



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-641
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00673/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 2 June, regarding New Petition P-04-641, Owners of Undeveloped Land. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding, which is due to an administrative oversight.

Currently, individuals and organisations are obliged to register all land or property in their name with Land Registry if they have:

- bought it
- been given it
- inherited it
- received it in exchange for other property or land
- or mortgaged the property.

In addition, where land and property has not been transacted since the introduction of compulsory registration, the Land Registry is encouraging landowners to apply for voluntary first registration. While appreciating the petition covers all ownerships, I can add, the Welsh Government went through a process of registering all our property interests not previously registered in 2011. Registration brings with it a number of advantages, however, our proactive approach to registration gives clarity in terms of the assets we hold.

Anyone can apply to the Land Registry to find out the identity of the owners of any registered land and property in Wales for a small fee. It is estimated over 80% of land in England and Wales is registered.

The Local Planning Authority has powers relating to unregistered land where the identification of the owners is not known. A Requisition for Information Notice under Section 330 of the Planning Act 1990 gives the Local Authority power to require details of ownership and of those with interests in the property.

In addition, Section 219 of the Town and Country Planning Act enables Local Councils to take direct action and carry out any necessary works to abandoned land and to recover the costs by placing a charge on the land.

Land ownership can be complex, with a number of parties having rights and obligations over the land. The Land Registry maintains the Land Register where more than 24 million titles are documented. All changes in ownership, mortgages or leases are registered, as required by the Land Registration Act 2002.

To ensure accurate and up to date ownership information, any responsibility for maintaining records should remain with the Land Registry. However, the Welsh Government has no powers in relation to land registration. The Land Registry is a non-ministerial Government Department responsible to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty