

**Minutes of the Cumbria and Lakes Joint Local Access Forum
Meeting held virtually on Wednesday 28th April, 2021**

Attendees			
Charles Ecroyd (Chair) CE	Carole Barr (Vice Chair) CB	David Gibson (CCC)	DG
Emma Moody (LDNPA) EM	Nick Cotton NC	Andrew Nelson	AN
Geoff Wilson GW	Steve Pighills	SP	Jonathan Brooks JB
Kathy Miles KM	Ben Mayfield BM		Helen Wall HW
Ron Lyon	RL	Chris Lyon	CL
			Vicky Hughes (LDNPA) VH
			Judith Ruddick (Sec) JR
Apologies			
Tiffany Hunt	TH	Mohammed Dhalech	MD
Mike Murgatroyd	MM	Rob Bishop	RB
			Sylvia Woodhead SW

1. Welcome

CE opened the meeting and welcomed members.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3. Membership

CE had nothing new to report on prospective new members but advised that he and CB had had a discussion regarding membership and in particular the fact that they had both been elected at the inaugural meeting of the joint access forum. They agreed that both positions should put up for election. CE felt this should go on the agenda for the next meeting in July. He also felt it would be the time to ask members if they were willing to continue as initially the term was 3 years which had now passed.

CB felt it would be better to set a deadline for nominations and midday Friday 14th May, 2021 was suggested, then to have a vote which could be ratified at the meeting in July and go forward from there. CE agreed and said he was happier with that. CB also said that if we then knew who was going to continue and who wasn't we would know where the gaps were in the membership for looking for new members. CE agreed.

3.1 The Regulations require forum members to elect from amongst their number a chairman and vice-chairman, taking such steps as may be necessary to ensure as far as practicable that they are drawn from members representing different categories of interest (note – they may both represent “other interests” provided they do not represent the same interest). Members of the appointing authority should avoid offering themselves to these posts if possible.

Action: CE to put together some form of wording, clarify it with CB then JR to circulate to members.

4 Public Participation

CE informed that he had not received any notifications from members of the public about attending today's meeting. CB mentioned a letter they had received from a gentleman regarding parking and the road closure at Coniston. CE said he had sent him a letter thanking the gentleman for raising his concerns but it was a Highways or National Park issue and not the remit of the access forum. Furthermore, CE said he had told him it would be reported at this meeting and brought before the members of the forum.

5 Declarations of Interest

CE asked members if there were any declarations of interest – there were none.

6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th January, 2021 were amended and accepted.

7 Matters Arising

- 7.1** Grange Railway Crossing – DG said there was not a lot happening but he was waiting for the Inspectorate. GW added that the Planning Inspectorate had asked if everyone who had made a representation was happy it was dealt with by written representation rather than an open public inquiry. His understanding was that there were nine objectors and all but one was happy to have it dealt with this way. However the Inspectorate had gone for a public inquiry. GW said that on a personal note he had objected to the closing of the crossing and wondered why they had gone on the side of the one objector. He fully expects this to take some time to be dealt with. CE thanked GW for his input.
- 7.2** Tilberthwaite – CB informed members that the first meeting of the Tilberthwaite Management Group had been held in March but most of the meeting had been spent around terms of reference and membership of the group. The next meeting will be in June and she hoped discussion would begin on a draft management plan. The group is going to be short lived, only the next couple of years. GW and CB would be walking the route in the next couple of weeks to have a look at the state of the path. CB mentioned that Diana Mallinson had contacted CALJLAF and asked what views CALJLAF would be taking to the meeting and a reply had been sent saying we would aim to work collaboratively with the group to form a management plan. The meetings were currently being chaired by an independent facilitator, however CB had said she would be happy to chair but that had yet to be decided.
- 7.3** GDPR - DG informed members that he had spoken to JR regarding how the data is kept from the Councils point of view but he felt there was something wider for the LAF to see how they envisage their information being shared, whether it appears on the website. He feels there is a bit of a conversation to be had there with members. He went onto say that from an authority point of view they were quite happy with how the data was being stored on a separate data stick and not held on anyone's computer, so it would be a case of when the website is delivered or the facebook

page of how people want to see their information on that. It is something for the group to discuss.

CE added that he realised some members were uneasy about having their personal contact details in the public domain. DG answered that it should be on the next agenda.

Vicky Hughes, the Deputy Chairman of the LDNPA's rights of way committee joined the meeting at this point in place of Tiffany Hunt.

CB mentioned that in the minutes of the last meeting that she, CE, EM and DG would get on with the GDPR so she had been working on a privacy notice which when finished could be shared with members. Basically it states who can collect information and what they will do with it etc. but also when we look at the membership at the next meeting and see who is staying on and signing up for the next three years, we need to make sure that everybody understands the privacy notice and what information we hold and what we are going to do with it.

CE thanked CB for doing that.

GW added that for a long time he had had concerns relating to the impact GDPR had on groups such as the LAF, as we are here for the public, we don't represent ourselves and he didn't understand how it could be that if the public don't know who we are and can't contact us how can we begin to fulfill the role.

CE said he didn't disagree with GW and felt that if you were a member of a public forum such as the LAF then your name needs to be out there but it was whether an individual's private contact details are in the public domain or whether if the public wishes to contact the access forum they either go through the chairman's email or the secretary's email.

CB then added that as a member of a forum, you have to accept that your name will be out there and actually you're not allowed to be on an access forum if you're not prepared for your name to be out there.

- 7.4** Potential Research Possibilities – BM told the group that initially he had been looking at getting PHD funding which was difficult to get in the current climate but then two other academics Glen O'Hara and Clare Hickman successfully won a £1 million research contract, In All Our Footsteps Project. That brings together lots of views on access, access users and access to the countryside in general. He said he continues to be in touch with Glen and Clare and they are very keen to have input from the access forum and also from individual members as well. They currently have a register of people who have offered advice and help with their project and are looking for research assistants, post doctorates and potentially a PHD student. It's progressing at a pace and he hopes to hear more from them over the summer when they have more time.

CE thanked BM for his report.

AN did say that he had tried contacting them but with little success and asked BM to pass on his name.

CB asked if the link to the project could be sent again.

Action: BM to pass on AN name to the project and to send the link to members again.

- 7.5** SWOT Analysis – AN said he hadn't done anything with it but didn't feel it was being used in the way it was designed.

CB said that at the next meeting when we knew about membership etc we probably needed to revisit the work programme through SWOT and look at the work going forward and maybe our stance on various things like the Tilberthwaite group or horses on multi user tracks.

CE agreed that this should be added to the agenda for the July meeting.

- 7.6** Keswick to Threlkeld Route – CB said that at the last meeting she had asked the LAF to support the route being used by horses and there was a lengthy discussion and a vote which did come out in favour of her suggestion. However, it was recognized that there were a lot of people using the route and in a conversation with EM she had said they were going to review users on that route in the autumn, so we should probably revisit that then. It would be good for the LAF to have a stance on this.

EM added that there had been mixed views and there would need to be more discussions around this.

CE said it would be interesting to hear the result of the input going in, in the autumn.

- 7.7** New User Impact – CE said this had been covered considerably at the last meeting and asked if any members had anything further to add. GW said that he was a volunteer for the LDNPA and that he had been advising the public and providing assistance to them as to how to conduct themselves in the National Park. It is a small minority who cause problems but he said the LDNPA in collaboration with the CC, NT and other partners were getting a good handle on issues.

DG told members that he had had a meeting with a lady from the Arnside and Silverdale AONB about this and she has put together a group of interested parties to address the issue and as GW was saying they are putting together meeters and greeters so they can let people know what they can do. This has been welcomed particularly through the RSPB within the Morecambe Bay area.

EM said she wanted to thank all the volunteers who had been doing an amazing job and that a lot more new volunteers had been recruited. She went on that it made a huge difference having people on the ground stopping problems before they arise. It's an ongoing thing and there are patrols out all the time working across all the different agencies.

CE said it was very reassuring to hear that staff on the ground were being proactive rather than reactive.

CB said that the plan had been really good and was working well but the communities that are affected shouldn't be forgotten and the input they might have was important.

CE reminded members that the updated version of the Countryside Code was launched on 1st April and that he had been asked to comment and that he had made specific reference to visitors being respectful to local people and local communities saying it is a national park but people derive their livelihoods and livings from here and it is our community.

8. Fix the Fells

An update had been circulated prior to the meeting from Annie Duckworth, a Fix the Fells Ranger. CE then asked if members had seen a piece on television from Wastwater talking to volunteers doing fix the fells work.

GW informed the group that Richard Fox who had communicated with the LAF over many years had retired and felt it appropriate for the LAF to wish him well.

EM said he had left two weeks ago and that AD had replaced him. She said she did have contact details for him if any member wanted to pass wishes on. CE wanted to place on record his thanks for all the work that Richard had been involved in over the years keeping the Lake District accessible.

9. LAF Work Programme

- 9.1** Upland Fencing – GW said that members had had his report prior to the meeting detailing the present situation and the consultations that are currently in progress. He asked that the forums acceptance of his report be minuted. He also wanted to mention that in the planning inspectorates response to the application for fencing and planting in the Newlands Valley around Keskadale, the inspector granted consent only for five years of fencing which came as a surprise for two reasons, one being that it's not normal for inspectors to give consent for planting or fencing for a period less than the applicants request which may be 20 or 25 years and secondly that five years seems a remarkably short period of time as nothing much is going to happen in terms of regeneration but of course they can reapply then. But I think it creates some hope that at least one inspector has become aware of the fact that there needs to be some work done to check on how successful or otherwise these regeneration projects are, speaking of which one of the ongoing ones which I referred to in the report that CE and I have been involved with – the proposed planting in Langstrath and Coombe valley which we hoped to have a zoom meeting last week but the consultant who is dealing with this had had an accident and wasn't able to convene the meeting so this has been put off and will be rescheduled. I have paid a site visit there and I think that is a classic example where planting could have a significant impact on that particular landscape. It's a fairly hidden valley, it's a hanging valley, it's a high level valley and I'm expecting especially from the Friends of the Lake District and the Open Space Society there'll be considerable resistance to that planting happening.

CE asked if GW had seen the email from Ian Brody, GW replied that he had and tried to not get too involved in the sorts of discussions that the Friends of the Lake District and the OSS engage in because the LAF deals mainly with access although we do allow ourselves to stray across because part of access is what you see when you have access so we don't steer clear totally but we try and avoid getting as academic about it as the FLD or the OSS do.

CE said he was very happy to recommend that members accept the report and asked if there were any objections. There were none.

CE added that Jenny Waine had reconvened the meeting on Langstrath for the 20th May, 2021.

9.2 Carlisle Southern Link Road – CE informed that he had received no further correspondence since the autumn and asked DG for an update. DG said that on a positive side the council were in the process of employing a project manager to deliver the programme and the award had been made to Morgan Sindall to deliver the new road. However, there had been objections from nearly every landowner affected by the work and that was currently being dealt with by the planning inspectorates.

Portinscale Bridge – AN said this was now the fourth meeting that this had been raised but that the signs were now up saying the restriction was now in place and he reported that it was being ignored and there was no difference on the ground.

JB added that he lives in Portinscale and crosses the bridge quite frequently and there was a mixture of attitudes in that most bikers ride over the bridge but when they see pedestrians they do dismount so that seemed to work ok.

AN said that it is now illegal to ride across the bridge so those that do are breaking the law and that Cycling UK have said they will help with representation if anyone gets taken to court over this.

CE asked who was actually policing it and JB said no one. CE said this could now probably be removed from future agendas but if either AN or JB had anything to report in the future to please do so. AN added that as the group had missed out on the consultation phase that this type of ineffectual restriction might be something that the LAF could discuss and have a pre-formed policy on.

CE thanked AN and said that this was not the first time that the LAF had either been ignored or not asked for comments on and that that was where local knowledge was very important.

A66 Improvements – CE said that since the last meeting there had been an online meeting with the contractors and the route had now been confirmed specifically the Penrith to Temple Sowerby is going to align alongside the existing, Kirkby Thore is going on the eastern side then comes back down onto the A66 bypassing Long Marton, Appleby bypass is all done then it's Warcop. The new road will run aligned to the existing. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about realignment or what would happen to PROW that might be stopped and those present were pleased with the effect on the PROW network. There would be some footpaths that would stop when they hit the new road but the whole aim is to get pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists off the new road and to use the old existing road. The drawings are all now in the public domain. The next meeting will be site meetings to look at rights of way and bridelways and that hopefully will be in the summer. Kemperley Bank roundabout at Penrith will be the biggest feat of engineering and will take a very long time.

DG added that he'd also had a meeting with the contractors and that there had been one or two errors with the drawings but that was being sorted and he had a

further meeting with them next week. He also said that they need to be supplying a route at the side or close to the A66 through the new development they're doing. They were using the Rochdale system which is very vague.

CE thanked DG and said it was very much work in progress but that he did know that Warcop Parish Council were not happy with the proposed route.

GW asked how pedestrians and cyclists would be segregated as there would be rights of way that cross the projected route. CE answered there would be underpasses as they were cheaper than bridges and that the underpasses would be used for agricultural access as well as rights of way. GW then asked if any footpaths or bridleways would become dead ends at each side and CE said there would be some.

CE said he hoped there would be some site visits in the future. GW said he thought these rights of way on the A66 would be dealt with by side road orders and not normal diversion or extinguishment orders but SRO are not as evident to the public as to what is going on.

RL asked if it could be kept in mind to make sure there were barriers for wheelchair access on rights of way, awkward corners and CE said he had made a point of looking at all users.

- 9.3** Lake District National Park Partnership – CB told members the draft new plan was still being worked on that the consultation would be going out very soon and members should look out for it and make any comments.

10. News from National & Regional Access Bodies

CE said there was nothing to report on national at all and said there hadn't been a North West Regional Chairs meeting for some time. KM said there was a meeting due 13th May. KM did want to mention the demise of Huddle but they were looking at other platforms to transfer all the information to.

CE told the group he wanted to update them on the Cumbria Wildfire Group which had been resurrected by a combination of individuals. They had a meeting of minds at the end of March and a virtual meeting on 27th April, 2021. The group is fundamentally driven by Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service because they are very aware of the potential damage that can be done after an extremely dry spring. There is a desire to raise awareness and what can be done to try to reduce the likelihood and impact of fires. The bodies present at yesterday's meeting were The Moorland Association, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service, Cumbria Police, Forestry England, Lake District National Park, Yorkshire Dales National Park, Natural England, Environment Agency, MOD Warcop and Spadeadam, National Trust, NFU, UU, Mountain Rescue & Cumbria Wildlife Trust. RSPB, North Penines AONB, Cumbria Woodlands and Cumbria Tourism were invited but didn't respond. CE has been put forward as chairman and there would be another meeting in a month's time. The basis of what they want to do is to get the message out there of the responsibility on individuals when they are out and about and there will be some social media campaigns, leaflets and a short video. CE said he would send some leaflets later for JR to circulate to members. The video would be out by Friday 30th

April and as soon as CE got it he would send it out. He mentioned the recent fire at Whinlatter.

CE asked if any members had any questions or comments and HW wanted to reinforce what he had said and told the group that there was a new head of the Fire & Rescue Service, John Beard, and she had been on one of the interview panels for him and one of the things that he had said which had impressed her was that he was very keen to tackle things further upstream and the two things he was looking at were flooding and wildfires and what you do before you put a fire out to prevent a flood starting. He was very keen to work with organisations such as the Wildlife Trust.

NC told the group that one of the committees he sits on had had a recent presentation from the fire service and they had been told that 25 out of 26 wildfire incidents had started with disposable barbeques.

VH wanted to update on a motion coming to the LDNPA at their next meeting regarding disposable barbeques so hopefully at July's meeting she will have an update for the LAF.

CE thanked her for that information.

AN wanted to inform members that a similar group to the Wildfire Group in the Peak District had gone round local shops asking them not to stock disposable barbeques and that had worked well for them.

CB said that had happened in Coniston last year as well her only concern was if they didn't have access to a disposable barbeque they might try to start a fire.

Action: CE to send leaflets to JR to circulate to members

11. Coastal Access

CE said there had been the opening up of stretch 2 on 31st March which had been a subdued affair because NE didn't want lots of people out and about. There would be a celebratory event and press launch in due course and there had been an email circulated from Danielle Radley regarding this.

DG added that stretch 5 had been started and they had been asked to put a claim together for that from Silecroft to Green Road train station connecting the end that finishes at Allonby. They'd also had the go ahead for a stretch at Nethertown and had been waiting for permissions to work on Network Rail land which they now had.

CE said everyone was waiting for the outcome of the planning inspectors report on the northern stretch Allonby to Gretna. DG said the only plus on that was they had been asked to put a planning grant claim in to cover time on looking at alignment and issues which the planning inspectorate had turned up but hadn't heard anything officially yet.

12. Updates from the Authorities

EM had sent her report prior to the meeting and said if there were any questions or comments, members should get in touch.

CB said she had noted that they had got the money for the Orrest Head work and wondered if they were talking to disabled groups about access to that.

EM replied that that had been built in from the start and that one of the main pieces of work was building a zigzag path to enable the gradient to be lessened to make it accessible to a greater range of people.

DG had sent his report prior to the meeting but what hadn't been included was that they were looking at a number of schemes which had been put forward to members in the district giving them the opportunity to have some additional funding from the Environment Fund which looks at a number of environmentally driven issues one of which is PROW. The council were liaising with them at the moment over those PROW and the deliverability so hopefully that will come back as a positive in the end.

Surveys on the major structures within the Cumbria bit of the Yorkshire Dales National Park had been completed.

DG then went onto mention that David Clare had left due to ill health which had left a gap that was very difficult to fill but they were making every effort to fill the gap. Adverts were currently out for that position and for a full time replacement for Bob Muscat. He also wanted to let members know that the CEO was also leaving.

CE wanted to comment on David Clare and on behalf of the forum thank him for all his strenuous and hard work that he had put in on his work for the County Council on PROW and he specifically wanted to thank him for sorting out a public footpath in Armathwaite that with common sense and engineering the public footpath was usable again with a modification order but also latterly David's work on the England coastal path had been fantastic and he would be sorely missed. He was a valuable asset to the Highways Authority and Countryside team and will be a difficult act to replace.

NC wanted to add that he had spent a happy three hours with Dave Clare last week when he came down to Kirkby Lonsdale as he had been responsible for the re-building and designing of the riverside path by the River Lune which is used by tens of thousands of people every year. He has been a fantastic asset and is a really good guy who will be sorely missed.

GW wanted to ask about DG comment on his report about digitizing the definitive statement and wanted to know how that would happen.

DG replied that it would be a copy of what was there in hard copy at the moment word for word, just making it so it's electronically available.

13. **Members News**

SW report was circulated prior to the meeting. However, she contacted JR just after the meeting regarding an email she had received from Slow Ways UK sharing their new website. JR will circulate this email to members.

MM report was circulated prior to the meeting.

JB said he still hoped for a biking and walking track around Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite. He had walked and cycled the Keswick to Threlkeld path and felt it worked well but was a little crowded.

C&RL had nothing to report.

GW had sent his report in prior to the meeting.

KM had nothing to report.

SP had sent his report in prior to the meeting.

CB had nothing to report.

HW wanted to mention the footpath round Walney. When NE looked at the coastal path they were so impressed with Walney Island that they wanted to create a round Walney footpath as part of their coastal strategy. A big chunk is now eroding away so Barrow Borough Council is in negotiations with NE in what to do about it. The warden of Walney Nature Reserve doesn't want it repaired to a point where traffic could get on it. Also there are a couple of gentlemen in Barrow who are interested in mapping footpaths, Brendan Sweeney is a former borough councilor and is involved with the ramblers and Matt Sanderson is keen on getting people to map their experiences of footpaths where they walk and don't walk.

AN had nothing to report.

BM had nothing to report.

NC said how there were LCWIPs going on in the six main towns within Cumbria and the one covering Kendal would be going out to consultation next week for a three week period. There was also £1.2 million being allocated by CCC from the Environment Fund and most of this was looking toward the improvement of footpaths particularly those in urban areas which had been used more during lockdown. There is also a central government fund called the Levelling Up Fund and CCC has got plans in for a years time to submit a bid looking at an improved walking and cycling green corridor all around the coast of Cumbria. So if any member wants to feedback into these LCWIP strategies covering Barrow, Kendal, Penrith, Carlisle, Workington and Whitehaven then they should do so.

VH had nothing to report but had really enjoyed the meeting and found it very informative.

CE thanked her for deputizing for TH.

14. Dates of Future Meeting

CE proposed looking at the last week in July, 27th/28th/29th July and asked JR to check on CC and LDNPA meetings by next week.

NC said he was unable to do the 27th but could do 28th/29th or 30th.

CE thanked all members for their attendance and contributions and reiterated that members would receive an email from the appointing authorities regarding the Chairman and Vice-Chairman positions and go forward from there.

CE hoped the next meeting would be in person and closed the meeting.