

# The Foundation for Common Land

## **STIMULUS**

- The work to develop the 2006 Commons Act
- The opportunity this provided for commoners to share views and opinions
- Realisation that problems were universal but quite varied.
- General view developed that there would be tangible benefits for commoners, public, government and other authorities for there to be an organisation in place which could act as a professional interface between everyone concerned.

# The Foundation for Common Land **DEVELOPMENT**

- Many meetings took place following publication of Commons Act 2006
- Agreement reached between those involved to develop ideas on the project and draw representatives to a meeting to see if there was a consensus
- Inaugural meeting took place on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 – unanimous decision taken to form a Shadow Board.
- Shadow Board to be responsible for identifying aims and objectives
- Creating an appropriate legal structure
- Organising a business plan
- Seeking seed corn funding to take the organisation past its first stage

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## **SOME FACTS**

- 1.5 million hectares of land in Britain and Ireland classified as common land.
- 2,500 registered commons in England alone with in excess of 1,200 in Wales and over 800 in Scotland.
- Diversity extends from extensive pastoral commons in hill areas of north of England, Wales, West Country, Scotland and Ireland to New Forest and Forest of Dean as well as many coastal marshes.
- Hugely important therefore for farming, ecology, culture and recreation.

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## **MAIN OBJECTIVES UNDER THE DRAFT MEMORANDUM**

- To advance and promote the interest and well-being of commons and commoners and to take whatever action is necessary to ensure a better understanding of their history, their present and developing importance.
- To promote research into the historic importance of commons and commoning.
- To be the organisation which will work with Government departments, their agencies and non-governmental organisations to protect the fabric and wellbeing of commons and commoners.

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## SO FAR:-

- Andrew Humphries MBE has been chosen as Chairman of the Shadow Board.
- Various groups have been identified to develop thinking on specific types of commons eg Lowland Commons, Upland Commons.
- An initiative has been started to create links between potential young commoners in different areas in order to grow contact and develop the fraternal thinking.
- The Foundation has been invited to participate in the Cheltenham Conference as sponsors.
- Natural England has already been helpful in providing financial support to assist in specific areas of work.

# **A COMMON'S CHARTER**

Creating tomorrow's heritage together

## **Role of the Charter**

- To clarify the six Principles that need to be recognised and reflected in the actions of partners who sign the Charter
- To promote the broad spectrum of individuals and organisations who have a stake, tangible or intangible, in the pastoral commons.

# **A COMMON'S CHARTER**

Creating tomorrow's heritage together

## **The 6 Principles**

- Economic importance of the pastoral commons and agriculture
- Ecological diversity within the commons landscapes
- Social value of commons communities and culture
- Historical significance of commons rights and practices
- The need for public awareness, advocacy and education
- The necessity of mutuality and respect

# A COMMON'S CHARTER

## Creating tomorrow's heritage together

### **Signatories of the Charter**

- Signatories of the Charter may have a particular focus for their interest in pastoral commons but, as signatories, they acknowledge the need to find and maintain constructive balance among all six Principles.

### **The Ultimate Aim**

- The ultimate aim of the Charter is to bring together Foundation members with other signatories to develop a sustainable framework for creating tomorrow's commons heritage together.