opted	01697 470016
Andrew Humphries		Co-opted	01228 564140

Administrator (part time)

Viv Lewis, 5 Burnbanks, Bampton, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2RW. Tel: 01931 713335;
mob 07748185049

viv@cumbriacommoners.org.uk

www.cumbriacommoners.org.uk