

New Commons for the Twenty-First Century

A vision and feasibility study

*We all need space; unless we have it, we cannot reach that sense
of quiet in which whispers of better things come to us gently.*
Octavia Hill, 1883

Written by Helen Baczkowska (NWT Conservation Officer)
in collaboration with David White (Norfolk County Council)

Foreword

In 2017, Norfolk Wildlife Trust led a 2-year project, Wildlife in Common with the aim of reconnecting people with their local commons.

It was an incredibly successful programme of volunteer skills development, wildlife surveying, practical conservation action and community celebration. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and in partnership with the University of East Anglia and Norfolk County Council our project brought large numbers of volunteers and communities into contact with their local commons to discover their natural and historic value.

Community powered solutions to the care of our commons were integral to this project and have inspired us to expand our commitment to Norfolk's commons and raise awareness of how new commons can be created, enjoyed and sustained. We are pleased and excited that this study is a reflection of our ambition and vision for new common land for Norfolk's wildlife and people.

Nik Khandpur and Kevin Hart, Norfolk Wildlife Trust

I am delighted that Norfolk County Council has been part of this inspiring initiative and hope very much that it points the way to further collaboration of this kind in the future.

Local Authorities throughout the UK are looking for new and innovative ways to enable communities to create and manage spaces for wildlife and recreation within easy reach of their homes. The new commons proposal offers a very positive way of doing this. By encouraging and assisting people to take the initiative themselves the technical language of "net gain" and "green infrastructure" becomes something real, useful and relevant to local communities. This type of place-making, that encourages more walking and cycling to outdoor environments, is good for the environment and for people's health and wellbeing and is a vital part of our "Greenways to Greenspaces" philosophy which will, I can only hope, lead one day to the creation of many new commons across the whole of Norfolk.

John Jones, Norfolk County Council, Head of Environment



Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction & Scope of Report	5
Common Land in England and Wales	8
- <i>Defining Common Land</i>	8
- <i>Common Land Legislation</i>	8
- <i>Wildlife Value of Commons</i>	9
- <i>Commons as Historic Landscapes</i>	11
- <i>Use of Common Land in Norfolk in the Twenty-first Century</i>	12
Creating New Commons	13
- <i>Vision</i>	13
- <i>Background</i>	14
- <i>Legal Mechanisms for Designating New commons</i>	15
- <i>Planning Framework for New Commons</i>	16
- <i>Biodiversity & Wellbeing frameworks</i>	17
- <i>Visualising a New Common</i>	19
- <i>Common Rights for the Twentieth First Century</i>	21
- <i>Analysis of Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Challenges</i>	22
Potential Approaches & Recommendations	24
- <i>Models for the Creation of New Commons</i>	24
- <i>Recommendations for Future Action</i>	26
References	34

Executive Summary

The study considers the potential for creating new areas of common land as an exciting and innovative approach to public open space, with opportunities for wildlife and people.

The history of common land in England and Wales reveals a long tradition of people being intimately connected to their common. Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Wildlife in Common project involved working with volunteers researching the wildlife, history and use of common land in Norfolk and demonstrated the clear connection to their local common felt by many Norfolk residents. Many people feel passionately about commons as the places they walk, seek solace and enjoy encounters with wildlife.

The study covers the history of commons, explains the legal protection and open access status of commons. The current planning framework, biodiversity, health and carbon agendas are also discussed in depth.

Strengths and weaknesses of the potential for new commons are looked at in depth, leading to recommendations for a number of ways forward; these include registering new commons with rights that are meaningful for Twenty-first Century communities, what is needed to support communities wishing to create new commons and creating commons as new open spaces that form part of larger housing developments. Making space for wildlife, engagement with local communities and reflecting historic landscapes is considered as central to all of these, as is the creation of new and meaningful rights of common, relevant to twenty-first century communities.

Illustrations that create a vision for a new common are included and recommendations for further action, at the end of the study, look at a number of different models for creating new commons, as well as measures to gain support for the idea amongst community groups, local planning authorities and other key agencies, the development of toolkits and provision of training and support.



Introduction & Scope of Report

The aim of this study is to examine the opportunities and challenges for creating new common land. The report focuses on examples and experiences in Norfolk, but frames them in a national context, with the intention that initiatives for new common land can be developed across England and Wales.

Common land in England and Wales frequently offers both public open space and habitats for wildlife, but it also holds a particular place in the national consciousness, with many people aware of the historic loss of commons to agricultural enclosure in the Eighteen and early Nineteenth centuries.

As the laws surrounding common land can seem convoluted, obscuring what precisely meant 'common land' means, the salient legislation is set out in brief.

The vision for creating new commons has formed part of Norfolk's Wildlife in Common project. As well as gathering data on the history and wildlife of Norfolk commons, Wildlife in Common has demonstrated the value of commons to local people as places to walk, seek solace and enjoy wildlife. The history of commons fascinate people and many feel passionately about the future and wildlife-friendly management of their commons.

Creating new common land not only strikes a chord with many people, but also provides an innovative approach to open space, with the potential to provide rights relevant to the Twenty-First Century and to provide an element of legal security for open space.

Wildlife in Common aimed to reconnect people with their commons, celebrate the importance of Norfolk's common land, and inform community-led solutions to improve commons for wildlife and people.

It was a two-year National Lottery Heritage funded project working in partnership with the University of East Anglia and Norfolk County Council.

Specifically, Norfolk Wildlife in Common looked to:

- Equip community volunteers with new skills to carry out the first comprehensive survey of wildlife and historic features on 60 Norfolk commons.
- Celebrate and increase awareness of the unique history of common land, creating pride in local green spaces.
- Inspire, train and support local communities to take practical action to protect and conserve commons and benefit wildlife and people.
- Demonstrate the case for creating new commons to support landscape-scale habitat creation and address the need for new green infrastructure.





Produced management statements for 32 commons.



© Caroline Spinks

Over 2,000 people attended a Living History Event run in partnership with Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse.

Over 14,000 biological records shared with Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service.



© Gemma Walker



Produced 2 films on common wildlife and the roles communities play in their management.

69 sites surveyed across the county.



© Caroline Spinks



© Gemma Walker

Organised 52 management tasks.



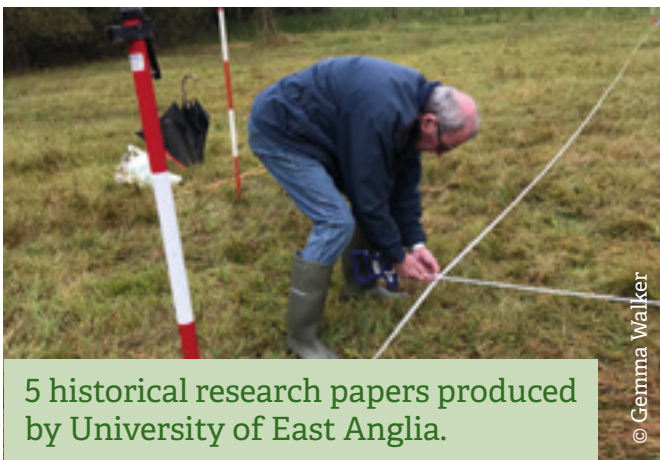
59 adult training workshops to develop volunteer skills in historical research, species identification and habitat surveying.

© Gemma Walker



We ran 39 common week events attended by approx. 1,500 people.

© Gemma Walker



5 historical research papers produced by University of East Anglia.

© Gemma Walker



Over 200 volunteers signed up to help deliver the project.

© Gemma Walker



Supported the setting-up of 3 practical conservation groups.

© Gemma Walker



© Anita Staff

10 outreach sessions for five schools with the National Centre for Writing, connecting children to their local commons.

Common Land in England and Wales

Defining Common Land

Despite the interest and concern for commons, there remains confusion about what exactly common land is and what rights people have to access it.

Common land is historically where certain people had rights over land they did not own. Rights of common were usually attached to specific houses in a village and varied depending on location, but typically included hay, grazing, taking small or dead wood (estovers), turf or peat (turbary).

The Commons Registration Act of 1965 required common land and common rights to be registered, with the registers for each county held by local authorities. Since 1965, common land has referred specifically to land recorded on these registers.

Some land named retains the name, but not a trace of common land remains, such as Sneath Common or NWT Thompson Common in Norfolk. In other cases, the land might be held by a local charity set up over a century of more ago for the benefit of the parish poor; whilst sometimes called 'common' these areas might not be registered as such and are more accurately fuel allotment or poor's trust land.



NWT Thompson Common, despite the name, is not a registered common.

Common Land Legislation

Laws covering the enclosure, protection and management of common land and rights date back centuries, forming some of the oldest laws and court cases in England. From the late medieval period, commons were 'enclosed' (incorporated into local farms), a process that gathered pace in the early 19th Century, driven in part by new systems of farming and the increasing need for food demanded by the growth of industrial towns.

Acts of Parliament from the late 1800's made provision for public access and a right to 'fresh air and exercise' on some common land. The 1899 Commons Act allowed local authorities to opt to manage common land that has no registered owner by making 'schemes of management'. Any common managed under the 1899 act must allow locals free access to the land; across the UK, many of these commons are in urban areas. A few 'scheme of management' commons exist in Norfolk, such as Thwaite Common near Aylsham.

The 1925 Law of Property Act set out legislation governing enclosure, fencing and activities such as driving or camping on commons. A range of case law and formal guidance subsequently underlined the need for landowners and right holders to co-operate on matters such as tree planting and vehicle access to property.

Common land and common rights were required to be registered under the 1965 Registration of Commons Act, as mentioned above.

Until the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act in 2000, public access to common land was restricted to specific public rights of way, although informal access was widespread, with many commons managed as public open space.

The Commons Act of 2006 updated much of the older legislation and set new frameworks for works on common land and for re-opening county registers to allow for them to be amended.

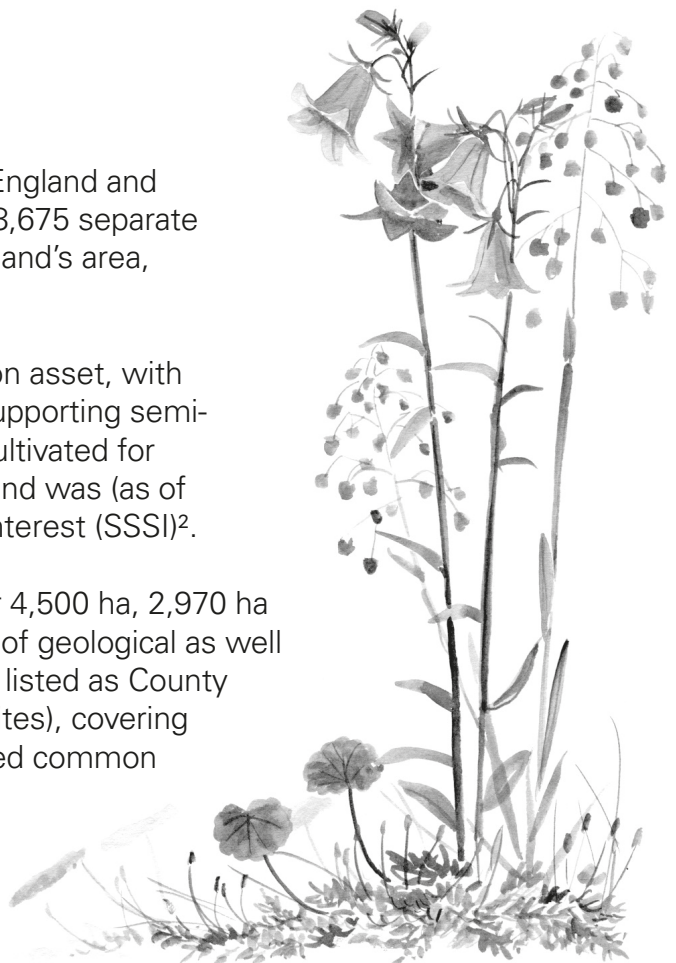
For the sake of clarity, village greens are a different legal entity and are usually notified on 'land on which a significant number of inhabitants of any area have indulged in lawful sports and pastimes, for 20 years, as of right.'¹ The Open Spaces Society (OSS) believes there to be about 3650 registered greens in England and about 220 in Wales, covering about 8150 and 620 acres respectively.

Wildlife Value of Commons

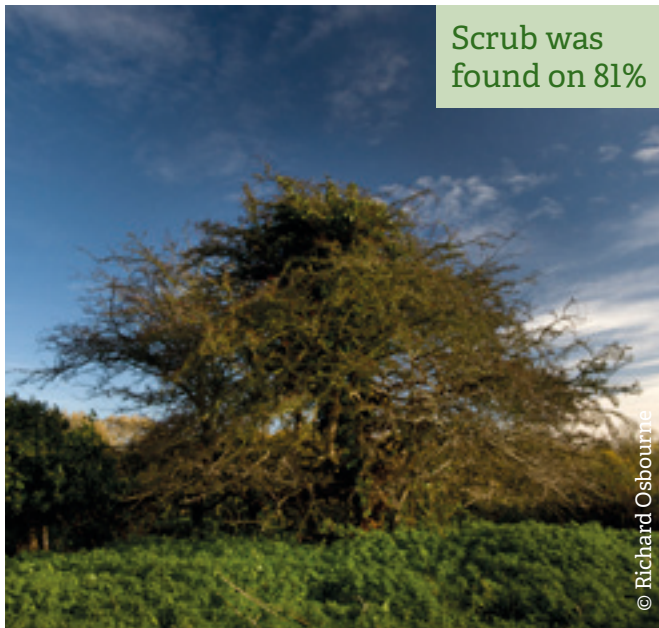
There are 396,800 hectares of common land in England and 175,000 hectares in Wales, contained in around 8,675 separate commons. Common land represents 3% of England's area, and 12% of Wales².

Common land is an important nature conservation asset, with almost all the commons in England and Wales supporting semi-natural vegetation on land that has been rarely cultivated for centuries. Around 55% of common land in England was (as of 2006) designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)².

In Norfolk, common land registration covers over 4,500 ha, 2,970 ha of which is designated as a SSSI, including sites of geological as well as biological interest. A total of 75 commons are listed as County Wildlife Site (known nationally as Local Wildlife sites), covering over 800 ha. This means that 84% of all registered common land in Norfolk has some designation (65.8% of which is SSSI and 18.2% CWS).



Through 53 registered commons surveyed during the Wildlife in Common project (2018-2019):



Commons as Historic Landscapes

Common land is part of the historic landscape of England and Wales, from the upland fells of Cumbria and moorlands of the Cambrians to the heaths of the New Forest and wood pastures of Epping. As well as these extensive areas of common, many small commons exist, especially in the lowlands, where they are frequently fragments of much larger commons long-since enclosed.

Common land in Norfolk is deeply rooted in the history of the County and is a relic of historic landscapes. The fragments of common land seen today originate from land that remained unenclosed in the medieval era, often land that lay on the edge of settlements and was difficult to farm. The history of this land can be observed in the location and landscapes of commons in Norfolk today: in north Norfolk, 'heathy' commons on sandy soils are still found and are often remnants of commons and 'sheep walk', once vital to the county's wool trade. Wet, marshy commons are found in the Broads and on the edges of the Fens, whilst commons in the Brecks range from thin chalk heath soils, to areas pock-marked with pingos. On the heavy clay soils of South and Mid-Norfolk, linear commons, such as Gissing Common, are still found on the edges of parishes, often furthest from settlements and a pattern of housing clustered around commons (often called 'greens') also occurs; this is often a consequence of later settlement and can be observed at Fritton and Brewer's Green in Roydon (South Norfolk).

Landscape assessments for targeting agri-environment schemes and those conducted by Norfolk district councils mention commons as historic landscape features, with the South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment³ referencing the pattern of commons and greens across the district. This offers an opportunity for new commons to form part of future developments, where they can provide open space and green infrastructure that echo the historic landscape and settlement patterns. Norfolk Wildlife Trust has produced a short report, 'A Vision for Long Stratton's Green Infrastructure'⁴, which sets out how new commons could sit within the proposed new developments for the town and these ideas were incorporated into the Master Plan for the proposed developments⁵.



© David North

Although the historic landscape provides one context for new commons and adds to the potential to include them as green infrastructure and open space provision in new developments, new commons should not be tied to this model. Registering land as common can also provide an element of legal protection to an existing and valued public space and could also apply to initiatives such as community orchards or woodlands, where residents have access to resources and a right of access. In such cases, the common itself may not reflect the historic landscape, but would reflect the historic role of commons as being important to the local community.

Use of Common Land in Norfolk in the Twenty-First Century

During the twentieth century, the agricultural use of common land in lowland counties fell as farming changed, with mixed farms and the need for marginal grazing land declining rapidly after the Second World War. Consequently, management work was abandoned on many commons, resulting in the development of scrub and sometimes secondary woodland. Aerial photographs from the 1940s, accessed as part of Wildlife in Common, frequently show commons as less wooded than today.

A series of commons survives around Low Street in the parish of Southrepps in North Norfolk. William Faden's county map of 1797 (here redrawn by Andrew MacNair) shows that they then formed a much wider network of common land, which included Antingham Common immediately to the south east. This was enclosed and converted to arable fields at the start of the nineteenth century but the commons in Southrepps survived and in 1946 were still kept largely open by cutting and grazing, although some parts were becoming overgrown with scrub.

By 1988 this process had accelerated, and large areas of School Common (to the north-west) and Bradfield Road and Mill Commons (to the south-east) were covered in trees and bushes.



1797 © Andrew MacNair



1946



1988

Although a number of commons are still used for grazing, evidence from NWT's work with the managers of common land, suggests that in Norfolk this is often focused on biodiversity conservation and is sometimes supported by agri-environment schemes.

In upland areas, active ‘commoning’ still takes place, with many hill farms reliant on common land grazing, usually for sheep. However, as with many lowland counties, walking and other forms of public access are the prime use of common land in Norfolk today, with many commons still retaining their ‘wild’ feel and not having become parks unless well within urban areas.

The UK government’s Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment 2017–2018⁶ reported 93% of respondents agreeing that it was important to have green spaces close to where they live (less than 2 miles away) and noted increasing interest in having green space within walking distance to reduce reliance on car use for environmental reasons. The report cited the main reasons for visiting outdoors as health and wellbeing, with these findings reflecting a considerable body of research showing the health and well-being effects of the natural environment. At the same time as the wealth of reports into the well-being and health benefits of the contact with the natural world, the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper recognises the growing disconnection between people and the natural environment.

Planning frameworks also recognise that the “design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population).”⁷
www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing

For the development of new commons to succeed, the public use of the common as a place for walking needs to sit alongside the establishment of new rights of common and the creation of wildlife habitat as part of ecological networks. The frameworks that can guide these are explored in the following section.

Creating New Commons

Vision

A new common will be a public open space firmly rooted in the historic landscape of an area, providing a place for ‘fresh air and exercise’ and perhaps designed to look very like existing local commons. It will be part of the ecological network of an area and have wildlife habitats that play a part in carbon capture, as well as creating a new space for wildlife. New rights of common will provide sustainable local resources and provide one way for residents to become involved in the care of the common.



Background

The historic loss of commons has led to common land holding a distinct and perhaps romantic place in British culture, with its associations of land to which people have access to and a stake in.

The proposal to create new commons chimes well with this cultural ideal, but also, on a practical level, offers the potential to provide some areas of open space with a high level of protection from development or ploughing. New commons could echo historical landscape features and potentially include common rights for local residents that link people with the land itself, provide open space for health and well-being and facilitate management for biodiversity.

NWT's involvement in developing new common land arose from the Long Stratton Green Infrastructure Strategy, when the idea of villages having their own common for access and as a way for delivering of ecological networks was raised by NWT. The idea was then explored with a range of individuals and organisations working in this area, including the Land Trust, Simon Fairlie of *The Land* magazine & the Ecological Land Co-op, DEFRA's National Stakeholder Committee on Common Land, the Open Spaces Society, UK Land Workers Alliance and Natural England. Discussions have included potential for new commons to be part of a framework of support for smaller farmers, community farms and smallholders as well as for public access.

At the same time, Duncan McKay, then of Natural England, was evolving ideas around new commons in tandem with Professor Christopher Rodgers of Newcastle University. McKay's ideas were captured in a presentation known as 'The London Paper'⁸, which highlights that in developing new commons, agencies need to think beyond the concept of commons as they appeared historically and consider access to resources, as, for example, developed by Incredible Edible projects, www.incredibleedible.org.uk, where volunteers develop vegetable gardens/beds free for anyone to gather food from.

The London Paper, research by NWT, including the examination of Norfolk commons carried out by Wildlife in Common and the wide-ranging discussions mentioned above have identified a number of key drivers for creating new commons:

- Well-being/health and public access – this fits well with national thinking and initiatives around access to green space and as part of green infrastructure planning.
- Climate change and sustainable resources – as concern about climate change rises up the political agenda, tree planting and other semi-natural habitats are starting to attract interest for carbon capture; at the same time, access to local, sustainable and plastic-free resources, from toothbrushes to firewood and furniture, are also becoming more sought after.
- Biodiversity – biodiversity conservation and the need to create ecological networks that buffer, expand and re-connect habitats have featured in both national and local frameworks for many years. However, growing awareness of climate change and wider environmental issues is currently lending more weight to and public support for efforts to ensure wildlife is well catered for in green infrastructure planning and as part of initiatives such as the Wildlife Trust's Living Landscape work, which looks at creating larger and more connected habitats.
- Stakeholder involvement – to succeed greenspaces and the places where people can have everyday encounters with the wildlife on their doorstep, need to be valued by those who live nearby or who use them regularly. Involving people in these spaces, from planning the management to carrying out practical tasks, helps people stay invested and can help secure the long term future of such places.

The following sections look at the mechanisms, planning policies, other frameworks and potential design elements of new commons, with the four drivers identified above remaining key throughout.

Legal Mechanisms for Designating New Commons

Registered commons have a legal status, but there are many areas of historic commons in England that retain the name 'common', despite not registered under the 1965 Act. This paper recognises that there are a number of distinct opportunities here:

- formally designating land as common and adding it to the common land register;
- creating land with common rights, although the land might not become registered (as per 'fuel allotments');
- creating areas of amenity land that resemble commons in terms of landscape and habitat, but which are not formally designated and may have no rights.

Each of these options has merits and may be applicable in different circumstances.

Prior to this the 2006 Commons Act, local authorities holding the registers worked under legislation brought about by the Commons Registration Act 1965. From 1 October 2008 (when the relevant sections of the 2006 Act came into force), a variety of measures became available for making applications to amend the commons and greens registers. In most cases a fee will be payable.

Cornwall has acted as a pioneer area for amending the common land register. Martin Wright, Common Land and Village Greens Registration Officer at Cornwall County Council notes:

Cornwall had a large amount of commons cancelled under the 1965 Act, and not surprisingly we have dealt with perhaps the largest number of applications seeking to re-register formerly cancelled land back as common land, most of which have been successful.

It should not be underestimated the amount of time in preparing such cases in showing that each case meets the legislative criteria, and I attach a couple of statements sent with some recent applications which sets out clearly how the criteria is deemed to be met.⁹

To register land as common, it is necessary that the landowner grants a right of common over the land, in accordance with S13 of the Commons Act 2006. Hugh Craddock at the Open Spaces Society has advised:

You will have to create new rights to give them legal 'life'. It only takes one grant, however minimal, to do that, but you will need to think about whether the right is going to be attached to land (i.e. beyond the common), which does ensure an 'attachment' to the locality, but risks the land falling into uninterested hands. An attachment to National Trust land, or other land in 'safe' hands unlikely ever to be alienated, might be advantageous.

Alternatively, the rights can be granted in gross, to a person or incorporated organisation. Again, there are risks, such as an incorporated organisation being wound up and the rights effectively being lost.

But....it's worth thinking about what sort of rights might be granted, and whether, ideally, they might be of a kind which would retain currency and continue to be exercised. However, I think the law is quite strict about what such rights might comprise — a profit à prendre of the soil, and do not, for example, include a right to walk the dog!

I also believe that any rights will have to be granted at the same time: once done, it is not possible to add in new rights subsequently; at least for the time being (it is different in the pioneer areas).¹⁰

The University of Newcastle Law School has created two guides to the legal framework for new commons. These set out some of the nuances, such as a community orchard would need to be planted by the landowner, with a right to pick fruit granted to commoners, rather than planted by commoners for their own use. The University's 'Tool kit' for new commons includes useful information for creating new rights, including the CA1 form required to grant and register rights. The information sheet and tool kit are available from:
<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/huls/research/impactengagement/commonsland/#researchbriefings>¹¹.

Planning Framework for New Commons

The need to deliver open space and green infrastructure in new developments forms a cornerstone of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Appendix 1 shows a breakdown of where reference to the NPPF could be used to support the concept of new commons.

In Norfolk, a number of settlements currently fail to meet the nationally recognised accessible green space standards (both Natural England's ANGSt and the Woodland Trust access Standards) and new commons could form part of delivering these standards, especially as further development plans come forward.

Information on settlements and green space can be found on the Norfolk Green Infrastructure mapping Project website: www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/ecological-networks.

At a more local level, discussions with South Norfolk Council have resulted in the potential for new commons forming part of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan¹², green infrastructure planning and master plan for new developments east of the village. Policy LNGS5 of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan states:

New developments will be required to enable and where appropriate provide:

- *safe public access to the countryside and between Long Stratton and surrounding villages;*
- *retention of habitat features and creation of new habitats;*
- *functional ecological connections between Priority (Section 41) species and habitats and designated sites in the vicinity of Long Stratton;*
- *an enhanced landscape setting for Long Stratton which reflects distinctive local landscape character, including in particular the landscape character and qualities of the existing historic commons;*
- *improved recreational provision to alleviate visitor pressure on sensitive areas.*
- *sensitively designed mitigation of any barriers to this green infrastructure provision.*

Development planning is increasingly required to consider climate change and it is highly possible that this will rise up the political agenda in the near future, often in close association with the need to protect environmental assets. For example, Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy for Greater Norwich is titled 'Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets'. Natural habitats can act as carbon sinks¹³, help with soil stabilisation and flood mitigation, whilst providing people with access to green spaces within easy walking distance can help reduce a community's carbon footprint by limiting the need for short journeys for recreation¹⁴.

Biodiversity & Wellbeing Frameworks

The justification and mechanisms for creating new commons reaches beyond development planning to embrace a changing world where health and well-being, climate change, biodiversity and ecological networks are drivers for action by local authorities, communities and a range of non-statutory agencies.

Figure 1 outlines some of the national and local initiatives that can be used to support the creation of new common land, but less easy to quantify is the motivation of communities to create, protect and have a stake in land valued by local residents. Often the drivers here are the same as those informing national policies and initiatives, such as a growing interest in climate change or biodiversity conservation, but these actions are heart felt and focused on local spaces and needs, rather than structured around national or regional policy.

As part of Wildlife in Common, Norfolk Wildlife Trust engaged with a number of communities where new common land had been designated or was being considered, these include:

- St Clement's Common – three small fields forming a Local Wildlife Site designated as common land by the landowner in the 1990s as a means of preserving access and the wildlife value of the land.
- Community Orchard in the Norfolk Broads – potential new common with a community orchard, aimed at protecting land from development and ensuring future management.
- Former Common in South Norfolk – potential registration of historic common that was not registered in the 1960s, aimed at ensuring access, management for wildlife and protection from development.

Proposed new open space in West Norfolk – local community exploring potential to add to existing network of common land in the parish with land being passed to them as part of new housing developments, but commons registration led by community.

Figure 1 National and Local Initiatives relevant to New Commons

National Initiatives	
Biodiversity 2020	The national strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. It was published in summer 2011 and sets out the Government's ambition to halt overall loss of England's biodiversity by 2020, supporting healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establishing coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.
The 25-year Environment Plan	This sets out the UK government's goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than before. It contains themes including thriving plants and wildlife, using resources from nature more sustainably, enhancing natural beauty and engagement with the natural environment, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.
Biodiversity Net Gain	An approach which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand. In the Spring Statement this year, the government announced it would mandate net gains for biodiversity in the planning system in the forthcoming Environment Bill.
Nature Recovery Network	A major commitment in the UK Government's 25-Year Environment Plan, intended to improve, expand and connect habitats to address wildlife decline and provide wider environmental benefits for people. The recent government announcement on Biodiversity Net Gain makes it clear that local Nature Recovery Networks will be integral to the process.
Local Initiatives	
Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP)	The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) requires Highway Authorities to make a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This is called the NAIP in Norfolk and includes wider access elements than just the Public Rights of Way network
Norfolk Recreational impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy	An emerging strategic solution for the delivery of visitor access management & monitoring at European sites. New access land to reduce the recreational use of European sites is an agreed mitigation measure for housing growth. This project is an initiative of all the district planning authorities in Norfolk.

Living Landscapes	The Living Landscapes concept encapsulates the Wildlife Trusts' aspiration to see nature conservation delivered at a landscape-scale, building on the so-called Lawton principles: "more, bigger, better and joined". Although key landscapes have been identified where the concept is likely to bring the most significant gains for biodiversity, the approach and guiding principles have potential application across the county.
Norfolk's Pollinator Action Plan	This emerging plan seeks to improve management of land for pollinators. It is likely to include incentives and encouragement for local communities to manage their local land with the interests of pollinators in mind.
Local Plans	All local plans have Open Space policies that provide details of the quantum of open space required for a given housing level. It might be useful to extract these. As a point of caution, I think it will be necessary to explicitly highlight the difference between 'normal' Green Space delivered through planning and our concept of new commons. Clearly we don't just want more of the same, so we need to highlight the additional benefits of making the open space a new common.
Neighbourhood Plans	Under the 2011 Localism Act, communities can choose to produce a neighbourhood plan, containing policies to help shape and deliver new development in their areas. Because this document will become a statutory document they have to produce in accordance with Government regulations. Neighbourhood Plans can set out a vision for an area and should contain planning policies for the use and development of land, but should guide development, rather to prevent it and can include protection or future creation of greenspace.
National Initiatives: Conservation Covenants	A conservation covenant is a private, voluntary agreement between a landowner and a "responsible" body, such as a conservation charity, government body or a local authority. It delivers lasting conservation benefit for the public good. It is proposed that Conservation Covenants will be included in the Environment Bill as a written signed agreement made between a landowner and a "responsible body".

Local Initiatives: Norfolk and Suffolk Environment Plan

This is a plan for taking forward the government 25 year Plan for the Environment in Norfolk and Suffolk. It is being developed by a partnership of local authorities, statutory bodies and NGOs, including Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

Three of the 6 policy areas of the plan have direct relevance to establishing new commons:

- Using and managing land sustainably.
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes.
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health & wellbeing.

Visualising a New Common

The four drivers identified in 3.1 give clues to the key elements that will make up the design of a new common, coupled with the existing soils and topography and features of the local historic landscape. For example, as mentioned above, South Norfolk has commons that can be long and linear, or broadly triangular 'greens', often with houses facing out onto them and tapering at one end.

Features for access, health and wellbeing could include 'trim-trails' as well as areas for walking, whilst in more urban settings it would not be out of place to include play-areas. This already occurs on commons in town or village centres, such as Mulbarton Common and the Neatherd in East Dereham; where new woodlands are created, or existing woodlands incorporated, areas for unstructured woodland play, such as den-building, would be appropriate.



© Zsuzsanna Bird

At a landscape scale, new commons should be located where they contribute most to existing habitats in terms of buffering and ecological networks. The wildlife habitat itself should reflect local priority and semi-natural habitats, as well as the needs of locally recorded species, such as hedgehogs and bats. New woodlands and scrub are not only important for carbon capture, but should be designed to accommodate the needs of wildlife and composed of species occurring locally. Thorny scrub is especially important as it provides a safe refuge for a range of small bird and mammal species and if appropriate can be designed to accommodate species such as turtle dove, which are now critically endangered. Allowing at least some areas to vegetate naturally, without much tree-planting can be considered, as the process of developing vegetation naturally benefits a range of wild species¹⁵. Meadow areas are attractive to people and can be created from locally gathered seed or 'green hay', which will benefit pollinators and invertebrates. Other habitats that could be considered include ponds, marsh, bog or fen, heaths, chalk downland and even micro-habitats, such as new pollards.

The SWOT analysis (see below) draws out a number of concerns that need to be addressed at an early stage of designing a new common, including the need to balance wildlife, public access (especially dog walking) and potentially grazing through design and long-term management. The designs should consider clear divisions of space between areas where dogs can run free, areas for children to play and areas for wildlife to be relatively undisturbed.

The role of new common rights to provide sustainable local resources should also be considered at the design stage; this may include coppice for small timber (bean poles, pea sticks, fencing, green woodworking and even firewood), meadows for hay or even grazing or community orchards.

Perhaps the single most important aspect of a designing a new common is the need for stakeholder engagement from the earliest opportunity; this should be aimed at determining local needs and opportunities, as well as developing long-term engagement in the common, including involvement in practical management and the exercising of common rights.



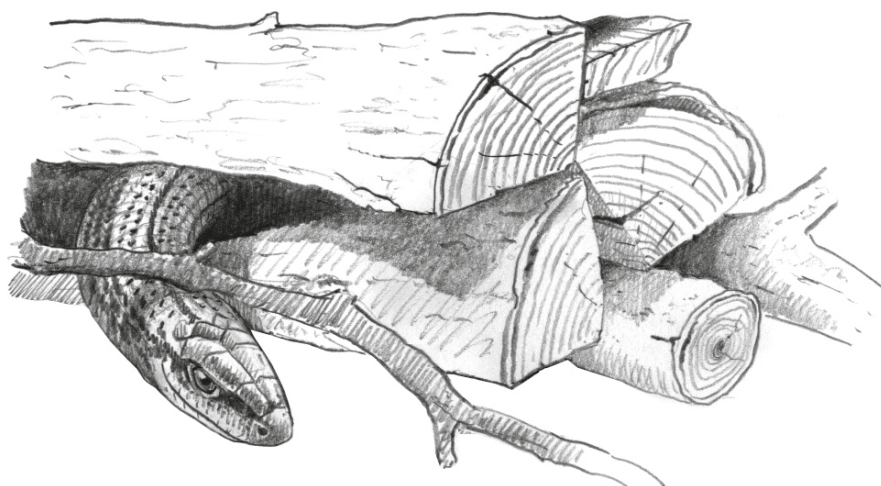


© Mark Webster

Common Rights for the Twenty-first Century

As Hugh Craddock says above, new commons need to have rights to ‘give them legal life’; the practical questions arising from this are: what common rights are relevant for the twenty-first century and who ‘owns’ these rights. On the latter point, as Hugh points out, rights can be attached to properties or to an incorporated organisation, which could, in effect, lease or manage the rights. Each of these options has merits and challenges; stakeholder engagement from the earliest opportunity is, as mentioned above, essential to ensuring the rights are appropriate to the local community and attached in a way that meets local need.

Two very different examples are worth noting here: at St Clement’s Common in South Norfolk, a new common was created by the granting of a right of estovers (collection of small wood) to a local property. The rights were eventually transferred to the Open Spaces Society, although they could be leased back to a local resident if required; the land itself is the property of a local trust. Snettisham Common in west Norfolk is owned by the parish council, but a right of estovers can be given to parishioners with the parish council’s consent – this is managed by putting cut timber in one place for collection and prohibiting collection on other parts of the common.



Analysis of Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Challenges

The following SWOC analysis can be used to identify the challenges and opportunities faced in the creation of new common land and to help refine recommendations for future action.

Figure 2 SWOC analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative approach to amenity land provision, ecological networks and landscape planning • Wide appeal, especially as many people are aware of the historic loss of commons • Providing a meaningful stake in the land and its management for local residents, re-connecting people with their local landscape and habitats. • Creating a framework for this approach to landscape design for open spaces/amenity land that reflects historic landscapes. For example, the South Norfolk model of houses around a common. • Potential for new habitats to be created as part of an ecological network or nature recovery networks. • Inspiring interest in wildlife, habitats and wild places • Existing initiatives such as pocket parks and Millennium Greens tried and tested. • Builds on existing research and initiatives around the health and well-being benefits of the natural environment and the contribution of this to reducing health costs in society. • Supports community, statutory and other drivers around biodiversity net gain and initiatives for the mitigation/adaptation to climate change. • Existing 'Common Purpose' process¹⁶ for developing consensus on commons. • Would enable those who wish to have their land protected from development (or for wildlife) and available for public use, after they die to have certainty that this will happen and to have some assurance that it will be managed as they wish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untried beyond one notable example in South Norfolk (St Clement's common) • Potential for disputes over land management and exercising of rights. • Need to avoid lack of clarity, defining from the start who is responsible for what • Lack of need if community already perceives it is served with adequate open space. • Neospora caninum parasite leading to conflict between cattle grazing and dog walking. • Potential conflict between grazing with sheep & dog walking. • Legal process perceived to be long and intimidating • Top-down approach (ie, land created as common by, for example, a local authority) might struggle to engage local people effectively. • Access to land might be an obstacle, along with cost of land purchase. • Requires landowners– to be willing and public-spirited. • Lack of local interest in or capacity for stakeholder engagement in land management.

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different opportunities present in different locations – in rural areas might for part of smaller developments, or be established by communities or groups of famers/small holders who want access to land. In urban areas more likely to be focused on amenity land, including forest gardens, community woodlands/orchard. • New commons within new developments to deliver open space requirements, including those in local development policies. • Potential for connecting new and existing communities to land and wildlife. • Designation of historic commons that were not registered in 1960s. • Re-creating long-lost commons – for example, the species-rich road verges of South Norfolk are frequently fragments of commons enclosed around 200 years ago; working with landowners and agri-environment schemes could see the return of some of these areas, at least in habitat/appearance even if not designated as common. • Health and well-being opportunities of natural environment available to more people and close to home, equally reducing the costs to society resulting from poor health. • Enabling local communities to take the lead in the management of wildlife habitats in their neighbourhood, evolving a meaningful engagement in open space. • Potential to form part of ecological networks, biodiversity net gain and initiatives for the mitigation/adaptation to climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration would de-value land and ensure public access, so this might be a negative point for some landowners. • Landownership – unlikely that many owners would be willing to donate land as common. • Need to resolve rights and responsibilities at the outset, perhaps drawing on the ‘Common Purpose’ process to establish a toolkit and clear pathways. • Top-down approaches may struggle to engage people unless a considered approach is taken early on. • Requires people to become new commoners – to be willing and public-spirited. • Training and on-going support for management, potentially requiring commitments from existing agencies and additional funding. • Need to evolve low-cost management of habitats that balance needs of people and wildlife and account for potential conflicts with grazing stock.

The SWOC analysis suggests that the development of new commons needs to be rooted in existing good practice around open space, ecological network and green infrastructure planning, guided by the relevant national and local frameworks. Stakeholder engagement is, as identified above, key, but so is a variety of models that can be adapted to local needs, each with adequate advice on management, legal aspects and where relevant, development planning.

The potential conflict and need to balance wildlife, public access (especially dog walking) and potentially grazing has to be considered in some depth in the design and long-term management

of new commons. These conflicting needs are already experienced where areas of wildlife interest have open public access and good practice from existing sites should be gathered prior to designing new commons.

As with all land management, identifying potential sources of funding for both land purchase and on-going management work is also crucial to the success of new commons. Funding and maintaining mechanisms for long term management are challenges faced by all new areas of public or publically accessible land, especially as, at present, many local authorities are very reluctant to take on new open space. New commons could be community owned or managed, or in the custodianship of management companies or organisations such as The Land Trust, but one of the strengths of a new common is that the community (or in some cases, individuals) can take ‘ownership’ of the management and use, even if they do not own the land itself – indeed, this is the historic pattern for the use and management of common land. Community groups are often more successful at attracting funding than private landowners, with grants available from sources a range of grant-giving trusts, corporate grants for community schemes, local authorities and where relevant, a Community Infrastructure Levy (see below). Crowd-funding and local fund-raising efforts can also form part of community action in support of a valued local greenspace.



Potential Approaches & Recommendations

Models for the Creation of New Commons

As identified above, there is more than one model for the creation of a new common and figure 3 looks at these, their funding needs, support needs and relative strengths or challenges.

Key challenges identified in the SWOC analysis include the long-term management of the common and potential legal complications around the registering of new commons and rights. It is possible that in some cases, especially those evolving through the planning and development model (see figure 3), areas of green space might be called common and visually reflect local areas of common land, but actual designation as common might be delayed until the details of right holding and management have been resolved.

Figure 3 Potential models for new commons

Model	Description	Challenges/ strengths	Support needed	Possible funding sources for land purchase and management
Grassroots/ 'bottom-up' approach	Arises when a community or group desires to create a new common,	Stakeholder engagement already commenced.	Possibly advice on land management for wildlife and ecological networks.	Grants for community groups. Local fund raising. Crowd-funding. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*.

Grassroots/ 'bottom-up' approach (cont.)	(cont.) either for agricultural rights or community use of open space	Potential for local conflict over use of common/ rights. Need to ensure stable and sustainable ownership & management.		Agri-environment schemes may be appropriate for some habitats and management. 'Leasing' of rights could generate a small income. Funding for land purchase may be required.
Benevolent landowner	When local landowner decides to grant a right of common, perhaps to protect an area of locally valued land with access.	Likely to be rare. Potential for confusion & conflict over use and management.	Requires a clear pathway covering legal aspects and ways of engaging stakeholders and ensuring sustainable management.	Agri-environment schemes. Some projects, such as tree planting, could be community led and access funds for community groups. Funding need would be for long term maintenance rather than land purchase.
Planning & Development	When a local authority or similar organisation designates new common land as part of green infrastructure strategy or in connection with new development.	A lack of early stakeholder engagement could result in failure and the project always being seen as part of amenity land package, rather than something residents have a meaningful stake in. Engagement with the process from plan-making to management will be essential.	Early stakeholder engagement determining rights appropriate to the community/ determined by them. Enabling stakeholders to take the lead. Mechanisms for evolving and registering. May require on- going external support for some time – eg, with habitat management.	CIL. Land arising from need to include open space in new developments. Some projects could be community led and attract funding aimed at community groups. Agri-environment schemes may be appropriate in some instances. 'Leasing' of rights could generate a small income. Funding required for long term management rather than land purchase.

Retro-fit	Existing urban or urban-fringe greenspace could be re-designed and revised as a common.	Some existing green spaces are poorly designed for wildlife, being rather formal in a landscape sense, with few features and closely mown grass. Re-designing these to reflect local commons and creating features for wildlife would be of benefit to biodiversity and the local landscape.	A sub-section of the toolkit, looking at mechanisms and design for re-fitting a common.	
-----------	---	--	---	--

**Where a district or borough operates with a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and where a parish or town has an adopted neighbourhood plan, the parish/town council will receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts. These could be used to support the management of new commons.*

Recommendations for Future Action

Both the SWOC analysis and the models discussed in Figure 3 raise questions around how new commons will operate; in many respect, these questions are identical to those facing any public open space, where long term management and maintenance are required. However, in the case of new commons, there are the additional factors of legal designation and rights of common. To answer these questions and to take the idea of new commons forward, a number of recommendations are explored in Figure 4. Although focused on Norfolk, these recommendations are easily adapted to other counties or regions.

Figure 4: Recommendations for promoting and supporting new commons in Norfolk

Recommendation	Details	Delivery in Norfolk
Promote and gain support in development planning	Information on need, benefits and opportunities for new commons aimed at local authority planning officers. Articles in national planning publications Presentations at events and conferences for local planners and developers, possibly linked to biodiversity net gain. There is the potential to frame this as ways of 're-wilding' the urban-rural fringe.	NWT & Norfolk County Council (NCC) joint delivery.

Promote to community groups	Articles in publications & at events accessed by community groups. Again, there is the potential to frame this as ways of 're-wilding' the urban-rural fringe. Consider workshops for parish councils and other community groups.	Promote through remaining Wildlife in Common events & future NWT community work.
Gain support through key agencies	Work with key staff in agencies to promote concept of new commons & tool kits. Promote through Open Spaces Society (OSS) & Foundation for Common Land through articles and signposting from their website to tool kits.	Examples of key agencies include tree wardens, Broads Authority, Biodiversity Partnership, AONB etc. NWT & NCC to deliver. NWT.
Develop information tool kits for different models and audiences	Tool kits covering the different steps needed by each of the models identified in Fig. 5 and signposting to further support/training. Include case studies and suggestions for the design of public spaces intended to benefit both people and wildlife.	NWT community work, supported by NCC and with advice from OSS.
Develop & support pilot projects establishing new commons	Identify at least one opportunity to develop a new common and work with stakeholders.	NWT with support from NCC and other relevant bodies (e.g. conservation volunteer groups).
Training	Identify training needs and opportunities for developing new commons. Other than legal aspects, this is little different from the existing needs of community groups.	NWT with support from NCC and other relevant bodies (e.g. conservation volunteer groups).
On-going practical support	Maintenance of land and management of rights. Again, this differs little from the existing needs of community groups managing green spaces and there are opportunities for joint training with a range of groups.	NWT with support from NCC and other relevant bodies (e.g. conservation volunteer groups).

Funding for community groups	Access to funds for either land purchase or on-going maintenance is a challenge facing most community groups managing greenspaces. The recommendation is to develop a means of signposting communities to local funds; this needs to be kept up to date and on occasion there may be a need to help support groups through the application process or provide training in applying for funds.	NWT, NCC and key agencies.
Work with developer interested in creating a new common	An opportunity to work with a developer to create a new common as part of the greenspace & green infrastructure delivery should be actively sought.	NWT, NCC & district/borough planning authority, working with developer and local stakeholders.
Promote new commons nationally	Work with OSS, Foundation for Common Land and the National Common Land Stakeholder Committee.	NWT through articles, presentations and encouraging signposting to tool kits as they are developed.

Appendix 1 Analysis of Reference in the National Planning Policy Framework that could be used to support the concept of new commons (David White, August 2018)

NPPF(2019) Section & Paragraph no.	NPPF text	Relevance to delivering new commons
3. Plan-making Paragraph 16	Plans should: a) be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development; b) be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable; c) be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities.	New commons would contribute to making development sustainable; there is a potential for creating new areas of common land as an exciting and innovative approach to public open space, with opportunities for wildlife and people. New commons are 'aspirational'. Community support for new commons, if articulated at an early stage in the plan-making process, could help shape policies for new commons.

3. Plan-making Paragraph 16 (cont.)		Engagement with the plan-making process, both for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will be beneficial to the concept of delivering new commons.
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities Paragraph 91	Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other; b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example (...) through high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure (...)	New commons could contribute to an environment which enables people to be more active and support well-being. Where well-being needs are identified for the local community, new commons could contribute to improvements and could be an integral part of a community well-being plan. Engagement with the plan-making process, both for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will be beneficial to the concept of delivering new commons.
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities Paragraph 92	To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, Open space.... And other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;	New commons could be considered part of the “social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs”. New commons could contribute to community sense of place and fulfil a cultural role ‘echoing’ that of traditional commons. New commons could “support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community”.

8. Promoting healthy and safe communities Paragraph 92 (cont.)	<p>c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;</p> <p>d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and</p> <p>e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.</p>	<p>Community support for new commons, if articulated at an early stage in the plan-making process, could help shape policies for new commons. 'Positive planning' for new commons would be an opportunity to 'enhance the sustainability of communities'. Engagement with the plan-making process, both for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will be beneficial to the concept of delivering new commons.</p>
Open space and recreation Paragraph 96	<p>Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.</p>	<p>New commons could contribute to an environment which enables people to be more active and support well-being.</p> <p>New commons could be promoted through 'up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision'. Engagement with the plan-making process, both for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will be beneficial to the concept of delivering new commons.</p>
Open space and recreation Paragraph 99	<p>Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.</p>	<p>Formal Local Green Space designations provide protection and recognition of important green spaces within a community. There may be synergies between Local Green Space designations and the concept of new commons. For example, it may be possible to seek some form of common rights within a Local Green Space, or be a stepping stone to becoming a new common.</p>

Open space and recreation Paragraph 99 (cont.)		Engagement with the plan-making process, both for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will be beneficial to the concept of delivering new commons.
Open space and recreation Paragraph 100	The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts. In the relationship between Local Green Spaces and new commons, it could be demonstrated that potential new commons would be 'special to a local community' and 'hold local significance' for the reasons listed in paragraph 100.
11. Making effective use of land Paragraph 118	Planning policies and decisions should: a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;	New commons could be seen in the context of paragraph 118, making effective use of land; there is a potential for creating new areas of common land as an exciting and innovative approach to public open space, with opportunities for wildlife and people. New commons could contribute to biodiversity net gain
11. Making effective use of land Paragraph 118 (cont.)	b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;	New commons could/would contribute to multi-functional use of land including those listed in paragraph 118.
12. Achieving well-designed places Paragraph 127	Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;	New commons could contribute to the aim of achieving well-designed places, sustainable in the long-term.

<p>12. Achieving well-designed places Paragraph 127 (cont.)</p>	<p>b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.</p>	
<p>14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change Paragraph 149</p>	<p>Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures.</p>	<p>New commons could contribute to mitigating impacts from climate change, for example by contributing to ecological networks allowing species to move through a changing landscape.</p>

14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change Paragraph 149 (cont.)	Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.	
Ground conditions and pollution Paragraph 180	<p>Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life; b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation 	There could be synergies between new commons and the desire to “identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason”

References

- ¹ Open Spaces Society www.oss.org.uk
- ² www.naturenet.net/law/commonland.html & Common Land Foundation fact sheet:
www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk/sites/default/files/fclfactsheet8-wildlife_screen.pdf
- ³ South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment:
www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/landscape-character-assessments)
- ⁴ A Vision for Long Stratton's Green Infrastructure, Norfolk Wildlife Trust 2017
- ⁵ Long Stratton, Strategy for a Landscape-Led Masterplan, Shiels Flynn 2017
- ⁶ Monitor of engagement with the natural environment (MENE)
www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results
- ⁷ www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing
- ⁸ The London Paper, Duncan McKay, personal communication with H Baczkowska, Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- ⁸ Martin Wright, Cornwall County Council, personal communication with H Baczkowska, Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- ¹⁰ H Craddock OSS personal communication with H Baczkowska, Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- ¹¹ Professor C Rodgers, University of Newcastle, personal communication
- ¹² Long Stratton Area Action Plan www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building/planning-policy/adopted-south-norfolk-local-plan/long-stratton-area
- ¹³ Carbon storage by habitat: Review of the evidence of the impacts of management decisions and condition of carbon stores and sources, Natural England, 2012 www.publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1412347
- ¹⁴ Long Stratton Access to Countryside and Open Spaces, Norfolk Wildlife Trust 2017
- ¹⁵ Seeing the forest not the trees, H Baczkowska, The Land June 2012
- ¹⁶ A Common Purpose: A guide to Community Engagement for those contemplating management on Common Land www.mk0ossociety9jn92eye.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/A-Common-Purpose.pdf



Norfolk Wildlife Trust would also like to thank the following for supporting the Wildlife in Common project: Mitchell Trust, Pennycress Trust, Spear Charitable Trust, Stuart Heath Charitable Settlement and Wildflower Society