

Minutes of the **Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum meeting**
held on Tuesday 11th April 2017 at Coniston Institute

Attendees:					
Charles Ecroyd (Chair)	CE	Carole Barr (Vice Chair)	CB	Jonathan Brooks	JB
Geoff Davies (LDNPA)	GD	Terry Jolley	TJ	Chris Lyon	CL
Ron Lyon	RL	Jim McQueen	JM	Kathy Miles	KM
Mike Murgatroyd	MM	Bridget Pickthall	BP	Steve Pighills	SP
Cllr Helen Wall (CCC)	HW	Geoff Wilson	GW	Sylvia Woodhead	SW
Dave Robinson (LDNPA)	DR				

1 Welcome

Charles Ecroyd welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Douglas Chalmers, Oliver Coles, Cllr Nick Cotton (CCC), John Crosbie, Mohammed Dhalech, David Gibson (CCC), Phil Greenup (CCC), Terry Jolley, Cllr Liz Mallinson (CCC), Malcolm Petyt, Gerry Rusbridge (NE – Natural England), Ken Taylor

3 Public Participation

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

4 Disclosure of Interest

GD is a member of the LDNPA and is Chair of the ROW committee. There was no other 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 Membership

LAF members were informed that this was Jim McQueen's last meeting. The Chair thanked him for his support as Vice Chairman and to Cumbria Local Access Forum, and for staying on until the new Forum had become established.

7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 17th January 2017 Cumbria and Lake District LAF meeting were agreed.

8 Matters Arising

8.1 9.1 Lack of Bridleways in the Barrow area – HW had gone to see the lady who had raised this issue, only to find that she had moved. CB highlighted the Coastal Access Team's suggestion that it may be possible to improve provision along the coast. CB added that some of the issues in the Barrow area were about maintenance.

8.2a 9.3a Logo – CB had not been able to speak to Jane again since the last meeting but would circulate the updated logo when she receives it.

CB

8.2b 9.3b Website – CB hoped to work with Sandra Pattinson and move this forward. LAF members were asked to look at the existing Cumbria LAF website (www.cumbrialaf.org.uk) and feed back on what needed to be changed or how the site could be improved.

All

- 8.3 9.4 Annual Reports – CB had prepared an annual report for the Lake District LAF and circulated it to members the previous evening. The Cumbria LAF 2016 annual report had been uploaded to the website.
- 8.4 9.5 Lake District Partnership Board – CB reported that there was currently not a great deal relating to access. Things like rural broadband were being fought for.
- 8.5 9.6 Lancaster Canal Regeneration Project – BP observed that this would be a long-term project over an extensive timeframe. Drop-in sessions about the project were taking place and many horse-riders had made representations about multi-user paths. JM reported that South Lakes had given a lot of monetary support to the LCRP, in the region of £175k.
- 8.6 9.8 Authority representation – After the County Council elections, CE would contact the new portfolio-holder to come to an agreement on the CCC representation on the LAF. Historically there had always been one representative from each of the three main parties.
- The new LAF would, however, would need representation from both authorities, CCC and LDNPA and the LAF may have a maximum of three authority representatives. CCC would therefore have to reduce its representation.
- GD enquired whether it had been agreed that a substitute could attend in place of him/the ROW Committee chair and this would normally be the vice-chair. This was accepted.
- 8.7 10 Future work priorities – An updated draft of the LAF's work priorities for 2017-18 had been circulated to members.

CE

9 Cumbria & Lakes Joint Local Access Forum Terms of Reference

The Chair had had every intention of getting together with GW to revise the draft TOR and apologised for the fact that the suggestions sent by Ken Taylor and Sylvia Woodhead had not yet been incorporated. He and GW would meet to do this.

**CE
GW**

10 Reports from Members

The Chair thanked the members who carry out this work on behalf of the LAF and explained that it had been decided that this work merited reporting as a formal agenda item in its own right, rather than as 'Members News' as in the past at CLAF meetings.

10.1 Inspections and recommendations on proposed ROW diversions

SW reported that the request for the footpath diversion for the Kirkby Ireleth quarry had come in very late and it was fortunate that she and BP had been able to go at such short notice. Their summary report of site inspections made had been circulated to LAF members before the LAF meeting.

SP had looked at a consultation received from Nick Thorne (LDNPA) and, as previously done, circulated this to members of the former LD LAF, who would send him comments to collate, and send back to Nick on behalf of the LAF. The LD LAF did not go on site visits automatically, SP explaining that Nick always gave a good overview of the situation, and CB adding that often there would be a LAF member who would have personal knowledge of the path. SW wished to make the point that they (SW and BP) had found that what looks straight forward on paper is invariably more interesting than that and that they are all worth visiting. MM agreed wholeheartedly that 99% of the time a site visit was very beneficial.

CE pointed out that the reason why CLAF made a point of replying formally was to ensure that the authority did not lose sight of the fact that the LAF is a statutory consultee.

He would like this to be continued within the National Park also. Procedures need to be coordinated so that the LAF continues to be involved. GW mentioned that he is sent all orders because he has asked to be sent them. He would support that where possible all orders being consulted on should be visited and surveyed.

MM had looked at four orders since the last LAF meeting. Two were very straight forward and involved schools needing to move a path sideways because of extensions to a school building and safety of the children. The other two involved housing developments.

CB observed that the LAF needed to agree a common process now that the two LAFs had merged. MM explained the current process and reiterated that all should be responded to. CE again advocated a coordinated approach and added that he would support consultations being circulated to all LAF members; this would be a useful tool as local knowledge may be helpful. The designated people would forward these to the whole LAF membership and members could respond to SW, BP, MM or SP as appropriate within the set time limit. Consultation responses should then be channelled through the chair. Though GW could not see the necessity for the chair to be involved, CE felt that it was better for it to be seen to be coming through the chair.

All

A table of all consultations in the intervening quarter should go to the next LAF meeting.

KM

10.2 Upland Fencing

GW had provided for circulation the report from the Fell Fencing Database Meeting held at the end of January. In doing the mapping, someone to take on this work had been sought for some time and a major step forward had been made. A number of questions were posed at the last meeting and it was hoped that these would be answered at the next meeting. Ordnance Survey (OS) was now able to do more frequent mapping than in the past. An amendment to the OS key to show where a fence was permanent or temporary would be very helpful. Some pressure may need to be put on the OS to show this on their maps because a temporary fence can prove a substantial obstacle to a walker.

11 **Members News**

- 11.1 CB wished to pick up on CL and RL's parking recently circulated query on behalf of the Disabled Ramblers, asking where there would be suitable parking provision for the Disabled Ramblers members' 20 or so large vehicles. DR confirmed that there is parking for 'Miles without Stiles' routes but not necessarily for such a large number of vehicles at one time. CE informed CL and RL that Douglas Chalmers was looking into their request and would get back to them soon.
- 11.2 JB had heard that a few trees had gone from Ullswater and opened up spectacular views, thus benefitting 'visual access'.
- 11.3 In connection with Routes to Resilience GD had been trying to get recognition that it was important for the LAF to be consulted.
- 11.4 GW reported on something he had been asked to do on behalf of Lazonby parish council. There were not many footpaths in the parish and even less recorded as ROW. He had explained to them that unless someone claims regularly used paths as ROW by 2026 the chances are that these paths will be lost. GW felt it was likely that this would be the case in very many parishes in the county. He felt there may be some inconsistencies that may need to be addressed as to the way things are recorded at CCC Highways.
- 11.5 JM had on 5th April attended the Morecambe Bay Conference; it was attended by about 80 people. The Partnership was about to introduce an electric bike scheme around the Bay.

The whole Arnside viaduct idea had come about with walkers wishing to be able to go across the viaduct; and more recently a lot of interest from cyclists. Though this would bring more funding, it was important to keep the focus on walkers. A charity would now lead on this Arnside-Levens project and things were now also happening at CCC, but the LAF was not being kept informed. This was not helped by the fact that there was no longer a formal cycling officer in the same department as Countryside Access. JM undertook to keep the LAF informed through SW, BP and the Chair. He would miss the LAF but felt it was time to step aside and make room for new members.

- 11.6 HW commented on the latest coastal access report and that local fishermen were very worried that they would be prevented from using the beach. CE observed that in practice the coastal path would not affect their access.
- 11.7 SW had written a little piece about the previous meeting which had been published in the Westmorland Gazette.
- 11.8 RL reported that the routes that Disabled Ramblers develop would in future be made available on ViewRanger <http://my.viewranger.com/>.
- 11.9 SP reported on the Gatescarth permit system: 18 motor cycles and four 4x4s a month use Gatescarth. There were no particular problems. The system was working well and some routine maintenance was being done.

12 News from National and Regional Access Bodies

- 12.1 The national LAF conference postponed from 21st March was now rescheduled to Wednesday 21st June, 11am-4pm, to take place at the Carrs Lane Conference Centre in Birmingham.
- 12.2 A further Northwest Regional LAF Chairs' meeting would take place on 18th May at the NE office in Manchester. KM was pleased to report that though some LAFs in the region had had problems there had been some progress, and the Wigan LAF now had a chair again.

13 Coastal Access Update

- 13.1 CE explained that there had been a mix-up over the dates and as a result Gerry Rusbridge was unable to attend the LAF meeting. Unfortunately this was discovered too late to arrange for another member of the Natural England coastal access team to substitute.
- 13.2 CE reported that Stretch 2 had some rollback issues that needed addressing and this would take some time as it would require working with individual landowners.
- 13.3 On Stretch 3 up to Gretna there had been a number of meetings and inspections with landowners who had objected to the proposals. Geoff Fewkes (CCC countryside officer) had indicated that not all had been spoken to and decisions were awaited from the Secretary of State (SOS) and some may go to an inquiry.
- 13.4 Stretch 4, Walney Island, has obtained approval.
- 13.5 On Stretch 5, which takes in the Kent, Duddon and Levens estuaries, decisions have been taken. For the Kent and Leven, the path will go right up to the road bridge. For the Duddon it is suggested that anyone wishing to cross will use the railway.

JM felt that as this was now on public record, it may increase the argument for the path to be cantilevered to the Arnside viaduct and help lever some funding.

14 Work Programme Updates

14.1 CE explained that as David Gibson had not been able to attend due to sickness, it was clearly not possible to have the usual detailed report. He went through the main points on the paper provided by David on Cumbria County Council Countryside Access Team work.

14.2 DR reported that after the last LAF meeting he had gone back to the LDNPA and asked if it would be possible to have a summary of work in the National Park along the lines of the county council one. The Lake District Routes to Resilience (ie flood recovery) spreadsheet in its current format was unwieldy and not really readable because of the scale of the work needing to be done. However, he had brought a couple of paper copies of the spreadsheet and the committee report which had been circulated to LAF members ahead of their meeting.

A LAF member observed that the CCC spreadsheet lacked detail on locations because it was a summary.

DR had met with Highways England the previous week, a pre-consultation event on how the trunk road network could evolve to benefit non-motorised users. He thought this may be of some individual interest and/or something for the LAF to respond to in due course.

GW asked if these proposals were just to get pedestrians across trunk roads or along them. DR replied that it was both but also for cyclists, horse riders and all users.

JM reported that the Morecambe Bay Partnership had been directed to talk to the Highways Authority, they being very keen to keep non-motor users away from major roads.

DR to circulate the LDNPA response to the consultation on safety of non-motorised users on the A590 from 2013. **DR**

GW had put in an application for Old Hutton parish. This would go to the DC&R committee on 25th May. He was unable to go and would welcome any LAF member to attend in his absence. **Any**

GD had seen many cases of ROW being cut in two by road upgrades, with steps instead of a ramp, to get off the road, so that wheelchairs could not cross the road.

15 Ongoing Infrastructure Projects

15.1 Thirlmere water pipeline – MM reported that there was a great deal of concern from local residents because of the disruption. GD, as a member of the Lake District Development Control Committee, had voted in favour of this scheme and observed that the whole question of the suitability of the project had been considered by an inquiry some years ago and approved.

CB asked if SP and KT had been to a meeting on this. SP responded that few ROW were affected, but he and KT had had to explain to them that UCR also had to be considered.

15.2 Moorside – As members would have heard, the financial turmoil regarding Westinghouse may well put the Moorside project back somewhat.

15.3 Northwest Coastal Connection – The coastal connections deadline was 2024. CL raised the Unesco application for the Lake District and CB observed that inspectors had been a few months earlier and Moorside had been a concern.

16 Other Business

There was no other business.

17 Feedback from morning Training Session / Natural Capital

KM was asked to contact Liz Davey, Andrew Herbert and John Dennis to thank them for their input to the morning's session on 'Natural Capital'. It had been interesting to hear about this new approach which intended to recognise the value of ecosystems to wellbeing and flood defence, and also in economic terms. However, some LAF members were somewhat sceptical and one observed that there were many times during the morning when the word 'profit' could have been substituted for 'benefit'. Though a useful session, some failed to see its relevance: the LAF focuses on specific improvements to paths and access and it was difficult to see how Natural Capital related to LAFs. DR explained that part of this was to show that Defra and Natural England were now focussed on this and the authorities have to bear this in mind. GD observed that health and wellbeing were an important factor.

Further comments were that it had been an excellent piece of work; however members were not convinced by the concept which was completely new to most of them and was difficult to take on board. Recreation was not quite the same thing as access and the LAF should ensure that ROWs are not forgotten.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Dates for the next two meetings were agreed:

Tuesday 4th July 2017

Thursday 5th October 2017