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## How to get in touch

Please use the details below to contact us and make your comment. **Please note that the deadline for comments is Tuesday 30 September 2008.**

Visit [www.nettlebed-commons.org.uk](http://www.nettlebed-commons.org.uk) and click on the links to 'Have Your Say'

**E-mail:** [jennihignett@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:jennihignett@bbowt.org.uk)

**Phone/Fax:** 01491 642001

**Post:** Jenni Hignett, Nettlebed Commons Project Officer, Warburg Nature Reserve, Bix Bottom, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6BL.

A background document is available if you would like more detailed information about the issues addressed in this leaflet. Please contact Jenni Hignett using the details above, or download it from [www.nettlebed-commons.org.uk](http://www.nettlebed-commons.org.uk).

## For your community

Kingwood Common is not just great for wildlife. It is also valuable green open space that is enjoyed by your local community. This open space needs to be protected so that future generations can continue to enjoy the common in years to come.

Your opinion counts. This is the first step in a public consultation process that will help decide the future for your commons. We want your opinion as a user of Kingwood Common, so that we can make the best decision for the long term protection of the Nettlebed and District Commons.

### Here are a few starter questions:

- How do you use the commons?
- Do you have any special memories of the commons?
- What do you think about having more open space on Kingwood Common?

The Nettlebed Commons Project is supported by the Nettlebed and District Commons Conservators, South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum, Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust and the Chilterns Conservation Board.

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### Heritage Lottery Fund



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# The future of your commons



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## Vision for the future

The Nettlebed Commons Project aims to protect and expand existing areas of heathland across the Nettlebed and District Commons, for the benefit of local people and wildlife.

Most of Oxfordshire's heathland has been lost, making the remnant heaths on Nettlebed, Peppard and Kingwood Commons very important. Bigger and better-connected open areas will support larger populations of nationally important species such as heather, dwarf gorse, snakes and lizards.

### How could the open areas be expanded?

- Cutting and mowing
- Grazing
- Controlled burning
- Turf cutting and scraping to create bare ground

## A look into the past

Local people had rights to use the commons for centuries to graze their animals and collect firewood and peat. This created an open landscape covered with heather and dotted with trees that supported wildlife found only under these conditions.

Generally, these practices have now stopped and scrub and trees have replaced areas that were once open. This woodland is of less wildlife value than the heathland it replaced, because heathland is so rare in Oxfordshire.

Kingwood Common is still a resource that local people value and use, but now it is more for quiet enjoyment than necessity. There is a danger that the cultural history of the commons will be lost if it is not protected.

## Wildlife haven

On Kingwood, open rides and heather filled glades provide a fantastic environment for wildlife to flourish. In summer, lizards and grass snakes bask on open ground between the heather and gorse. The heather flowers in August and September, and with the gorse creates a carpet of pink and gold.

Expanding the existing areas of heathland could encourage birds such as the Dartford warbler, stonechat and nightjar to breed on Kingwood Common. The Nettlebed Commons Project hopes to find the best option so that this potential can be turned into reality.

The commons have the potential to provide an important educational resource for local children. They can learn about local history, protecting heathland and maybe see some fantastic wildlife at the same time.