

Communities Wanting to Designate a Village Green Fact Sheet July 2011

Are you a community group or individual who want to create a designated village green for your local community? If so here is some information and organisations that can assist you.

We will add to this when we receive requests for information that is not currently included.

If there is something specific that we can advise on please contact us at mail@architecturecentre.net

Where to get design advice and support

Architecture and built environment centres are independent charities or not for profit organisations. Their role is to help people make better places.

Architecture and built environment centres can provide design support services, but are not designers themselves. They can assist you as the client or client group to develop a design brief; facilitate consultation; do mapping and characterisation studies; facilitate visioning exercises and provide on-going design advice.

See our website for a centre near you:

<http://www.architecturecentre.net/docs/network/centres/>

Public spaces, parks, village greens etc.

Village green designation

A village green is an area where people in the community have enjoyed legitimate sports or pastimes as of right for at least 20 years.

Legitimate sports or pastimes include things like:

- cricket matches
- blackberry picking
- dog walking
- village fetes.

Claiming a new village green

To register a new village green you must prove that:

- the land is mainly used by local residents (rather than, say, day trippers)
- it is used for legal activities
- it has been used for at least 20 years
- people haven't forced their way onto the land or used it in secrecy
- it has been used without the permission of the landowner.

If the land you wish to register as a village green your local authority may be responsible for dealing with your application.

How to apply

Applications go through a three-stage process:

Stage 1

If you wish to register land as a village green, please first visit the Defra website. This includes guidance notes and an application form to download – the 'Town and Village Green Registration Application form':

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/protected/greens/>

Send the completed form to Legal Services or similar at your local authority/ council.

You also will need to supply the following documents:

- A map showing the boundaries of the proposed village green.
- A map outlining the area that local users of the land come from.
- A completed Statutory Declaration. This is included in the Defra form above, and must be witnessed by a solicitor or magistrate
- Evidence forms or letters of support from residents. These describe when and how residents use this land – please download and print as many copies as you need: an example is: [Evidence form](#)

Stage 2

Once they receive your application, it is publicised and a period for people to comment on the application is opened. It may be necessary to hold a hearing to determine your application. The person hearing the matter will then write a report and recommend whether or not the land should be registered as a village green.

Stage 3

A committee with special responsibility for these applications – the Commons and Village Green Registration Panel or similar – has the final say about whether or not village green status is granted. They consider the report then write to all parties concerned to confirm the final decision.

Register of greens

The Local Authority should hold a register of village greens which is updated with all successful applications.

Useful organisations & publications

Neighbourhoods Green

Neighbourhoods Green is a partnership initiative which highlights the importance of open space for residents of social housing and works with social landlords to raise the quality of their design, management and safe use.

The project provides guidance, support and tools for housing associations, local authority housing departments, arms-length management organisations (ALMOs), resident associations, community groups and their partners.

<http://www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk/home>

Community-led spaces: A guide for local authorities and community groups

A guide to the issues involved in transferring ownership and management of public space from local authorities to community groups.

<http://atu.org.uk/Support/toolkits/communityspaces>