

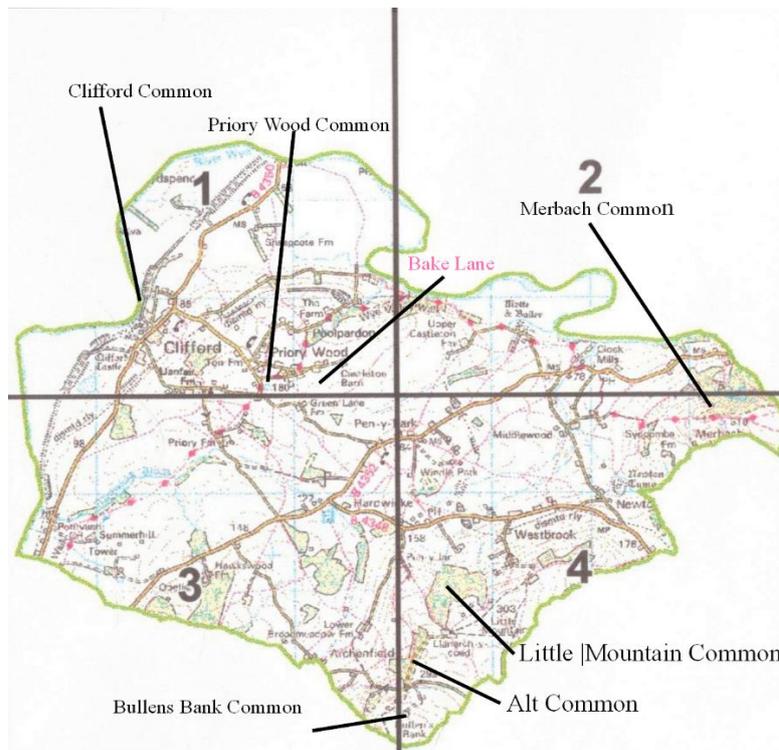
OPEN SPACES IN CLIFFORD PARISH

1. The term ‘Open Spaces’ includes common land, village greens, public rights of way and other land which has no known owner. By and large, all of them can be accessed by the public on foot, sometimes on horseback and, exceptionally, by vehicles for access or authorised recreational or maintenance purposes.

COMMON LAND

2. Common land has been a feature of the national landscape since feudal times. It is a remnant of the manorial system whereby commoners were given the legal right, derived from an Act of 1235, to graze and take fuel from poor, unproductive land belonging to the lord of manor. Over the centuries, the law relating to the ownership and use of common land has been subject to numerous iterations, but it was not until the early 20th century that the public began to take an interest in preserving it. This led to legislation being progressively introduced to identify and register all common land and also to ensure that it was accessible to everyone and would have a long-term future for the benefit of all.

3. Today, common land is recognised not only for its agricultural and recreational associations but also for its many diverse attractions including history, archaeology, geography, vegetation and wildlife. Clifford is fortunate in having 6 registered areas of common land or commons as they are usually referred to. Each one of them has unique characteristics which collectively render them very important and precious assets for the local community and for others. They are respectively named: Alt Common, Bullens Bank Common, Clifford Common, Little Mountain Common, Merbach Common and Priory Wood Common. It is likely that they were originally the property of the Whitney Court Estate (the Hope family) and the Moor Estate (the Penoyre family). All are open to the public throughout the year and are accessible from public highways and /or registered footpaths.



4. Alt Common

Location: Centre south of Parish at Grid Reference SO 2716 4228

Area; 11 hectares

Altitude: 200 to 300 mtrs

Owner: Private

Features: Comprising a long narrow strip parcel of grazing land, woodland and scrub, the Common is on sloping pasture land and steep-sided woods. It has excellent views to the north, east and west, and there is a registered footpath along the length of its western border.

5. Bullens Bank Common.

Location: Centre south of Parish at Grid Reference SO 2690 4172

Area; 11 hectares

Altitude: 200 to 300 mtrs

Owner: Private:

Features: Bullens Bank Common, adjoins the southern tip of Alt Common, and like Alt Common, is on sloping land and steep-sided woods. It has excellent views to the north, east and west. It can be approached from unregistered tracks on Watery Lane.

6. Clifford Common.

Location: Bordering centre north east Parish boundary alongside River Wye; OS grid reference 245 459

Area; 4 hectares

Altitude: 75 mtrs

Owner: Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

Features: The chief interest of this grassland reserve lies in its potential as an otter refuge, together with the four main habitats found here: the river itself rich in invertebrates; the tree-lined river bank; the flood-plain with its mixture of damp-loving plants such as tansy and hemlock; and the mixed deciduous woodland on the steep bank frequented by woodland birds. The path leading from the reserve entrance partly follows the remains of an old horse-drawn tramway from Hay-on-Wye, constructed about 1818 as an embankment along the eastern edge of the common. The river bank is subject to continuous erosion and is unsafe when the river is in spate.

7. Little Mountain Common.

Location: Bordering centre south of Parish boundary; OS grid reference SO 3281 2427

Area; 52 hectares

Altitude: 183 to 384 mtrs

Owner: County of Herefordshire District Council

Features: Little Mountain has grazing meadows, woodland, trees and scrub, all on gently undulating land. It is criss-crossed with numerous pathways, both registered and unregistered, and is a haven for wildlife and fauna. A survey undertaken over many months identified 89 different species of birds visiting or resident on tye Common.

8. Merbach Common.

Location: Centre west of Parish at Grid Reference SO 2716 4228

Area; 66 hectares

Altitude: 110 to 318 mtrs

Owner: Private

Features: Merbach Common is spectacularly positioned, rising to 318 m altitude (trig point at SO 304447) and situated up above the Wye valley, with glorious views to Hay Bluff and the Black Mountains to the south, the Welsh Hills to the west, Clee Hill to the north and the Malvern Hills to the east. The Common is mostly rough gorse, fern, scrub and grassland, and is a little haven for butterflies.

9. Priory Wood Common.

Location: Centre south of Parish at Grid Reference SO 2716 4228

Area; 5 hectares (rough estimate)

Altitude: 130 to 170 mtrs

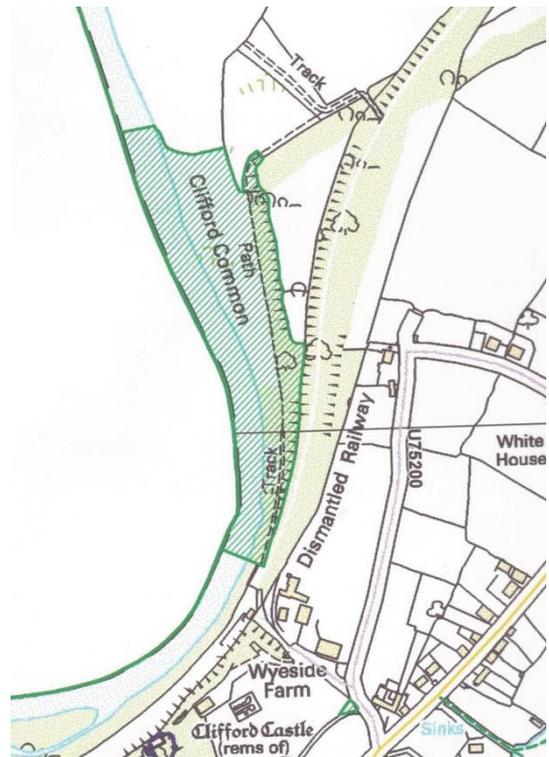
Owner: Chapel Common plot- Clifford Parish Council; other plots- no known owner

Features: Comprising over 20 plots of varying size, half of which are roadside verge. There are 3 larger plots, 2 of which are essentially pasture (Orchard and Barn Common) and 1 (Chapel Common) which is maintained as a children's playground. The remaining smaller plots are retained as wild havens for flora and fauna. All of the plots are managed by Clifford Parish Council in accordance with long-standing bye-laws and an approved Scheme of Regulation.

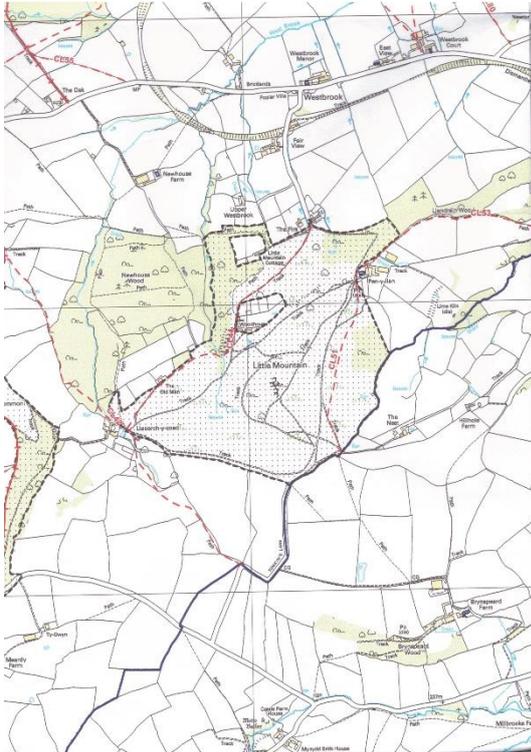
Alt and Bullens Bank Commons



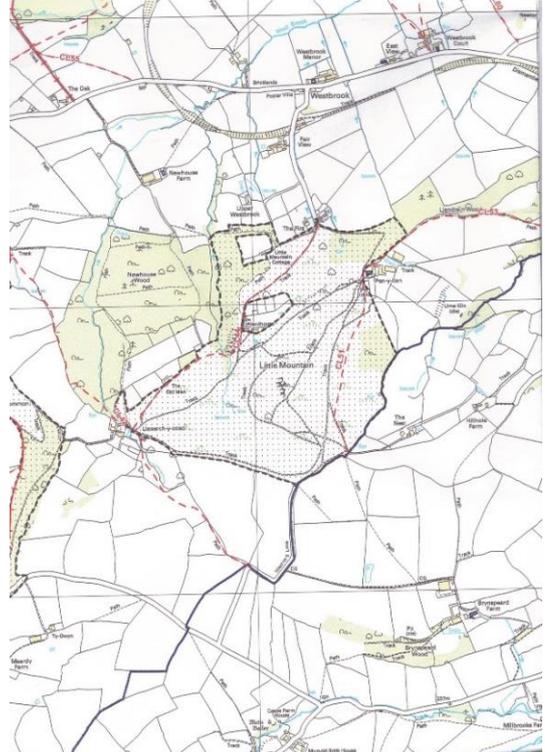
Clifford Common



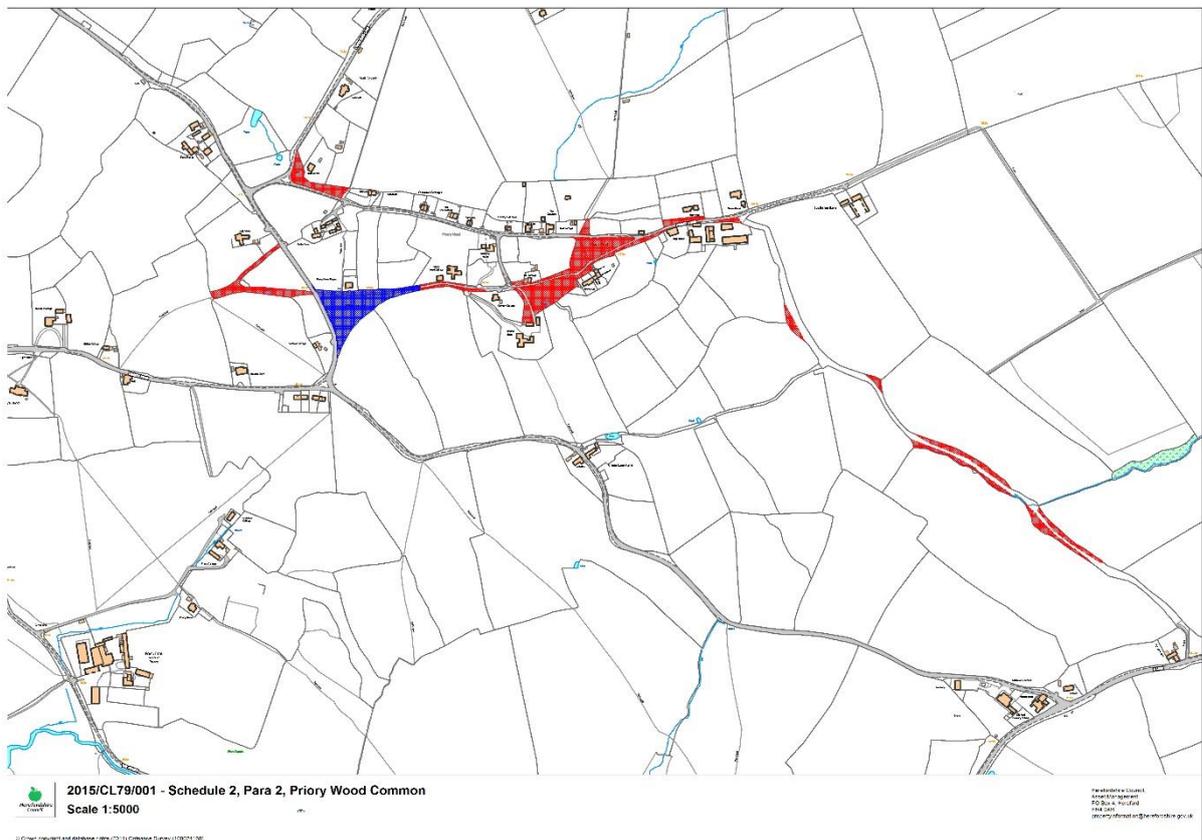
Little Mountain Common



Merbach Common



Priory Wood Common



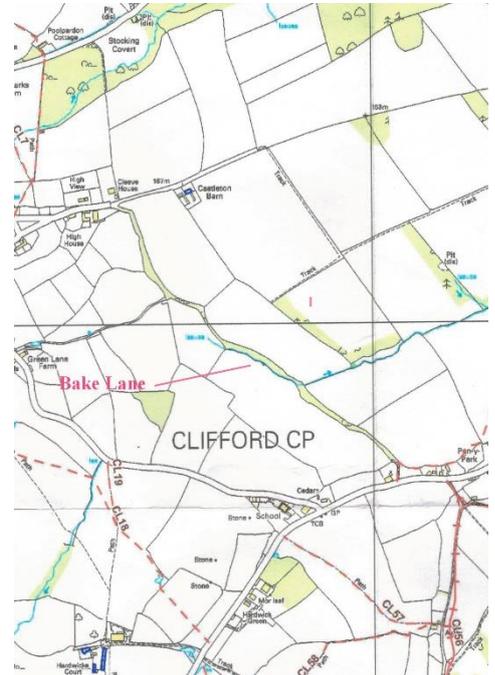
2015/CL79/001 - Schedule 2, Para 2, Priory Wood Common
Scale 1:5000

© Crown copyright and database right (2015) Ordnance Survey 100019136

Author: [Name]
Date: [Date]
Scale: 1:5000
Project: [Project Name]

VILLAGE GREENS

10. There are no registered village greens in Clifford Parish. However, consideration is being given to applying for Bake Lane to become one. The Lane is a 1125 mtrs long woodland corridor and extends from High House in Priory Wood to Pen-y-Park on the B4348. It varies in width from 4 mtrs to 56 mtrs and has an unregistered footpath along its whole length which can be difficult to negotiate in inclement weather. At either end, the Parish Council has installed a kissing gate to deter other than walkers. It contains 6 small untended plots of registered common land which are part of Priory Wood Common and which, like the whole of the Bake Lane, are havens for flora and fauna. No part of the Lane has a known owner.



PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

11. Clifford Parish is blessed with a wealth of registered footpaths and bridleways traversing woodland, orchards, open fields, common land and running alongside streams. They cover flat and undulating land, are particularly scenic - often with spectacular views - and, whilst some can be quite challenging, others are accessible to users of wheelchairs. Altogether, there are 49 registered footpaths and 5 bridleways covering 54 kms. They include sections of the Wye Valley Walk and the Herefordshire Trail. All can be seen on local OS Maps of 1: 50,000 scale and below and can be further identified on the map in the Parish Community Centre.