

Draft Minutes

Cumbria Local Access Forum

Meeting: Wednesday 2nd July 2014
Lazonby Village Hall.

Attendees					
Charles Ecroyd (Chairman)	CE	Terry Jolley	TJ	Elizabeth Mallinson	EM
Jim McQueen (Vice-Chairman)	JM	Oliver Coles	OC		
Elizabeth Barraclough	EB	Sylvia Woodhead	SW	David Gibson	DG
Alan Dougherty	AD	Mike Murgatroyd	MM	Eve Borrino	EMB

1 WELCOME

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

These were received from: Jo Cleary, Bridget Pickthall, Douglas Chalmers and David Young.

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There were no members of the public present.

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There was no disclosure of interest by any member in relation to agenda items.

5 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

No requirement to exclude members of the public/press.

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

7 MATTERS ARISING

Membership: The CLAF pop-up banner and fliers were taken to Countyfest. The banner and/or fliers are available to members wishing to promote CLAF membership (contact EMB).

Tebay tree planting: notices informing the public about their rights of access are in place. Oliver Coles expressed his gratitude, and that of Tebay Parish council to EMB for producing them.

DG added that Geoff Fewkes was at Tebay today, working with Natural England to mark out the fence line and gate locations. This is to prevent the problems encountered under phase one, where public access was not appropriately addressed.

CE has had discussions with Jim O'Neill (Forestry Commission) at the Ravenstondale meeting about tree planting there. He is now more aware of the need to take access arrangements into account.

ROWIP is to be covered at the January meeting.

There is still no public announcement about the **National Park extensions**. There was speculation among the group about why this should be.

Douglas Chalmers has been appointed to the **Cumbria Local Nature Partnership**. He will ensure that it works in partnership with CLAF.

EM stated that she shared the CLAFs concern that the **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS)** are not adequately covering rural areas in Cumbria. Rural issues are *not* generally high on the agenda of the County Council. Most of Cumbria politically is in urban areas. Looking at past papers from LEP, there is an avenue of opportunity. The more people and organisations that make representation to: the Council, the Executive, the Leader of the Council and to the Chief Executive, the better. Living in a rural area should not disenfranchise people. EM suggested that CLAF write to the council.

CE stated that the rural representative on the LEP is Katy Milbourn (who is an owner of Walby Farm Park). He had considered contacting her.

EM: Felt that Katy would appreciate some support.

CE: 'It is interesting to hear that she is a siren voice', perhaps our support could bolster her case.

CE +JM to draft a letter to Katy and invite her to a meeting

AD explained that the North Pennines Access + Recreation group received the minutes of their LNP, perhaps Cumbria LNP should forward their minutes to CLAF.

CE to discuss with Douglas Chalmers

JM: It was raised at the NW regional meeting that *too many* partnerships were being set up.

OC raised the point that he attends the **Health and Wellbeing board (H+WBB)** as a representative/observer for CLAF. This has not been formally acknowledged: in the boards' minutes, he is recorded as a member of the public.

CE to provide a letter to the board stating OCs position and CLAFs potential role in the health agenda

EM mentioned that primary drivers for the H+WBB are obesity + type 2 diabetes. CLAF could play a role by explaining what they and Countryside Access can do to give people the opportunity to get out and about.

SWs letter about access to the promenade in **Grange** has been forwarded to the County Council and been acknowledged.

SW queried Network Rails intention to close *all* level crossings. CE confirmed this *is* network rails *aspiration*.

JM: the **Arnside Viaduct** informal committee is waiting to hear from the CCC officer responsible for cycling.

DG: Mark Brierley (CCC Cycling Officer) wants to talk to the ATOG group about the feasibility study and the funding for the scoping project. DG has passed on contact information to MB. He should be in touch soon.

EMB confirmed that the CLAF **website** is up-to-date. The news item on the CLAF site-visit to the first stretch of coastal access was posted shortly after the last meeting. The only delay was in getting a suitable photograph to accompany it. If members do have good photographs relating to CLAF activity, please email them to EMB. It is useful to have a library of photographs to select from when pulling together documents such as the CLAF Annual Report. A photograph can complement the text and bring a report to life. It can also be good to have something which adds a little humour.

MM raised CEs expressed intention to contact **the Ramblers**

CE apologised. He will be in contact with them shortly.

8 CHAIRMAN'S ACTIONS

Update on **tree planting** at Tebay, Ravenstondale + Mallerstang.

CE has had discussions with Peter Leeson of the Woodland Trust (who are involved in all 3 tree planting applications). The lack of communications on phase I of the planting at Tebay was covered. There are sections of NE involved with habitat restoration, and sections at NE working on Access, CROW etc. Unfortunately the two do not communicate effectively.

CE attended a meeting at Ravenstondale. The policy of tree planting in the uplands was discussed. In this case NE wishes to plant up the ghyll sides and continue up onto the open fells. This would have a major impact on the landscape character in this area. It was felt by a number of those present that going up onto the hilltops was a step too far. Revised proposals are due by 12th July. CE hopes for a serious revision. He will circulate the revised proposals ASAP. He would appreciate a rapid response from members as he suspects the window of opportunity will be small.

A proportion of the funding for the planting projects will be put into an account that will be available for the removal or reinstatement of the fencing.

This appears to be a step forward. The trustees of the funds will be held accountable.

CE did not attend the meeting at Mallerstang. However, Geoff Fewkes (Ranger) did. The landscape in this locality is different. There is more woodland already present. Planting on the lower slopes will not have such a dramatic impact. It is felt that the main issue here will be to protect access from the road to the open fells (CROW Access Land).

AD raised the point that Landscape Character Assessments for the areas emphasise the difference between the *valleys* and the *open fellside*. The planting locations are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which have been designated to protect the upland moorland species *not* woodland species.

CE expects that the Natural England plans will be pared back in the light of consultation responses.

Geoff Fewkes' response highlights the old road (Lady Anne's Highway) must remain open. It is a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) and part of a national trail (the Penine Bridleway). The revised proposals will be out soon and your comments and suggestions will be welcomed and submitted to Shirley Muir.

CE raised the question with Natural England (NE) 'What are you trying to restore to?'

How far in time do you want to go back.....25, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000 years?

EM expressed her wish to keep open moorlands and wanted to examine the consultation documents when they came in.

AD observed that there is a tendency in parts of NE (and some other organisations) to consider trees *anywhere* a good thing. These are management decisions to prioritise one species or habitat over another. We have a much loved landscape. To replace it with something different it must be justified ethically and in ecological terms.

SW reminded the meeting that the CLAF remit is Access.

CE conceded the point but felt the very significant changes to the aesthetics of the landscape justified concern.

EB stated that in the long run we had to find room for both. Creating a different environment will change the wildlife present. We should not rule it out but we still want access to the newly created habitat.

MM reminded the group that the reason we want access is to have the opportunity to admire and appreciate the wildlife and landscape. It is the 'Raison d'être' for access.

CE pointed out that access is at the top of the CLAF agenda. He trusts Ian Brodie (Open Spaces Society) and Jan Darrell (Friends of the Lake District) to lead on landscape.

AD reminded the meeting that the Access issue is not a problem in these instances as the planting is on common land. If the land is CROW access land by virtue of being common land; it will remain so whatever the vegetation type.

His greater concern is that where the land is CROW access land on the basis of being 'Mountain, Moorland Heath or Down', there is nothing in law to keep the land as access land once it becomes Woodland.

The issue here is about the CROW act, and is something that LAFs collectively need to bring to the national table. That is where the legislation lies.

CE felt that the issue of tree planting on the fells was largely a north of England phenomenon. Ken Taylor (Lake District LAF) had recently mentioned to him that the amount of planting there was alarming and needs to be kept under observation.

EM asked if the CLAF notified the local County Councillors about consultations. They may appreciate being kept informed.

OC stated that Libby Bateman (CC Councillor for 2 of the commons recently involved) had been very forthright in expressing her opinion.

Nothing has been heard on Crosby Garrett.

9 MEMBERSHIP

Ron and Chris Lyon have been offered, and have accepted membership of the Forum. They apologise for not attending today but are away on a Disabled Rambler tour.

CLAF members were asked to encourage potential members to get in touch with CE or EMB. There are still a number of vacancies, but they would only be filled if the right applicants (with specific expertise and knowledge) came along.

10 MEMBERS' NEWS

MM raised a problem encountered with **bus timetables** in the Borrowdale valley.

The summer timetable runs from the 4th April. Bus stops in the valley have timetables displayed in weatherproof cases. On 24th May he waited for a bus that did not arrive. The timetable in the case was the winter timetable! He contacted a Stagecoach Inspector who stated that the timetables come from CCC. When they get the timetables, they put them up. But 6 weeks on from the start of the new timetable, those at the bus-stop were out of date. This is in the Lake District, an area with many UK and foreign visitors, who are actively encouraged to use public transport.

Another difficulty with the timetables at the bus-stops is that they refer to some busses not running on school holidays. How are visitors from outside the county expected to know the dates of term of Cumbrian schools?

DG suggested MM contact Cheryl Cowperthwaite the Integrated Transport officer MM brought to the attention of Forum members the situation of a **blind** couple.

Henry is chairman of Eden Sight Support. He and his wife have sighted friends who have gone out walking with them. These friends are now moving out of the area.

MM is interested in finding ways to help this couple.

He has contacted the Ramblers and Disabled Ramblers who were unable to help. Part of the difficulty relates to Health and Safety and insurance issues. He had found that there was a support group in South Lakeland which did provide liability insurance. Can the LAF help?

CE suggested contacting Eden Access Forum.

JM suggested the Calvert Trust.

EB mentioned that Lake District volunteers had accompanied a blind group (Milton mountaineers).

JM reported that he has seen at least once a year in Arnside, a team of cyclists from the Bury area riding tandem bikes carrying blind people on rear seat. He said all had heartening smiles and it was great to witness.

MM to follow up the leads suggested

SW was delighted to hear that 3 **new public footpaths** were to be added at Marble quarry, Beetham. She was disappointed to hear that objections can still be made until 17th July. DG explained that it was the legal process.

SW had also had sight of an application for planning permission to extend at Ghyll Scaur Quarry. There is an excellent 'Rock Park' on the site and a viewing point. There was no mention of public access in the reports she has seen, although public access is known to be promoted.

DG ascertained that the footpaths marked on the maps had been extinguished under Town and Country planning when the company started operations in the quarry.

SW will reply to the consultation

EM reported on the **Hadrian's Wall bus**. CCC has removed their subsidy on this route. However, Northumberland CC have agreed to fund the entire route.

The forum agreed that Northumberland CC had been most helpful in subsidising sustainable transport for people wishing to walk the Hadrian's Wall Path.

AD Mentioned that the Peat Restoration Project was moving on to restore larger areas of bog. This will involve the need to exclude livestock from some areas. He wished to flag up that this would bring further pressures for fencing in the uplands.

11 CLAF ACTION/RESPONSE

A formal response is needed from the CLAF to the Moorhouse NNR access consultation.

- DG has responded by email to CE: The bridleway route into the area from Tyne Head would benefit from works to give better access to cycles and horses. The majority of the route through the reserve suffers from erosion and would benefit in a number of places by being re-aligned.

This would also help with the off road motor cycle use, at the present time they are deviating from the route to negotiate the eroded sections. Maintaining the route would keep them to the track and protect the surrounding environment.

- Tony Burns has added: there are issues on the neighbouring Garrigill Estate with unauthorised MPV access; this probably doesn't affect Moorhouse too much, but I have in the past seen signs of motorcycles atop Little Dun Fell. There is also regular unauthorised MPV access up the Radar Station road from Knock; less of an issue as it's generally road-going cars on a sealed surface and there are barriers restricting access to the very top.
The proposed northern extension to the Pennine Bridleway skirts the western flank of the site.

AD pointed out that Moorhouse is almost contiguous with Upper Teesdale NNR, and the two reserves should be considered together.

CE stated that he had no closing date for the Moorhouse consultation but he would ask members to submit comments in the next couple of weeks.

SW: The CLAF applaud the aspiration of NE to improve access provision. We are sure that the managers of the NNRs will make the right decisions if they liaise fully with us and the rangers.

AD felt that the forum should be more pro-active and suggest improvements.

LAF members to submit their comments to CE by mid-July.

12 NEWS FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACCESS BODIES

LAF NW Regional Meeting: JM reported that due to the chairman having another engagement, he attended the meeting on the 19th June. He said that 8 LAF's attended plus Kathy Miles (KM:Regional LAF Co-ordinator) and two officers from NE, Gareth Lawler and David Jeffries. He had made comments on the minutes held on 13 February and in particular:

In terms of tree planting and fencing on open access, LAF's should consider /press for entry for desire lines as well as for PRoW. He reported that CLAF had a case where the landowner had agreed to place a sum of money into a holding account to be used wholly for the cost of removing the fencing as prescribed by the agreement.

He reported that the planting application had in the main been for copses rather than major forests but Cumbria had recently had an application for 400 hectares which posed greater concern.

Reported that the CLAF website was up-to-date thanks to the much pressed for Secretary training from CCC.

Natural England (NE) had reported that the organisation is in the middle of yet another round of change. Staff involved with LAF's was to be reduced but Jim Milner will still cover Cumbria. NE tabled two documents: Plan of Engagement between NE, Defra

and the LAF's dated 9.4.14 and one called 'The Natural England refresh'. This paper included the names and responsibilities for the new regime.

EMB to circulate when forwarded by KM

Members discussed the merits of holding the regional meetings. All agreed that they were useful and I commented that CE had felt the session from Railtrack had been particularly useful. The issue of NE holding a National conference was debated. Different views were expressed and in particular the apparent lack of enthusiasm from NE.

Huddle was discussed. One discouraging factor about using huddle was the number of messages/comments to be read and some felt that members had other interests/commitments to undertake. Members are volunteers not paid officers. Some believed that access to Huddle was restricted to limited number of members. NE said they would investigate

Members commented that there are far too many 'local networks' being established and that NE etc should review the numbers. Local Nature Partnership's was one example.

In reference to LAFs making the most from the health agenda opportunities, JM commented that in terms of encouraging cycle use for school pupils, the situation was not helped by the fact that most pupils have to carry books, equipment and even coats with them for the day. Coat hangers, lockers etc are not generally provided. Perhaps LAF's should publically highlight this discouraging factor.

13 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS WORK PROGRAMME

PROW management: The parish programme is now underway. Contractors will be out on site this month.

ROWIP: 30 projects, £47k match funding to date. The largest individual sum (£28k) coming from Cockermouth.

ENQUIRIES LIST: The numbers are currently increasing but the signage programme will start soon. This should remove a number of enquiries from the list.

COASTAL ACCESS: Memorandum agreement signed for stretch 2.

Implementation by the access team will start next April.

NE are taking stretch 3 (from Allonby to Gretna) forward.

There are interesting discussions to be had about how and where Hadrian's Wall Path meets the England Coast Path.

The likely crossing point of the Eden at Carlisle was also discussed.

NATIONAL TRAILS: Details about the maintenance of the England Coast Path as a National Trail have not yet been settled with NE.

Hadrian's Wall Trust has been wound up. Grassland maintenance will be run in Cumbria by CCC for the rest of the year.

DEFINITIVE MAP PROJECT: Work to convert the hard copy to a digital record continues.

LAND REGENERATION PROJECT: The Countryside Access unit is assessing the liability of the council for these projects. We are establishing which partnerships/groups are working with us, and what their commitments are. The team are currently assessing for trip hazards.

BRIDGES: Wampool bridge works have started.

14 OTHER BUSINESS

The **Annual Report**: is currently being completed for Natural England.

CE and JM will complete + submit to Kathy Miles

Ken Taylor from the Lake District LAF has been in contact about digital mapping of the planting areas on access land in the National Park. A system that the Lake District is developing is expected to be running by the end of August. There is a possibility of getting all Cumbrian planting applications recorded on one system. He wishes to come and talk with CLAF about this.

CE to invite Ken Taylor to the next meeting

JM raised 3 points:

- It would be good to have an update from the CCC Cycling Officer.

Mark Brierley to be invited to the next meeting

- The LAF appreciate that Elizabeth Mallinson has attended today's meeting; but it is a shame that the other 2 appointed Councillors do not attend meetings. It is unfortunate that the Council do not see Countryside Access as an area of importance.
- JM recently visited Arran; in an area with no public toilets, there was a sign explaining that there were places (businesses) that welcome people to use their toilets. In the past, in Bowland, the Countryside Commission had funded pubs to extend their car parks, so that walkers could use them and access their facilities.

Lack of toilet facilities in Cumbria is a problem. Perhaps alternative approaches to solving it could be considered.

15 FROM THE SITE VISIT:

CE thanked DG for the site visit to the Raven beck path. There was a tremendous improvement and it was a credit to the village community for wanting to nurture and look after it.

DG responded that it just takes people to come along to us with the idea and we turn it into a reality for them.

The priority for further works is to remove the crossfall on the first section. Any further grant funding raised will go towards extending the improved surface further up the beck.

Dates of the next meetings: Please put these in your diary:

The next quarterly meetings of the CLAF will be held on the 15th October.

2015 dates are: 21st January; 14th April; and 15th July.