

PRESS RELEASE



2016 BPS Payments on their Way to Commoners

The Foundation for Common Land is pleased to report that the Rural Payments Agency has agreed to make BPS payments to as many commoners as possible by the end of 2016. These will occur even if there are unresolved issues with their 2015 payments. This has been authorised by Defra Ministers.

Over the last eight weeks the Foundation for Common Land together with the NFU and the CAAV have been meeting regularly with senior RPA staff to highlight and work through the substantial number of issues that have affected payments on common land. Many of these are now being addressed and we will continue to meet over the Christmas New Year period to assess progress.

In the meantime Defra has made the decision that the fact that a farmer has unresolved issues on their common should not delay their 2016 BPS payment. Once any outstanding common land issues from 2015 have been resolved any top ups required can be made. It is excellent news that commoners and hence the management of common land will not be disadvantaged compared with other land. Common Land provides multiple public goods on many of our most iconic places but is dependent on active management by commoners to maintain these benefits.

ENDS

20th December 2016

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Notes to Editors

1. Commons provide more public benefits per area of land than almost any other type of land. This outstanding value and uniqueness arises from hundreds of years of active management by people working collaboratively to meet their livelihood needs. 58% of common land is designated as SSSIs, over 80% is in designated landscapes and 38% of our moorland is registered common land.

2. The term 'common land' derives from the fact that multiple people own rights to graze over the same area of land (i.e. in common) not as often mistakenly thought that the public owns the commons.

The Foundation for Common Land

The Foundation for Common Land is a Registered Charity, our charitable objectives are

- To conserve for the benefit of the public the agricultural systems and the cultural landscapes delivered by commoning and the management of common land.
 - To promote the conservation of the physical and natural environment by supporting the responsible and sustainable pastoral use of common land
 - To conduct and commission research into commoning and common land issues and publish the results of such research to the public at large
 - To educate the public in subjects pertaining to commoning and common land
- For more information see www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk