

MINUTES**Cumbria Local Access Forum meeting held on Tuesday 27th October 2015
at Art Gene, Barrow**

Attendees:					
Charles Ecroyd (Chairman)	CE	Jim McQueen (Vice-Chairman)	JM	David Gibson	DG
Jo Cleary	JC	Alan Dougherty	AD	Terry Jolley	TJ
Chris Lyon	CL	Ron Lyon	RL	Kathy Miles	KM
Bridget Pickthall	BP	Sylvia Woodhead	SW		
Members of the public:		Roy Hill	RH	Peter Woodhead (CWT)	PW
Presenters:		Maddi Nicholson (Art Gene)		Stuart Bastik (Art Gene)	

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and expressed thanks to Bridget Pickthall for organising the meeting in Barrow and to Art Gene for providing the excellent venue and refreshments.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Elizabeth Barraclough, Oliver Coles, Nick Cotton, Elizabeth Mallinson, Mike Murgatroyd, David Young. The Chairman noted that all had good reason for their absence. However, the lack of attendance of the third councillor, John Murphy, was also noted and if LAF members agreed he would write to Stewart Young, Leader of the County Labour Group. Members **agreed** this. *CE to write to Stewart Young*

3 Public Participation

No representations or questions had been received from members of the public.

4 Disclosure of Interest

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

5 Exclusion of Press and Public

There was no requirement to exclude members of the public/press.

6 Presentation

Maddi Nicholson and Stuart Bastik gave a presentation on Art Gene's work, mobilising and empowering people through looking at all kinds of things of interest in the Barrow area and in the environment around them. Further information can be found at: www.artgene.co.uk. The Chairman thanked Maddi and Stuart for their interesting presentation. They have also been working with Bridget Pickthall in connection with the Heversham-Hincaster trail.

7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted as accurate and ready to be uploaded to the website.

8 Matters Arising

- 8.1 10. Membership is an ongoing issue and CE was pleased to welcome Roy Hill who was considering becoming a LAF member. He also welcomed Peter Woodhead from Cumbria Wildlife Trust and thanked him for his contribution during the morning's visit.

- 8.2 8. CE thanked SW and BP for all their work on the Annual Report. SW informed members that the next annual report would be done on an annual basis ie for 2015 and BP was suggesting a revolutionary version. As usual, photographs would be welcome, as well as suggestions on the possible new format. *CE to prepare Chairman's Report*
- 8.3.1 11. A letter had been sent to Development Control & Regulation (DC&R) regarding the Storth Inquiry.
- 8.3.2 CE observed that it was an ongoing battle to convince PINS of the need to consult with the LAF. JM raised the issue of Inquiry documentation only being available in Carlisle. Members **agreed** that as a minimum it should be available online.
- 8.4 8. DG confirmed that he and Tony Burns had visited Cow Green Reservoir regarding the new bridleway. On the Cumbria side the landowner had been very positive regarding a new link route, whereas on the Durham side the estate are asking for a vehicular bridge instead of a bridle bridge. A compromise would be to suggest the landowner pay any amount in excess of what a bridleway bridge would cost. However, Natural England (NE) may refuse permission for a vehicular bridge as they may not want such extra traffic in this environmentally sensitive area.
- 8.5 8. JM had received an email from National Grid who would hold their last information event in Heysham on Thursday. The design will then be refined ahead of a formal consultation next year on the final proposal.
- 8.6 11. SW reported that the Marble Quarry Public Inquiry had been postponed to 16th/17th April 2016 as the planning inspector was ill. The point was raised that there should be some way of alerting members of the public and the CCC officers involved. The two officers had a long, unnecessary journey to the south of the county: a waste of their time and public resources.
- 8.7 11. JC had forgotten to circulate a link to LAF members but would do so. *JC*
Funding would be available to do feasibility work on 30-40 schemes, to include two crossings on the A590 in the Backbarrow area: one a bridge and the other using a small bit of carriageway. There have been public meetings. Campaigning has been going on for years and there is a very strong evidence basis. JM added that he believes DoT have a commitment to facilitate any scheme that may help take cyclists off main roads.
- 8.8 12. CE has emailed Warcop about the need for two meetings a year of the Access Group.

9 Chairman's Actions

CE had not yet met with Ken Taylor and Geoff Wilson. Ken is very doubtful whether the Lake District will take responsibility for hosting the database in the current financial climate. CE will circulate the fencing paper from the recent Lake District LAF meeting. *CE*
He also offered to send a letter to Carole Barr (LD LAF chair) and anyone else relevant to say that Cumbria LAF has been and continues to be very supportive of this issue. This was **agreed**. *CE*
AD suggested that Friends of the Lake District (FoLD) could be asked about the fencing database. *CE to contact Douglas Chalmers*

The Ravenstonedale Common fencing application has been withdrawn, so there will be no public inquiry.

In respect of the proposed new water pipeline from Thirlmere, to replace the water which has hitherto been taken from Ennerdale, a considerable amount of the work will be within the National Park (NP). Parts outside the NP were also looked at in terms of ROW.

CE had asked to be provided with a list of the parishes that will be affected. The easiest way to circulate the information will be via CALC (Cumbria Association of Local Councils). There are a few ROW around Great Clifton and one near Bothel which will certainly be affected.

10 Membership

CE was pleased to welcome Kathy Miles as a new LAF member. He explained that KM has volunteered to take on responsibility as LAF Secretary, and will receive a small stipend to cover these duties.

11 Members' News

BP reported that a local landowner had made a 'notice of no deposits', which in effect stopped the clock on the 20 years' evidence of use as a ROW. It is known that the sign was posted, as a counter claimant had photographed it. DG had seen this too.

JM, as at the previous meeting, spoke about the Arnside Viaduct and the fact that it had been possible to get a hook into the NE led committee which deals with estuary crossings. To JM's surprise, the managing director of Holker Estates was very supportive of the idea of the Arnside Viaduct and felt this would be an asset and that it might be possible to find further funding from businesses in the Barrow area. Holker Estates and Suzanna Bleakley (Morecambe Bay Partnership) were very encouraging about this. The latter thought she would be able to take the lead on this, as CCC were unable to take this on. Ian Stewart, county councillor, had also been at this meeting and agreed to be involved in drafting the tender documents. JM was now fairly hopeful that something would happen on this in the not too distant future. Also, if a path on the side of the bridge was not possible, a suggestion had been made that Northern Rail could help walkers and cyclists make the single stop journey across by rail.

SW reported that the extinguishment of a footpath, the Candle Path, had happened. However, BP had met the farmer who explained a well thought through alternative.

CE reported that Mike Murgatroyd had been to look at woods on the outskirts of Hayton where there were several applications; MM had then produced a measured report.

AD reported that the North Pennines Coast to Coast footpath regeneration and peat land reclamation are attempting to get 'Crowd Funding'. The North Pennines AONB are developing a bid for Heritage Lottery funds and access can be covered. He thought this may be worth keeping an eye on. RL was interested to hear about this as it was right on their doorstep.

JC observed that the River Leven crossing at Greenodd had very recently been resurfaced, but some surface dressing had clearly been dumped at each end of the bridge, to such an extent that cyclists have to dismount. DG explained that it was not actually a cycle path, only a footpath, and Highways would soon put 'cyclists dismount' signs up. The alternative would be for cyclists to use the main road or if Morecambe Bay Partnership could find the money to raise the height of the rails to make it safe for cyclists. It was then suggested that Sustrans should be approached and it be explained to them that this strategic cycling route needed some extra funding. JM asked if CCC would be able to facilitate whatever was necessary for the bridge if funding were found. DG agreed, but added that although CCC would like to see this happen, he had previously spoken to Sustrans and they were happy with dismount signs.

The Forum **noted** that this issue highlighted the need for those Council Members appointed to the LAF to attend LAF meetings.

RL reported for interest that as a member of a sub-group of the Eden Access Forum he would be involved in producing a map of access in the Penrith area and asked that if anyone had come across anything like this elsewhere they should please let him know.

12 CLAF Action/Response

On 23rd October the Secretary of State (SoS) confirmed the National Park boundary extensions. CE observed that two factors came to mind. The Yorkshire Dales National Park, if it continues to be called that, will from 1st August 2016 include a large part of Cumbria. He had heard Richard Leafe, Lake District National Park Chief Executive on the radio and had found everything that he had said fair, until his final comment on the state of footpaths.

LAF members felt they wished to **record** their dismay at, and how much they deplored, Ms Truss' comments which were unfounded; likewise Richard Leafe's which asserted that footpaths would be better maintained once they are within the NP. **CE to write to SoS**

DG countered that extension of the NPs would not include the ROWs because these are a highways function; but an arrangement can be made between CCC and the NPs as to who will look after these footpaths. However, the NPs will become responsible for the large Open Access areas.

CE observed that the NPs may wish to increase their membership and invite new members from Cumbria. He suggested the possibility that the three LAF chairs might get together and consider a new LAF to cover the whole of Cumbria. DG mentioned that there will be little increase in funding to the NPs and he thought that the Parks may therefore be interested.

CE hoped that the picture would have become clearer by the time of the next LAF meeting.

13 News from National and Regional Access Bodies

CE had attended a meeting convened by NE at Barrow Town Hall two weeks earlier about the Walney stretch of the coastal trail. It was a good scoping meeting looking at access opportunities around the island working out where the problems would be. The airstrip seaward edge and the very top of the island would not be included (ie only as far as the dunes) and because of roll-back provisions probably be kept back from the west shore as a lot of erosion has already occurred.

The LAF should consider the impact on the nature reserve and contribute as and when asked. Gerry Rusbridge had already indicated that they will not go against anything from NE's Nature Conservation Department.

There is likely to be a meeting in December on the Allonby to Gretna stretch.

14 Countryside Access Work Programme

Progress Report

a) DG reported that the Parish Programme is underway and going very well despite the delayed start and quite good feedback has been received from landowners.

b) ROW improvements are going well with £50k match funding raised so far for the schemes being taken forward this year.

c) Enquiries List – grass-cutting had to continue for longer this year because of the warm start to the autumn which temporarily raised the number of enquiries.

d) Coastal Access – on 1st October the green light was given for the implementation of Stretch 2. DG had just taken a call confirming work to begin from Whitehaven to St Bees. CE had been informed by Danny Moores that none of the objections had been upheld.

e) National Trails – all coming on well. The CCC payment to the Hadrian's Wall Path has been reduced. However, CCC are delivering the more involved schemes for the partnership within Cumbria.

f) The Countryside Access apprentice has now gone but another is to start soon.

There is about a year's work still to do on digitising the Definitive Map and Statement. The apprentice can only input information and someone else will need to proof the mapping.

g) Land Regeneration Project – identify the risk to the property department, where a stone seat feature is likely to fall off the cliff. Working with Maryport Town Council to address this.

h) Structures Priority List / major PROW Bridges programme – the Greenodd bridge has just been resurfaced and a new bridge has been put in at St Sunday's Beck where there had previously only been a ford.

i) Mapping Orders are going well and, if anything, more are getting done than before.

Reorganisation

Originally the structure being proposed did not fit anything the Countryside Access Team were doing. The Team put in another proposal, which gave DG a similar role to his current one, Andy Sims likewise; and Sandra Pattinson and the Rangers also have all become Countryside Access Officers alongside the others. The County Archaeologist, Mark Brennand, is now the Team's manager.

Other CA News

Countryside Access received glowing reports for their work on the Tour of Britain. As CE observed, this showed Cumbria in a very good light. Mark Brierley and Kevin Crawley have been put in for CCC Excellence Awards for their organising of the event.

15 Feedback from morning Training Session / South Walney Nature Reserve Visit

Thanks were expressed to Peter Jones for the passionate and informative presentation around the Walney Cumbria Wildlife Trust (CWT) reserve. Walney is a short but very useful training exercise for NE's new coastal access staff. Gerry Rusbridge hopes that despite the difficulties, they will come up with a route fairly quickly. CE invited LAF members to feed in ideas or suggestions for Gerry through him or KM. **All**

JC observed that the coastal path is intended as a national asset, and she could see that this should be supported and defended, but it should also be balanced against other nationally important assets.

PW thanked the LAF for coming to the reserve and encouraged the LAF to keep in contact with CWT and the Reserve. Joe Murphy, the Senior Reserves Manager can be contacted at: JoeM@cumbriawildlifetrust.org. PW offered that if it would be helpful to the LAF they would be pleased to come to a future LAF meeting.

16 Date of Next Meeting

The next CLAF meeting will be held on Tuesday 19th January 2016 at The Courts, Carlisle.