

**OPEN SPACES SOCIETY
NEWS RELEASE**

BUCKS COMMON FREED OF UNLAWFUL FENCE

The Open Spaces Society,⁽¹⁾ Britain's leading pressure-group for common land, is delighted that unlawful fencing has been removed from Pinner Green Common, near Latimer in Buckinghamshire.

In 2013 it was reported that a local landowner had erected barbed-wire fencing around the small piece of common land⁽²⁾ which adjoins Blackwell Hall Lane, to prevent fly-tipping. The land is owned by Chiltern District Council.

The fencing did not have the Secretary of State for Environment's consent, under section 38 of the Commons Act 2006, and was therefore unlawful. The public has the right to walk on the common.

The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum and the Open Spaces Society pressed the local authorities to remove the unlawful fencing.

Now Chiltern District Council has written to say that the barbed-wire strands have been removed so that pedestrian access is once more available.

Says Kate Ashbrook, general secretary of the Open Spaces Society: 'This is a splendid outcome. Too often common land suffers unlawful encroachments and no one is prepared to act. We are pleased that the Local Access Forum recognised this to be an important issue, which could have set a dangerous precedent for other commons and access land. The forum pursued this with determination and we are grateful to Chiltern District Council for ensuring the fence was removed.'

'It is excellent that Pinner Green Common, which although small is nevertheless of public value, is open once more for people to enjoy.'

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Notes for editors

- 1 The Open Spaces Society was founded in 1865 and is Britain's oldest national conservation body. It campaigns to protect common land, village greens, open spaces and public paths, and people's right to enjoy them. This year it celebrates its 150th anniversary with the hashtag #saveopenspaces150.
- 2 Common is land subject to rights of common, to graze animals or collect wood for instance, or waste land of the manor not subject to rights. The public has the right to walk on all commons. Before a common can be fenced, the consent of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is needed under section 38 of the Commons Act 2006. Without such consent the works are unlawful and any local authority or member of the public can take enforcement action.