

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros  
Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate  
Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: PO/HIDCC/0090/25

Andrew R.T Davies MS  
Chair  
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

2 April 2025

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter regarding Lord of the Manor titles and the impact on common land. I will address each of your questions in turn.

**Question 1: What is the current Welsh Government position on the issue of people using Lord of the Manor titles to take over common land?**

It is important to highlight that common land and the rights of graziers are protected by various act of Parliament, notably the Commons Act 2006. This legal framework includes provision for seeking remedies through court for unauthorised works on common land and unauthorised agricultural activities. It also abolishes approvement, a medieval law which allowed Lords of the Manor to enclose a common.

Lord of the Manor titles might be considered in the context of land ownership more generally, and if a landowner is acting outside of their rights, there may be legal protection available, depending on the circumstances. For example, criminal behaviour of threats or violence could be reported to the police. Any restricted works without permission could be the subject of an application to the County Court (see sections 38 and 41 of the Commons Act 2006).

As manorial rights can vary there currently is no overarching Welsh Government position on the matter. If the actions of a Lord of the Manor, or indeed a landowner, were acting outside their legal right, it would likely be considered a private matter and will likely require independent legal advice sought by those affected. Farmers Unions may be able to assist if legal fees for private law firms are too much of a burden.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**Question 2: Is there any policy work the Welsh Government could undertake to make buying these titles less attractive?**

As highlighted above, common land and associated graziers rights are already protected by law. Currently the Welsh Government's primary focus when it comes to common land is to implement the remaining parts of the Commons Act 2006, primarily Part 1, section 25 which will introduce electronic registers of common land and village greens. This will help to ensure their longevity and provide commoners and members of the public easily accessible records.

**Question 3: Which organisation(s) has responsibility for this issue and who should be supporting people affected?**

It is difficult to provide a full response to this question without further detail. As highlighted, the common land and graziers rights are protected in law. If criminal behaviour is suspected by any landowner or Lord of the Manor, then the police should be involved. If the issue is a breach of commons legislation, for example s.38 Commons Act 2006 where restricted works that require consent are carried out on common land, the Act enables any person to make an application to the County Court to rectify the situation. Farmers' unions may also be able to assist.

**Question 4: 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?**

Common land and graziers rights are already protected in law. If a Lord of the Manor is not acting within their legal rights and is preventing the commoners from exercising their rights, the way in which they are breaching them would determine the next steps. For example, incidents of criminal behaviour are a police matter. If it is a civil matter, they could take the case to court. Again, a farmers' union could support them with this.

**Question 5: Has this issue been considered as part of the development of the SFS?**

How landowners and those with commons rights can access funding has been fully considered during the development of the SFS and the revised Scheme Outline published last November provides the latest update on the development of the Scheme. If a Lord of the Manor or landowner are operating outside the law, this is a matter for legal action or, in the case of criminal behaviour, the police.

Yours sincerely,



**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

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