

# Lord's Waste

You would think that 'Lord's Waste' would be confined to the dustbin of history, however it continues to be a real issue in Henley.

## What is 'Lord's Waste'?

Lord's Waste was common land where all members of the community had right of passage.

'Part of the demesne land of the manor which being uncultivated was termed the Lord's Waste and served for public roads and for common pasture to the lord and his tenants.'

(Black's Law Dictionary, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 1990)

## Where is the 'Lord's Waste' in Henley?

Lord's Waste mainly consists of the land between the pavement and the front of the properties on the high street. Originally the whole street, including the Market Place, side streets and back lanes were termed Lord's Waste. While the responsibility for looking after road and pavement has been taken over by the Council, the remaining areas are still termed as 'Manorial or Lord's Waste'.

Lord's Waste is mentioned on many occasions in the Court Leet records.

### Examples:



That every householder in Henley shall from time to time and at all times hereafter keep the part of the street at his door so far as his house extendeth unto the channel clean and passable for travellers upon pain that every one in default to forfeit 3s 4d. (1656)

The Jury presents George Parkes for putting a bow window on the Lord's Waste to a house belonging to him. He is assessed to pay 6d a year Quit Rent. (1917)

## Why is it causing problems today?

Recently there have been problems, because no one accepts responsibility for the Lord's Waste. The County Council have 'after taking legal advice concluded that the land is manorial waste and are therefore not responsible for it'. Local government reforms over the last century have reduced the Court Leet to a purely ceremonial body. However at Spaunton in Yorkshire, the Court Leet have taken responsibility of the grass verges and fine people that park on it. There have also been a number of incidents where people have bought titles and have attempted to charge people for using their 'common land'. Paul Flynn M.P. has raised this issue in the House of Lords and Welsh Assembly.

What was once set up to enable freedom of access within a manor that everyone had an interest in and responsibility for is now causing many unforeseen problems.

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