



CREATING COMMON GOOD LAND USE

8 December 2016

A BRIEFING BY
(SHARED ASSETS)





Shared Assets is a think and do tank that supports people managing land for the common good. At Shared Assets we believe that land is a common resource that should deliver shared benefits for everyone.

We provide practical advice, support and training to landowners and communities who want to manage land as a sustainable and productive asset. We also undertake research, policy and advocacy work to help create an environment where common good models of land management can flourish.

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Acknowledgements:

This conference briefing and the conference it provides context for are the culmination of two years of conversations with an amazing group of people. We would like to thank all those who participated in our workshops and interviews, and the many enthusiastic attendees of our Making Land Work event last summer. Your contributions laid the groundwork for our research and helped us identify strategies for making land work for everyone. We would also like to thank the people who read and commented on our work, informing and strengthening it. Finally, we are grateful to the generous support of the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, without whom this policy work would not have been possible.

Introduction

Shared Assets & land for the common good

At Shared Assets, we believe that land should be used for the common good. This means increased recognition of the social, economic and environmental benefits afforded by parks, woodlands, waterways and green spaces. It means valuing food growers who take care of the land, and enabling them to develop sustainable livelihoods. It also means fundamental changes to the way our society owns, uses and thinks about land.

We want to support [common good land users](#) wherever they are found. Common good land users take many shapes and forms. For example, we have [Chiltern Rangers](#), who manage 13 woodlands and nature reserves for Wycombe District Council, with the help of volunteers, charities, schools and many other community organisations. Elsewhere, in the heart of Edinburgh, [Re-Union Canal Boats](#) are helping people realise their potential whilst maintaining the canal as an asset for the community. Common good land users all understand that land issues affect almost every facet of our lives, from health and wellbeing, to food, housing and wildlife. We think it's about time our policy and practice reflected this fact too.

Our policy work was originally focused on land-based social enterprise as a way of delivering social, economic and environmental benefits from managing land. We still see social enterprise as an excellent vehicle for delivering these benefits, however it does not encompass everyone delivering common good land use. Many innovative land users do not fall within recognised definitions of 'social enterprise,' and a lot of great examples of land management are developed by other land users, from groups of volunteer 'commoners', to progressive businesses and charities. Land-based social enterprises are certainly on the frontier of creating common good land use, but we also want to include other approaches that can create common good land use.

To create a more sustainable relationship between land and society we will need the cooperation and participation of many different groups and organisations. Not just practitioners but campaigners, researchers, policy makers and technical experts from across a range of different disciplines such as planning, service commissioning and data science.

This conference aims to bring together a range of views and perspectives to develop a collaborative vision of the future and of how we can continue to work together to ensure that land is managed for the common good.

What is Common Good Land Use and why is it important?

To define ‘the common good’ is no easy task, and to define it in relation to how we manage a varied and ubiquitous resource like land is harder still. In the five years since Shared Assets was founded, we’ve worked with some amazing land-based projects. We’ve considered how they deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits, and reflected on what makes them successful.

We have observed six core elements that we believe help to define common good land use:

- [Creating livelihoods for individuals](#)
- [Enriching the environment](#)
- [Producing the things that people need](#)
- [Creating shared social and economic benefits](#)
- [Encouraging community control and engagement](#)
- [Placing land within a wider process of system change](#)

When we talk about ‘common good land users’, we are talking about people and organisations managing land in ways that incorporate as many as possible of these six elements. Common good land users are different types of businesses and organisations that manage land sustainably, and in ways that deliver a wide range of shared public benefits. However our focus on ‘common good land use’ is more than just a way to encapsulate particular models of land use. It’s an attempt to shift the way land is conceived and discussed. We need to recognise land as a shared asset - and one that should be managed in the public interest, for the common good.

There is strong and increasing evidence to show that many of the problems we face today - from soil degradation to the housing crisis - are driven at least in part by the ways in which we exploit land and see it primarily as a commodity to be used and traded for private profit. It is therefore important to recognise the ways in which land can be managed for shared public benefit and to understand how we can best support the wide range of individuals and organisations who are committed to managing land for the common good.

Our policy programme and this conference

‘Creating Common Good Land Use’ is the last in a series of workshops and events that we have been delivering for the past two years. During this time, we have identified key barriers to common good land use and considered some solutions to them.

This briefing covers six main issues; [Planning](#), [Public Land](#), [Skills](#), [Finance](#), [Land Data](#), and [Access to Land](#). We originally identified these issues by talking to practitioners through our

early consultancy and support work. Working with food growers, woodland managers, or other land users the same problems were coming up again and again. In the past two years we've spoken to many more land-based practitioners, and also a range of other experts in each particular field in order to explore each area in more depth.

This briefing focuses only on key messages and information, for each theme and provides links to more detailed analyses from Shared Assets or others. We also encourage readers to [visit our website](#) to view dedicated sections on each of the themes, including reports, blogs and more.

For each issue in this briefing, we have:

- explained why we think the issue is important to common good land use,
- highlighted the most pertinent facts and dimensions of the issue,
- suggested what changes are needed,
- and highlighted our strategy for pursuing those changes.

We have also included key questions for each issue, which we will use to guide table discussions at the event.

Our level of expertise varies across these issues. Some of them are particularly complex, requiring specific technical and professional expertise to develop a comprehensive understanding. We will endeavour to continue learning from those with expertise and knowledge in each area. We also remain open to identifying new issues or missing dimensions of the issues we have chosen.

At this conference, we hope to bring multiple different perspectives and expertise together in order to deepen the knowledge and networks necessary to achieve change in the ways we own, manage and think about land. We have thought a lot about how we want to engender change, and have included a section for each issue outlining what we see as some of the possibilities.

We think these goals are achievable with the right capacity and resources, and want to create the links that make them possible - whether it's securing funding to take on particular projects, or building momentum for further action.

At the end of this report, we have laid out an action plan, reiterating some of the projects we are working on, and the measures in both immediate and longer terms that we think could begin to address the problems in the land-based sector and beyond.

Access to land

Ownership and access to land in the UK are historic issues and remain one of the most pervasive structural barriers to common good land use. Land is too expensive, ownership is extremely concentrated and we don't have clear information on any of it. To achieve common good land use, there needs to be more opportunities to buy, rent or lease land affordably for common good projects. We think that the UK needs policy change to ensure that land is distributed more equally, used more productively and managed for the common good.

- Is major reform the only route to solving issues around access to land? What other approaches to improving access to land could be successful?
- How can we work to improve public awareness of how land is used and controlled?
- How can we put common good land use at the heart of policy discussions around land?

What we've learnt

Accessing land is one of the biggest problems facing entrants to the land-based sector, yet fundamental reforms are rarely discussed in public policy circles. We have participated in several [conferences and discussions](#) around the UK on the issue of land reform, most recently co-hosting [Land for What](#) in London. From this and our other work we have a good idea of the most important factors contributing to lack of access to land:

- Land is too expensive. Most people are aware of the affordable housing crisis, fewer know that the price of agricultural land [has trebled](#) in the past decade.
- Current policy drives land away from common good use. Subsidies and taxation both limit the social, economic and environmental productivity of land and encourage people to treat it as a speculative asset. The [current system of taxes and subsidies](#) does little to encourage common good land use, whilst driving up the price of land.
- [Land ownership in the UK](#) is among the most concentrated in the world, with almost 70% of the land owned by 0.6% of the population. This is not commonly known, partly due to limited access to information on who owns land.
- Public awareness around these issues is poor, partly due to poor access to information including a lack of knowledge about both historic and current land struggles.

Despite these fundamental structural problems of ownership and tax systems, [Scotland has shown us that land reforms are possible](#). How such legislative change will be achieved in

the Westminster context, and what it will look like, is a matter for discussion. At the conference, we hope to discuss what kinds of changes might facilitate better access to land in the rest of the UK.

What needs to change

- The UK government should make it clear that land is a common good that should be managed in the public interest, and work with other stakeholders to work out the implications of this. A Royal Commission on Land Reform should be established to investigate how to bring land use closer to the public interest.
- The government should prioritise facilitating affordable access to land for common good projects, especially by ensuring that policies don't encourage speculation on land, or poor land use. Agricultural subsidies and inheritance tax relief need reform, and a [land value tax](#) should be given serious consideration.
- Communities need better mechanisms and support for purchasing land where they can improve its management.
- We need increased awareness of the interconnected issues of land ownership and inequality. This means everyone, particularly those working in land related areas like housing and food, needs to do better at engaging the public in land struggles. This would be helped by [free, open, and complete records of land ownership](#).

What we want to do

- **Research:** Learn more about options for land reform, drawing on learning from Scotland and elsewhere. Explore alternative ways of accessing land. Some examples include [public asset transfer](#), models of land value capture like [Community Land Trusts](#), and innovative models of land tenure like [land partnerships](#).
- **Campaign:** Develop policy and support for a movement to make more fundamental changes to the land market. This will include advocating to reform subsidies and tax exemptions that distort the market and ensuring social and environmental value is [valued](#).
- **Network:** We are a part of the coalition [Land for What](#), seeking to create spaces for discussion and collaboration between land-based struggles, including housing.
- **Educate:** Work to improve public [land literacy](#), and make the connections between issues of ownership, information access and common good land use.

Local authorities and public land

Local authorities own land, and play a crucial role in providing and commissioning land-based services to the community, particularly parks and green spaces. In a time of austerity, local authorities need to decrease costs, increase income and add value to their land-based services. Given their crucial role in land management, local authorities need support to ensure that public land is managed for the common good. This section is focused on local authorities, but we believe much of it is also relevant to land owned by other public bodies such as the NHS.

We think the current situation provides a rare win-win opportunity for both local authorities and common good land users. While common good land users have skills, vision and capacity, they often struggle to get access to land. Local authorities own land in the heart of communities, but have decreasing resources to manage it. By giving social enterprises and other common good land users access to public land, local authorities can help solve both these problems, whilst enabling the delivery of a range of new social, economic and environmental benefits that increase local economic resilience, improve wellbeing and create better places to live and work.

- How can local authorities do more to enable communities and social enterprises to take a bigger role in managing land? What support do they need to do this?
- What opportunities or challenges might devolution imply in rethinking the relationship between public land and common good land users?
- How can we ensure that new models of public land management do not exacerbate local and regional inequalities?

What we've learnt

Many local authorities do not make the most of opportunities afforded by social enterprise management models. In our report on [Making Public Land Work](#), we identified the main reasons why this valuable relationship is difficult to establish.

- Local authorities are facing huge budget cuts, and land management is normally not a statutory service, meaning it can face especially large cuts. The resulting focus on 'value for money' often fails to recognise the added social and environmental value generated by common good land users. Moreover, bidding for public contracts can be dominated by large companies who offer to take on 'bundles' of services cheaply.
- There is a resistance to new approaches to land management within local authorities. Councils are large, political, organisations, often operating on a short term time horizon. There can be poor internal coordination and resistance to changing the status quo.

- There can be a lack of understanding between councils and land-based social enterprises. Local authorities lack awareness of the models and value of land-based social enterprises. On the other hand, land-based social enterprises can fail to engage in a way that makes it easy for councils to support them.
- Austerity disproportionately affects more [deprived areas](#). If voluntary, community and social enterprise models are being considered, they must take into account the representation, capacity and resources of the community at large.

What needs to change

- Local authorities need to [aim land-based commissioning at achieving wider social and environmental benefits](#), and develop new strategies to do so. This will require more creative and strategic commissioning for clear outcomes, and a willingness to be flexible in supporting the development of new models
- Land-based social enterprises need to produce strong business plans and a convincing narrative for what they can offer local authorities in terms of skills and services. This will require a stronger engagement with local authorities and local stakeholders, by developing relationships and networks inside and outside councils.

What we want to do

- **Research:** Identify good relationships, best practice and ways of overcoming barriers. Finding out what makes success stories work. Using our findings to create evidence, materials and publicity about new models of land use, for common good land users and local authorities to draw on.
- **Consult:** Work with local authorities and common good land users to help develop and scale alternative management and funding models for public land. Helping local authorities think about their land differently and find ways of managing their environmental assets sustainably in the long term.
- **Campaign:** Push for greater local authority commissioning to land-based social enterprise. This means both selling the benefits of social enterprise, and pushing for ways of truly measuring the value they produce, such as extending the [Social Value Act](#). Advocate for greater public spending on environmental assets.
- **Network:** Work with councils and common good land users to improve mutual understanding and share best practice.

Skills and Training

Delivering common good land use requires a diverse range of skills. These include not just skills in land and environmental management, but also the skills needed to build and run a business, manage a team and develop relationships in one's community and beyond. To achieve common good land use we will need many more people to possess these skills. We will also need 'new land professionals' - planners, landscape architects, surveyors and developers who are able to respond to what people need from land. Accordingly we will need more, and better, training.

We think that training and skills development is both a challenge and an opportunity for common good land users. There is a clear challenge in developing the skills needed to manage land well and develop livelihoods from it. There is also a major opportunity, in that land-based projects can make training a key part of their business models - whether that's training other practitioners, new land professionals, or anyone else.

- What are the best ways to deliver training to practitioners working in common good land use and how can we scale them up?
- What skills might 'new land professionals' (e.g. planners, landscape architects, or surveyors) need to enable common good land use - and how can these best be provided?
- How can we make careers in land-based work more attractive? Assuming incomes won't raise substantially, what wider benefits can we communicate?

What we've learnt

Skills deficits and lack of training to address them are a major issue for landworkers in general as well as for common good land users. Though land-based training is available, it is often fragmented and it is difficult to design courses covering all the skills required by land-based social enterprises. Additionally, especially in the newer approaches favoured by land-based social enterprise, land-based sectors can lack clear career paths towards sustainable livelihoods. As a result, careers in land-based activities can be seen as risky and unstable.

Our recent report on [skills](#) explores the main problems surrounding access to training and pathways to employment for common good land users. Some of these include:

- Not enough people find land-based work aspirational. While common good land use involves innovation, entrepreneurialism and the delivery of social and environmental benefits, this message is not coming across to the general public.
- The work can be difficult, and working conditions can be unstable.

- Pathways to livelihoods and opportunities in the land-based sector can be unclear. Land-based work encompasses such a diverse group of jobs, aspirations and models, that it is difficult to establish a single progression route.
- Despite widespread public support, these initiatives struggle to secure funding. This makes it difficult for trainees to afford courses, and for trainers to suitably offer them.
- Delivering land-based training is difficult, requires a wide range of skills in itself, and can struggle to raise enough income to be sustainable.

Despite these problems, we believe that increased and comprehensive training programs are necessary for the land-based sector, and that [social enterprises are well placed to deliver these kinds of training](#). For the land-based social enterprise, a well-integrated model of training could provide a steady source of income. For the sector as a whole, it could mean attracting new entrants, and encouraging different and fulfilling employment paths.

What needs to change

- There needs to be policy that improves and encourages pathways to land-based careers. This could include improving legislation around working conditions and fair pay, or publicly funded schemes to support land-based training, including on-the-job training.
- Creation of coherent training and employment pathways through partnerships within and between the land-based sectors.
- We need to make land-based careers aspirational, by outlining the diverse pathways into the sector and make known the range of skills required within it.

What we want to do

- **Research and consult:** Identify and share best practice in current training programs, and continue delivering training on governance and business models to land-based groups. Promote land-based social enterprises as key training delivery providers.
- **Campaign:** Advocate for means of improving work and pay conditions for common good land users.
- **Network:** Seek funding to pilot a ‘common good land use’ foundation course, which aims to give participants an overview of, and training in, running a land-based social enterprise.

Access to information on land

Common good land users need accurate and accessible information on land to make good decisions. Key decisions include finding, evaluating and managing sites, informing applications for grants and planning permissions. Currently, however, much information on land is unavailable or inaccessible. To achieve common good land use - either to find the site to start your work, or to improve the land you are already on - practitioners need better access to information about land.

We think that increasing access to information on land is an achievable goal in the immediate future, and one that is crucial to supporting common good land users.

- What information is most important to common good land users?
- How can common good land users get better access to information? What exists already and what else is needed?
- How can we ensure that more information on land is collected and made open and accessible?

What we've learnt

Information on land is hard to access, making tasks more difficult for common good land users, and especially for those with fewer resources and less capacity. In our report on [Exploring Land Data](#), we found that a lot of information on land already exists as open data, and most of this information is collected and owned by various agencies, many of them public.

- Common good land users need quality information on things like land ownership, environmental characteristics, location, existing infrastructure, local markets, and planning processes.
- Information on land often costs money to access, or is not open to access at all. Many common good land users are not aware of what datasets are available, or how to access them.
- Open datasets are unnecessarily difficult to download and use. Websites are often complex and data is not supplied with adequate supplementary information.
- Existing platforms for using data do not take into account the specific needs of common good land users.

Improving access to information on land is an achievable goal that could generate enormous social and environmental value. Building a new information infrastructure could be relatively cheap, yet offer benefits to a wide range of users. A lot of the raw materials (in the form of open datasets) are already available and free to use, meaning that high impact could be achieved for relatively low outlays.

What needs to change

- Government and other data producers should follow an ‘open-by-default’ policy of making all their data open and accessible, especially to common good users. This means investing in the time and resources necessary to audit and improve past open data releases, develop new protocols and templates, and actively engage users who will use data for public benefit.
- Data scientists and developers can contribute expertise to projects aimed at meeting [the information needs of common good land users](#).
- Funders (including government) can support ‘data for good’ projects directly through grants and competitions.

What we want to do

- **Innovation and product development:** We are in the process of developing a new online platform, [Land Explorer](#), to provide common good land users with the information they need. If we can find funding to complete it, it will focus on responding to the expressed needs of users, providing lots of supplementary information on how to use the data, and maintaining a simple, fun user experience. We will also signpost to other useful resources and platforms that can help common good land users.
- **Educate:** Raise awareness of the open data that is available and the ways of using it. We already started this process with our [report](#), and [open data spreadsheet](#).
- **Campaign:** Continue our campaign for more complete and more open data on land, in particular the Rural Land Register, ownership information from the Land Registry and mapping from Ordnance Survey. We want to amplify the voices of common good land users in an area where they are not normally considered.

The Planning System

The planning system is crucial in determining what can and cannot be done with land. Though its role is to protect our land from unsuitable development, the planning system is often perceived as difficult to navigate and counter to the needs and objectives of common good land users. We need a planning system that supports land managers to contribute to sustainable development and common good land use.

We think that common good land use is essential to delivering the sustainable development objectives in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). If models of common good land use also get more support at national and local planning authority (LPA) levels, the potential for creating social, economic and environmental value is huge.

- How can planners and common good land users engage more successfully with each other?
- Is planning policy currently amenable to common good land use? What aspects of it are compatible, and what needs to change?
- Should the planning system actively favour common good land users? If so how could this be achieved and what would be the main problems?

What we've learnt

Common good land users do not feel like their objectives are taken into consideration by the planning system, though there are many ways that the two can benefit each other. In [our recent report](#) on the planning system, we explore the main barriers to common good land use in the planning system. Some of these include:

- The planning system can be daunting. The planning application process alone is long, expensive, and can be difficult to get right. There are few opportunities for advice and consultation regarding this process. This makes it tough for common good land users who lack experience and resources. We have also found that people are struggling to understand how decisions are made in the planning system, and thus framing their applications in the wrong way.
- Common good land users often propose new models (often requiring a “change of use” - for example building structures to facilitate education in a woodland) that are unfamiliar to the planning system. This can mean many get unfairly rejected as being non-essential or because projects are seen as unviable.
- The planning system does not currently account for the diverse types of social, economic and environmental value created by common good land use. The focus on the need to prove viability of these complex models, coupled with the multiple land uses that enterprises can bring onto one site, can result in a system that militates against common good land use.

What needs to change

- Local Planning Authorities need to make the local planning system and application process more accessible for common good land users. This includes producing clear policies and guidance documents, increasing opportunities for free pre-application advice, and recognising common good land use objectives in planning decisions.
- National Planning Policy could do more to recognise and support the value of common good land use models and practitioners. Possible measures include supporting Low Impact Developments and new kinds of developments associated with ecological land use. A more fundamental change worth considering would be allowing consideration of the applicant and ownership structures.
- Common good land users must engage with the current planning system. This means understanding key policy and practice, writing applications with these policies in mind, presenting clear long-term plans and business models and contributing to Neighbourhood and Local Plans.

What we want to do

- **Research:** Introduce common good land use to the planning system. This will entail developing guidance and sharing best practice for planners and local authorities. It will also include lobbying for development contributions to go to common good land use.
- **Consult:** Support common good land users as they negotiate the planning system. This might include signposting to guidance materials, supporting success stories, producing materials to support applications and providing direct training and support work.
- **Campaign:** Provide a voice for common good land use in planning policy debates.

Accessing finance

Accessing finance is a challenge throughout the life of any project - from securing the funds to buy land or start up, to securing funding for further scaling and to facilitate a financially sustainable business model. Generating income from land-based activities can be difficult, and with drastic cuts in public budgets and the increasing availability of repayable '[social finance](#)', the subsidies and grants that many common good land users rely on are no longer assured. To achieve common good land use we need to ensure practitioners are able to access the right finance, at the right time, and under the right conditions, to enable them to be financially sustainable.

We think that there are many current and yet-to-be explored opportunities for innovative financial models that support common good land use. Despite the potential and variety of these funding alternatives, they must be placed in the context of wider structural change, and maintaining a level of public funding for public goods.

- To what degree is social finance supporting common good land use? What could be improved?
- Which funding models have the most to offer common good land use?
- How do we make common good land use an attractive investment?

What we've learnt

It is hard to secure finance for and generate income from land management, a fact which restricts many opportunities in the land-based sector. For those dedicated to common good land use, this is an ubiquitous challenge, especially in the face of reduced public spending. During the last few years of research, discussions and interviews, we have found that accessing finance for common good land use is limited by several factors.

- Lack of security of tenure. It is difficult to secure loans and grants when you don't own the land or have a long lease agreement. This is another problem that stems from insecure access to land.
- Social and environmental value is not recognised in the market. Improving natural capital such as biodiversity or air quality is of great value, but is generally not adequately compensated. The same is true for social capital, for example improving health and wellbeing, building community cohesion and contributing to the local economy.
- Some models of land use employed by common good land users are still relatively new. Indeed many have developed to respond to gaps in conventional approaches. This can mean they are perceived as unpredictable and risky investments. While there are already well established projects operating successfully, the sector needs time and support to develop, identify, scale and promote successful models.

- Structural market issues, such as the market domination of large producers for food, fuel and timber make it hard to generate income from smaller scale land management. Large competitive buyers make it difficult for common good land users to sell their products at a price that reflects the costs of production and makes their businesses sustainable.

What needs to change

- We must develop, support and scale innovative financial models, charitable funding and social finance for common good land use. Examples include [capital endowments](#), patient loans, and land-based social enterprise business models.
- Structural market issues need to be addressed. This includes fairer wages and labour conditions for those in the land-based sector, better and fairer access to land, capturing land values, and refocusing tax and subsidies on promoting common good land use.
- Social and environmental outcomes need to be valued. This means strengthening and extending existing legislation like the [Social Value Act](#), and building on measures to value the environment and recognise and reward health outcomes such as [Natural Capital accounting](#).

What we want to do

- **Research:** develop and explore innovative ways of securing finance and the best practice associated with it. This currently includes working on new models such as our proposed [Land and Savings Trust](#), and working with social financiers.
- **Campaign:** for varied funding solutions in the common good land-based sector, including social finance, grant funding and increased public funding for public goods.
- **Consult:** help common good land users organise business plans and secure finance.

Conclusion and action planning

The aim of this briefing has been to provide a basic outline of the issues we think are key to common good land use, to prepare for discussing them on the day of the conference. We acknowledge that moving towards a future of creating common good land use will require expertise and engagement from as many different stakeholders as possible. As such, this briefing should be seen as a conversation starter rather than a decisive account of the issues and solutions to common good land use. We actively invite additional views, criticisms and new dimensions to what we have learnt so far.

What we hope to achieve after this conference

- Rally practitioners and other key stakeholders around a workable definition of common good land use. Identify a common set of immediate and long-term problems and solutions.
- Produce action plans for each problem area and follow them through.
- Find clear ways to value common good land use in policy and in practice.
- Build relationships between the worlds of policy, practice, advocacy and funding.
- Open and raise the level of public debate on land use.

Let's keep this discussion going

A key part of achieving the changes proposed in this document is raising awareness and opening up public debate about the issues put forward. Here are some suggestions:

- **Social media.** We will be including a social media guide with each event pack detailing all the twitter handles and key messages of the conference. Also, don't forget to refer to our event hashtag #CommonGoodLand
- **Feedback.** We will also be circulating a feedback form via email after the event. We would appreciate if you could take the time to complete these and share any suggestions.
- **Action plan.** At the end of this document, we have laid out the main projects we are currently working on to address the issues outlined in this briefing. Given the importance of forging partnerships in this common good sector, we urge you to have a look and contact us with any queries or suggestions for collaboration.

How we will work towards common good land use: an action plan

The following categories are ways in which Shared Assets is seeking to create common good land use. We hope it will give guests a better understanding of our strategy, and stimulate ideas for collaboration. Shared Assets is already engaged in many of these areas, whilst for others we are searching for ways to resource further work. Finally in some areas the best approach might be to support the work other organisations are doing. At the conference we'd like guests to think about these approaches and think about existing projects or spaces for collaboration.

Research

We explore different alternatives to using land and innovative strategies; finding out what works, where and why. Some examples of current research work include:

- [Better Land-Based Economies](#). This involves following three food growing groups as they search for new land, in order to expand. We are learning about how to engage with planning and local authorities, and hope to produce materials to make it easier for other groups in the future.
- [Learning from Land Reform](#). We have travelled around the UK to talk to experts fighting for reforms to land use and ownership. We aim to collect this information to help build momentum for change in England.
- [Peer Networking](#). We are working with Power To Change and The Social Change Agency to convene a community of practice of 13 organisations who are exploring more sustainable approaches to peer networking.

Consultancy

We advise those already practicing common good land use or wanting to start. This includes both land-based social entrepreneurs and landowners. We also develop materials including guidance, best practice, and toolkits. Some examples of our consultancy work include:

- [COMA](#), [Delivering Differently](#), [Our Place](#) and [Rethinking Parks](#): We have worked with 11 different local authorities and community and social enterprises to support them in the development of new models of management for public parks and open spaces.
- Cornwall AONB: We are working with a number of organisations involved in managing Cornwall's natural capital, supporting them to take a systems based approach to delivering the County's ambitions for environmental growth.
- LB Barnet: We are supporting London Borough of Barnet to develop and consider options for the delivery of their Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

Advocacy, campaigning and awareness raising

We are increasingly looking for areas where we can coordinate campaigns for awareness raising and policy change

- [Opening up the Land Registry](#): We helped the fight against privatisation, and now that is off the table we are building a coalition to fight for the data to be made free and open.
- [Future of parks](#): We have contributed written and oral evidence to the Select Committee on the Future of Parks, and produced a number of articles and think pieces to help to contribute to and shape the wider public debate on this issue.

Innovation and product development

We look for opportunities to develop or contribute to new tools that can help facilitate common good land use. Some examples of this include:

- [Land Explorer](#): We are in the process of developing a new online platform for helping people understand the land around them. It will lead people towards the information they need to make good decisions about land.
- [Land and Savings Trusts](#): We are exploring the potential for combining elements of Credit Unions or Community Finance models with elements of land trust models to create a savings and loans mechanism that would support common good land use.

Network building

We look for ways to connect the dots between actions, issues, and the various stakeholders who need to be involved in creating common good land use.

- [Land for What?](#): We are collaborating with several organisations involved in struggles around land use (e.g. food, housing, environment). We ran a conference in November where a diverse group of 250 people discussed these issues.
- [Making Local Woods Work](#): We are partners in Making Local Woods Work, a pilot programme supporting the development of woodland social enterprise in the U.K. The programme provides business support, undertakes research to understand what works and the issues faced by woodland social enterprise, and to raise awareness of the potential of social enterprise approaches to woodland management.

