

MINUTES

Cumbria Local Access Forum meeting held on Wednesday 20th July 2016 at Birdoswald Visitor Centre

Attendees:					
Charles Ecroyd (Chairman)	CE	Jim McQueen (Vice-Chairman)	JM	David Gibson (CCC)	DG
Oliver Coles	OC	Terry Jolley	TJ	Chris Lyon	CL
Ron Lyon	RL	Cllr Elizabeth Mallinson	EM	Kathy Miles	KM
Mike Murgatroyd	MM	Bridget Pickthall	BP	Cllr Helen Wall	HW
Sylvia Woodhead	SW	Phil Greenup (CCC)	PG		

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, in particular County Councillor Helen Wall, newly appointed as a County Council representative on Cumbria Local Access Forum.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Elizabeth Barraclough and Douglas Chalmers, as well as from County Cllr Nick Cotton who, though unable to attend due to another meeting, was working with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) regarding the imminent boundary extension and was also busy with regard to flood recovery work on footpaths and footbridges in Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale.

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 or the press.

6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted with the following amendments:

9, para 7 – change ‘a particular concept of’ to ‘any problem with’

11.5, 2nd para, 1st sentence – amend to ‘SW & BP had visited a FP at Bowston to rectify a map error. SW asked if a FP diversion request had been received from Burlington slate quarry on Kirkby Moor.’

7 Matters Arising

7.1 7.1 DG (Senior Countryside Access Officer) confirmed that Countryside Access Officer Chris Graham’s ROWIP paper is now on the Cumbria LAF website.

7.2 7.2 The Marble Quarry public inquiry on 15th March resulted in the failure of the claim. The inspector decided that the evidence was not conclusive as the evidence provided by the parish council was insufficient. SW felt this was a very sad decision by an inspector otherwise respected. The brigadier had allowed access but it was not his intention to create a Public Right of Way (PROW). This has only happened since he died and the new owners of Dallam Estate started to review the estate. Hale is a small village and the woods were very well used by the locals. The decision could be appealed in the High Court, but

no-one would be able to afford to do this. SW questioned the neutral stance that the County Council had taken with regard to this particular inquiry. DG commented that the Deregulation Act might help achieve a more satisfactory outcome. The LAF regretted this decision and accepted that they were unable to do anything about it.

- 7.3 **7.4** CE had met with United Utilities and reaffirmed the LAF's stance that there should be the minimum disruption to ROWs whilst the new water pipeline from Thirlmere is put in.
- 7.4.1 **11.5** Following publication of the Cumbria LAF Annual Report BP had prepared a brief publicity article, but it was thought it may be better to combine this with other news such as the merger of CLAF with the Lake District LAF following the extension of the National Park.
- 7.4.2 **11.5** BP had also brought up the lack of coverage on the County Council website about horse riding. DG explained that the part of the website concerned was not under the control of Countryside Access and was primarily about cycling. He acknowledged BP's point that horse riding contributes about £30m to Cumbria's rural economy and encouraged her to get other horse riders involved and to write something promoting horse riding. PG explained that the cycling coverage was part of the GoLakes initiative which had provided funding for cycling. JM felt the LAF's disappointment at the lack of mention of horse riding on the CCC website should be minuted. It was conceded that a link to the CLAF website from the CCC website could easily be made and would solve this problem.

8 Chairman's Actions

- 8.1 CE had in early July met with Angela Jones (Assistant Director Environment & Community Services), Janet Willis, the new portfolio-holder, and Phil Greenup. There were useful discussions on topics such as countryside access funding and Tony Burns' situation. If CE has any concerns he is to direct them to PG, Janet Willis and Angela Jones. It was a positive meeting.

9 National Park Boundary Changes

- 9.1 PG confirmed that at officer level an agreement had been reached in principle that YDNPA will manage ROWs within the area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park extension. Funding has not yet been agreed and no formal agreement has yet been reached. It will go to Cabinet in October and Full Council in November.
- 9.2 PG informed the LAF that the situation with the Lake District was very similar. However, the 'ask' from the LDNPA was larger than that of the YDNPA even though it is a smaller area. In particular there are substantial repairs required to one route. Both parks have carried out condition surveys in the extension areas to come up with costs. Legally the extensions come into being on 1st August.
- 9.3 CE had received a last minute invitation to the LD LAF meeting and had attended. At CLAF's last meeting CE had invited members to contact him with any concerns about or objections to a merger but received none. He therefore took this message to the LD LAF meeting. At a subsequent meeting of the chairmen, vice-chairmen and officers of both LAFs it was decided that rather than give two lots of notice it made more sense to notify all neighbouring authorities and the formal letter was therefore sent on 8th July 2016 with the requisite 21 days notice. It is now a matter of preamble and working together towards the merger. The suggestion is to work towards a start date of early January 2017.

As both LAFs' next meetings are scheduled for October, within a week of each other, they should therefore rather hold a joint meeting. It was decided to offer all existing members of both LAFs a place on the new Forum as the numbers of current members did not exceed the maximum allowed membership.

CLAF members felt a joint meeting was a good idea. Kathy Miles was asked to contact Carole Barr (LD LAF Chair) and Dave Robinson and suggest a joint meeting at Ambleside on Thursday 20th October when a training session was already planned. At the LD LAF meeting CE had also pressed for a continuation of the four meetings a year pattern with morning session. **KM**

- 9.4 When CE met the chairs of the YD and LD LAFs they aired the idea of observers attending each other's meetings. They have now formally requested that a representative from CLAF attend their meetings for the next 18 months. CE in return will invite their chair to attend our meetings in the same way. He will try to attend every meeting but if unable to do so, would ask another CLAF member to attend in his place.

10 Membership

Cumbria LAF agreed previously to not actively seek to look for new members until after the matter of the merger is concluded.

Authority representation of CCC and LDNPA has yet to be sorted out. CE to email Janet Willis about this. JM suggested that the October meeting stress the importance of relevant Authority representation to help the merged LAF fulfil its work. **CE**

11 Members' News

- 11.1 MM was carrying on with surveys for the north of the county. An idea to re-open one of the mines to the north of St Bees for high quality coal would affect several ROW and the company concerned has modified its plans. This time they have included consideration of comments received from other responders, but ignored the LAF's concerns about the ROW, though other respondents had also referred to them. PG observed that the application is for coal only and if the company wished to extract gas they would have to put in a completely separate application.
- 11.2 HW reported concerns about cutting down part of a willow wood for the coastal path around Walney. Also residents had raised the fact that there are no bridleways in Barrow. BP offered to pick this up with Cumbria Bridleways. There is also an issue with people walking on the edge of the golf course, when the PROW is actually on the shingle. **BP**
- 11.3 JM reported that he attended a meeting of ATOG supporters on 21st July. He explained that he is a member of this group in his own right but with approval he also represents CLAF when appropriate. Eight people attended including Arnside and Silverdale AONB, Morecambe Bay Partnership [MBP] (Susannah Bleakley and Jenny Wain), Dallam Estate (Julian Oyston), Adrian Waddingham and Jim Trotman from Community Rail Partnership. Some very useful information/news was shared and MBP's offer to act as lead was gratefully accepted. The next stage of producing tender invitations is progressing and with some promises of funds from SLDC and private sector of around £20k, ATOG feels more confident of reaching the target costs of £40-£60k. Susannah has offered one of her staff, Jenny Wain to take things forward but charging some costs to the project. The two County Councillors, Ian Stewart and Pete McSweeney have offered support to the ATOG proposal. The prospects are moving forward at last.
- 11.4 BP and SW had visited a footpath (FP) diversion request in Dalton-in-Furness. This met the legal tests and was supported. A proposed FP extinguishment in Barrow-in-Furness was also supported as its removal would be no loss to the public. They had also visited a FP diversion request on the Cumbria Way north of Ulverston, where the applicants had shown them the proposed diversion which was a huge improvement, keeping to higher ground with good views, with large gates and clear route-way across the fields. The new system of contacting applicants was working well.

SW reported that Cumbria GeoConservation had unveiled two information boards (explaining the quarrying process and how rocks form) at Birkhams Quarry on the C2C and ECP [England Coast Path] on St Bees Head.

SW had seen an article in the Yorkshire Post magazine announcing the opening of 68 miles of the Yorkshire ECP from Filey to the River Tees. It mentioned that Andrew Best of NE had spent 9 years planning the NE section from Skegness to Scotland. CLAF members would remember meeting with Andrew Best and his team in northern Cumbria in 2009 when they were preparing the methodology, with Cumbria as a Pilot Coastal section.

- 11.5 RL explained that Disabled Ramblers run a number of rambles in various parts of the country, visiting the NW in 2016; thus looking for one or two possible ramble routes in Cumbria to include in the "Northern Tour" which might be in Warcop if suitable routes are available. Parking spaces for 20 or so cars/camper vans (not to camp) are also needed. RL and CL had attempted an early recce route up Scordale which looked promising, but the ford stopped them doing the full route safely as they were on their own. They are members of the Warcop Ranges Access Group, but were unable to attend the recent meeting. However, CE was able to attend and reported that the ford was discussed.
- 11.6 TJ, as a member of Carlisle Ramblers, had visited the Silverdale AONB and noted that all the footpaths were in excellent condition. He had also observed that there are several stiles in the Dalston area which are verging on dangerous because walkers have to climb up 2½ ft steps. DG explained that these stiles would be the farmer's responsibility. In a ROW they would be the regular maximum 30mm. TJ commented on the livestock in fields crossed by a ROW and on the potential dangers. Other members observed these would have been dairy cows and not at all aggressive, only perhaps if accompanied by calves.
- 11.7 EM informed the LAF of the walk packs for Carlisle which were very good. Rickerby Park now has a clause on it preventing events such as the Cumberland Show. The park is still suffering from the effects of damage caused by Storm Desmond. Fishing from Rickerby Park is no longer possible for disabled users because of fencing erected by Carlisle City Council to protect the river bank. EM also described the progress with cycle routes and highlighted the fact that the cycle paths put in some years ago are now crumbling because there was no funding put in place for maintenance. The Waverley Viaduct is continuing to be a problem to solve.
- 11.8 DG had attended the NP AONB Access and Recreation Group meeting and would circulate **DG** his notes to LAF members.
- 11.9 CE informed members that Tony Burns had now left the Countryside Access Team and had started a new job with the County Council.

CE had attended the Warcop Users Group meeting on 19th July and found that engagement with users is very much by spirit and letter, but is very much improved. Access days have been set and updated on the website. There was an incursion on to the live firing range by a car and consequently many gates have been replaced, which had not been in existence for a number of years; and signage has been renewed. They now accept and recognise their responsibilities under CROW. RL would like to work more closely with them because 'we' are in Cumbria again next year. Warcop are now again regularly (weekly) walking to check where live ordnance has fallen in order to have it removed. CE added that Simon Wilson would fix next year's date for the organised walk to Little Fell and let the LAF know. It had been a positive meeting.

The chairman of the meeting highlighted their safety concerns about footpaths in the Impact Zone. DG added that when the Deregulation Act comes in, it may be possible to move a footpath on the grounds of safety.

12 News from National and Regional Access Bodies

12.1 The next NW Regional meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8th September.

13 Coastal Access Update

CE had taken up the question of closed dates with Gerry Rusbridge (GR) who came back to confirm that NE were confident they had correctly assessed the situation and that the 1st September to 31st March closure was right. CE told him that the LAF intended to object.

The report on Stage 3 was to be published the following day, meaning that the deadline for responses would fall before the next CLAF meeting. CE invited members to look at this online and send comments to him. He would then circulate a response to CLAF members for comment before submitting it. **ALL**

CE had also asked GR about the effect of Brexit on European designations such as SACs. GR had no idea at this time.

14 Countryside Access Work Programme

14.1 Countryside Access Progress Report

- Flood recovery

Two projects have been addressed so far. Rothay Park, which forms an important link for access from Ambleside and Barbondale Bridge into the surrounding countryside. An application has been made to the RPA for £500,000. It will be known by September whether this bid has been successful.

- PROW Improvement programme

Since the City Council have handed back the rights of way function in the Carlisle area, improvements are now being made in partnership with CCC to the network.

- PROW Management programme

Countryside Access are now about 50% committed on the survey programme.

- National Trail Maintenance Programme

Coastal Access work is going all right but there is a gap to fill as Tony Burns had been detailed to do this and has lost his job within Countryside Access. Guy Timperley will now step in to do it on top of his other work. The coastal trail will be added to the National Trails in Cumbria. There has been a reprieve on National Trail funding and last year's funding levels will be retained.

- Land Regeneration Project (LRP)

The Maryport seating should now be resilient for many years to come as it has been re-location further away from the cliff.

- Flood Programme

There are 21 emergency closures in place. DG explained that there is a prioritised list of which Birks Mill Bridge in the YDNP area is high on the list. One of the bridges will require planning permission because the new structure will be substantially different.

JM enquired whether DG had had anything to do with the new cycleway on Dunmail Raise. CE replied that Carole Barr at the LD LAF meeting had been very cross that the LAF had not been consulted. It was seen as urbanisation of the countryside. However, the origin of the path was that it was the black-top single track road put in for the school bus until the A591 was re-opened. EM observed that overall it was a blessing for the community and for road users to keep cyclists off the road.

14.2 Countryside Access Team update

PG informed the LAF members that the CA Team now comprised a senior officer and six Countryside Access officers, plus three days a week for a Coastal Access officer. He was also in the process of obtaining approval for another full-time officer for coastal access.

15 **Feedback from morning Training Session / Drainage on the Hadrian's Wall Path**

CE thanked DG for organising the interesting site visit and observed that the rain had not stopped members enjoying the morning. He also asked DG to pass the LAF's thanks to Chris Graham (Countryside Officer, CCC) and Gary Pickles (Hadrian's Wall Ranger, Northumberland NPA), both of whom, in addition to DG, had provided a valuable insight into the difficulties and paperwork involved in carrying out work on a scheduled monument and obtaining consent to do so.

EM, though unable to join in the morning session, was delighted when she saw where the LAF were going and was interested to see that the LAF were being informed about the problems of trying to do work on a scheduled monument. In Stanwix, in her constituency, a bus stop sign had had to be mounted on the adjacent railing because no digging deeper than 4" is allowed.

16 **Dates of Future Meetings**

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 20th October 2016; however, in view of the intention to hold a shared meeting with the LD LAF, the date would be confirmed as soon as possible, along with the venue. [**Date subsequently moved to FRIDAY 21ST OCTOBER**]

A further meeting is currently scheduled for Tuesday 17th January 2017.