

## **SOAC Part 10 - Houses and Gardens**

To ensure some privacy, houses and gardens are outwith your access rights. The exact location of the boundary can be very difficult to judge in the countryside as rural houses do not always have the urban-style of defined garden. The Code guidance, if followed, will mean you will be within your rights as long as you act responsibly. This means when near houses keeping noise and lingering to a minimum.

Customary routes to some mountain and climbing areas pass close to houses. Often there have been no problems using these for many years. An example of a constructive approach to this is signing a preferred route through the grounds close to a house e.g. Ardvorlich House en route to Ben Vorlich. Here walkers are asked to use a path that avoids going too close to the house, but is not way out of your way and is on good path. There have been a number of court cases around issues of privacy, and as more court cases are brought, the situation will become clearer. They will be reported on the MCofS website and this magazine.

Buildings other than houses also have some degree of curtilage (area around them outwith access rights). This might be a store, warehouse or cattle shed etc. The area will be likely to be immediately adjacent to the building and often surrounded by a wall or fence. The Code says if there is not a clearly defined area, then to “use your common sense.”