

A category of landscape offering tremendous variety of scale and size, the overriding characteristics being the lack of enclosure and, usually, a land use of rough grazing. The smaller unenclosed commons are ranked as features within other Landscape Types but a few are considered to be of sufficient extent to warrant separate classification.

The character of these landscapes has developed historically as a result of the activities of those with commoners' rights. Commons can convey an exhilarating sense of wilderness and are invariably of high nature conservation value. Sadly, there now appears to be a lack of motivation to restore active pursuance of rights of common today (due to economic factors, disturbance and danger to grazing stock from busy roads, dogs and people and increased animal husbandry regulations). This has resulted in reversion to scrub in many places. Elsewhere commons are valued for their recreation potential and managed in a municipal fashion, with regular cutting of the sward and sometimes planting of ornamental trees. There have, however, been successful instances of community approaches to restoring grazing stock on common land, Monkwood Green being an example. Long term sustainable management initiatives are clearly needed for these landscapes.

The settlements associated with commons are often much sought after, but properties frequently become subject to enlargement and remodelling, and risk developing a suburban character as a result. It is important that the integrity of such small communities is retained and their distinctive detail and spatial patterns conserved.

Wayside Cottages
of Distinctive Scale and Style Located on
the Perimeter of these Landscapes

It is unlikely that the common land itself, or parts of it, will have been enclosed, but should this be the case, opportunities to remove such features may be possible. The boundaries gardens/plots of land associated with settlement around the perimeter of common land are typically hedged and, where these have been replaced by fencing, there may be opportunities to restore them.

Land Use—Rough Grazing

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