Using a recent sample from the Directory of Open Access Journals, an exploratory look is taken into sustainable journal characteristics from a Commons theory perspective. Building on a previous quantitative analysis within the same sample, a qualitative method is used to analyze variations in the article-processing charges in relation to Commons surrogate characteristics, such as the possibility of having a waiver or discount based on contribution of work to a journal. A descriptive approach is used to highlight potential characteristics related to a sustainable Knowledge Commons, with the sampled journals and publishers as guide for discussion and further research.