

Funding Request for Greenham and Crookham Common Commission

What needs funding – the practicalities?

1. Administrative Support - The Commission meet at least 4 times a year and have two sub-committees; one for governance matters and one for conservation matters. The core Commission meeting requires admin support for booking meeting venue, gathering agenda items, setting the agenda, taking minutes at the meeting, sending out draft minutes and finally creating an approved version of the minutes. The list of current commissioners must also be kept up to date and assistance is needed when elections for new Commission member's takes place.
2. Support with preparation and auditing of annual accounts
3. Initial set up costs and annual fees and upkeep of website. The Commission must under a number of the duties outlined above provide information to the public and by far the best way to do this is to provide it via a website.
4. Support to apply for funding opportunities other than relying on grants from appointed bodies to help support management of the common. Although the Common is in a CS scheme and receives funding for management of heathland and grassland this does not provide sufficient funding to reduce the large areas of scrub which keep the Site of Special Scientific Interest part of the common in an unfavourable condition.

Why is funding required – the Commissions duty?

The Greenham and Crookham Common Commission was formed in 2002 as a result of the Greenham and Crookham Common Act 2002. The Act places several general duties on the Commission and the Council some of which require funding in order for the Commission to deliver. A summary of some of the most relevant duties are provided below:

Greenham and Crookham Common Management Plan:

The Council, with approval from the Commission make available for public inspection a plan (to be known as "the Greenham and Crookham Common Management Plan") setting out their policy with respect to the exercise by the Council and the Commission of their functions under this Act.

The plan should be reviewed every 5 years.

General duty of Council and Commission:

Section 1:

- The Council and the Commission shall each have a duty to use their reasonable endeavours to exercise their functions in a manner which
 - restore and conserve the Common as a peaceful place of natural beauty and, in particular, conserves its flora and fauna and ecological, archaeological, geological and physiographical features;
 - conserve any part of the Common which is a site of special scientific interest as such a site;
 - subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above—
 - promote and improve grazing on the Common;
 - promote educational activities related to the Common and, in particular, encourages public awareness of the ecological, cultural and historic significance of the Common and any additional open space;
 - manage the Common and any additional open space as a place open to the public for recreational purposes; and
 - facilitate the exercise of commoners' rights on the Common.

Section 2:

- Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) above, the Council and the Commission shall each have a duty to exercise their functions in a manner which implements the policy set out in the Management Plan.

Section 3:

- In subsection (2) above “Management Plan” means the Greenham and Crookham Common Management Plan adopted under section 9 (Greenham and Crookham Common Management Plan) below as for the time being in force.

Account of Commission

The Commission shall—

- keep proper accounts of all sums received or paid by it and proper records in relation to those accounts;
- prepare in respect of each financial year a statement of accounts giving a true and fair view of the state of affairs and the income and expenditure of the Commission; and
- prepare in respect of each financial year an annual report relating to the discharge of its functions under this Act.

Funding of Commission

Any expenditure incurred by the Commission in discharging its functions under this Act shall be met from the following receipts—

- amounts paid to the Commission by the Council under section 19(3) (Special events and activities) above;
- grants and gifts received under section 21(3)(c) and (d) (Functions of Commission) above; and

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- grazing fees, or amounts in respect of grazing fees, retained by the Commission as provided by section 22(6) and (7) (Grazing agreements) above.

In reality funding is not received from either the Council for special events and activities as there are none or from grazing fees. The Commission relies on grants and gifts for funding which not consistently provided.

Why should Appointed Bodies fund the Commission?

Greenham and Crookham Common is a large area of open space on the edge of Newbury, Thatcham and Greenham Parish Councils. It is a popular place for residents in the council areas to access on foot or a short car journey where they can park at one of the car parks located around the site. The accessibility to areas of open natural beauty is known to have a beneficial impact on public health both physically and mentally. Greenham and Crookham Common provides this space however meeting the needs of the local residents and the duties placed on the Commission to maintain the Common in balance requires input from all the Commissioners and with that comes a requirement for financial support as described above.