



AGRICULTURE BILL BRIEFING

Please help us protect, maintain and enhance Common Land by engaging with the Agriculture Bill when debated on 10th October 2018. Commons are iconic places looked after by iconic people. The Bill as currently drafted provides no safeguards for Common Land and the Government has failed to make any financial commitments on the quantum of public funding after 2022. This puts our cultural and natural heritage at risk.

Your help is needed to protect Commons for your Constituents

Common Land is only 3% of England but comprises 21% of our land designated for nature (SSSIs). It is also 39% of our open access land and has 11% of our scheduled ancient monuments. This multitude of public benefits in the lowlands and the uplands has been maintained over a millennia through collective management by commoners and the owners of common land. Commoning is at the heart of so many iconic places from the New Forest, with its ancient Court of Verderers, to The Lake District where the pastoral commoning system has now been recognised by UNESCO as of global significance.

The Foundation for Common Land is a charity focused on enhancing the natural and cultural public benefits on commons and the system of commoning that produces these.

We support the briefing and Bill Amendment requests of the Uplands Alliance and would add the following points:

What needs Fixing:

- ***We request explicit recognition of traditional pastoral systems as a public benefit.*** The pastoral system of Commoning represents a historic way of managing our most valued landscapes and habitats. This system is at risk and will disappear without explicit public investment.
- ***We oppose delinking direct payments from land management except when retirement is assured and if accompanied by a new entrant scheme.*** As drafted new entrants will not be able to compete with existing farmers to take on farms vacated by retirees. Instead the proposed policy favours economies of scales and is likely to lead to fewer commoners and either ranching or increased grazing levels. This is not in the public interest.
- ***Public Support is Required for Native Breeds of Cattle, Ponies or Sheep*** These breeds are best suited to environmentally sensitive grazing of our most valued habitats but will never be as productive as commercial breeds.
- ***Legislation and policy should acknowledge the complexity of land tenure*** rewarding the multiple players operating on the same piece of common land

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