

Huw Irranca-Davies MS  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs

21 February 2025

Dear Huw,

## **Lord of the Manor titles**

On 5 February we **raised the issue** of Lord of the Manor titles with you and offered to write with further details. This is an issue Hefin and I have **raised with your predecessor** and Natural Resources Wales in our constituency capacities.

There is a long established right to farm common land across Wales. However, we are aware of situations where individuals have purchased the title of 'Lord of the Manor' and then have used medieval laws to take over, and force farmers and grazers off tracts of common land. This of course does not just impact farmers but also, once the land is taken over, will stop other residents being able to enjoy their local commons.

The Committee is concerned that the combination of increased property prices, potential agricultural subsidies and the possibility of installing renewable power installations may make this sort of action more attractive.

Both Hefin and I have heard from constituents who have been affected by this issue that they have been passed from pillar to post between their local authority, NRW and Welsh Government. The Committee would like Welsh Government to take a leadership role and create some clear policy or guidance to support farmers, grazers and communities impacted. Especially, as commons are an important part of the Government's proposed sustainable farming scheme.

As part of our consideration of the matter, we would be interested to know:



- The current Welsh Government position on the issue people using Lord of the Manor titles to take over common land;
- Is there any policy work the Welsh Government could undertake to make buying these titles less attractive;
- Which organisation(s) has responsibility for this issue and who should be supporting people affected;
- Have the Government given any consideration to how it might be able to safeguard graziers rights over common land when Lord of the Manor titles are purchased on the open market?  
And;
- Has this issue been considered as part of the development of the SFS.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew RT Davies". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.