

**Minutes of the Cumbria and Lakes Joint Local Access Forum  
Meeting held virtually on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2021**

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

**1. Welcome**

CE opened the meeting and welcomed members.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received as recorded above.

**3. Membership & Chairmanship**

CE advised that there were no new members and no one had resigned. He also reminded members that he and CB had suggested that now the forum was into its fourth year an election for Chair and Vice-Chair should take place. He announced that there had been no applications for Vice-Chair and for the Chair GW had been put forward and seconded. Subsequently he told how GW had had a meeting with CE regarding the way forward and explained how GW had experience of chairing access forums both the former Lake District LAF and the Yorkshire Dales LAF. CE said he accepted his experience and input in those forums. They had had a frank discussion regarding a number of areas. CE acknowledged there had been failings on his part for which he had apologized. Subsequent to the meeting GW withdrew his application for Chairman, for which CE applauded and thanked him. That led to a group of LAF members meeting informally and this will be discussed in agenda item 9.1 and at that point CE would hand over to GW and CB to talk through that. He explained that the appointing of the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair were not in the hands of the appointed authorities but in the hands of the members. He then asked CB if she was happy to continue in the role of Vice-Chair.

CB explained that in the paper she had circulated prior to the meeting one of the recommendations was that an election be held at the next meeting as it would be an in person meeting and easier to hold an election.

CE said that if everybody was happy with that then it would make perfect sense.

TH asked if there were any laid down terms of reference or guidance for the governance of the LAF, how Chairs and Deputy Chairs should be appointed and asked if the Chair served a particular period of time along with the Deputy, whether it was annual, whether voting was done by a show of hands or ballot.

CE felt it needed to be done by secret ballot using the LAF secretary. He said that in terms of governance under the CROW act there was no minimum period nor maximum for either Chairs to be in post. He felt this needed to be looked at.

GW then said he would read out a paragraph from the Guidance to Access Forums.

*Paragraph 5.2.1 – “regulations require forum members to elect from their number a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman taking such steps as may be necessary to ensure as far as practical that they are drawn from members representing different categories of interest. Members of the appointing authorities should avoid offering themselves for these posts if possible. The length of time to be served by Chairman and Vice-Chairman is for the forum to determine but will be constrained by the maximum term of their appointment as a forum member”.*

CE asked if this had answered TH question and she replied yes.

CE confirmed that he and CB would continue in the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman and that between now and the next meeting they would need to have more discussion about this and that an appointed LAF sub-group may need to look at a more formal basis of appointment.

CB then said that the paragraph GW had read out that says you could only be Chair or Vice-Chair for the length of your membership was almost saying it was a three year term at the most and then you would have to be re-elected as a member anyway. CE agreed and said that brought us onto the next point of membership.

He continued that when the new forum came into being past membership was erased and everybody started afresh and the appointments needed to be reviewed and that it is the appointing authorities who make the appointments on the recommendations of members or the Chairman or Vice-Chairman. He felt that the length of tenure of a number of members needed to be looked at and whether any members wanted to stand down. He said that DG and EM needed to get together and work with CE and CB and have a serious discussion about it before the November meeting.

AN said that part of the improvement works that he had been involved with he had looked up how other LAF's managed this issue and at least in two everyone resigns after three years and have the immediate opportunity to re-apply. So there is no interruption of their membership but those that wish to resign can.

CE thanked AN for that.

HW then wanted to point out that with the upcoming County Council reorganization she hadn't expected to still be here as she is not re-standing for the County Council. She also said that she was Chair of two or three committees in Barrow that got re-elected once a year and she felt it could become a bit of a formality annually. So if the Chair sits for a bit longer then re-election becomes a bit more important.

CE agreed with her.

GW suggested that when appointing members maybe it should be a third for one year, a third for two years and a third for three years so there was a retirement and reappointment cycle in the process rather than everyone retiring at the same time.

CE felt this was sensible as you could risk losing everyone whereas if it were more staggered you were less likely to be depleted in numbers making it easier to recruit or top up numbers and that would hinder the effectiveness of the forum in carrying out its role.

EM then replied to the comment made by HW and said she would be welcome to become a member as an individual even if she were no longer a Councillor and she would very much welcome the continuation of the expertise and perspective she has. She thanked her for everything she had brought to the forum and said she wouldn't want to lose her. EM then added that when the County splits into two whether the LAF continues as Cumbria & the Lake District or not, she would support it staying as it is as she wouldn't want to visit two different LAF's.

CE thanked EM for that.

#### **4 Public Participation**

CE said he could see no reason for disbaring the public from this meeting.

#### **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 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 were amended and accepted.

#### **7 Matters Arising**

- 7.1** Grange Railway Crossing – CE said he had received communication from the Planning Inspectorate which JR had circulated. GW and SW had both been closely involved with this. GW said that the Planning Inspectorate have scheduled a public enquiry which will be for four days commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2021 and he is expecting an announcement that it will be held at Grange over Sands rather than via Zoom. GW had noticed that in the papers circulated that CCC have effectively said they are going to leave the presentation of the case for the closure of the level crossing to NR and his view is that the LAF should make some comment on that because NR are not an independent expert on rail safety. Yes, NR are an expert on safety but they are not independent because NR has a policy of closing level crossings therefore Cumbria's public are being let down by CCC in not making their own independent case to protect and preserve the public's rights. GW then said he would invite discussion on that. GW had personally made an objection to the closure as had a number of other locals. At the CCC development control meeting he felt there was a fair balance on both sides of local people who wanted the crossing closed and local people who didn't want it closed so it was a very split decision. But certainly the body that should not be relied on to give an independent case is NR – they are not independent and GW would like the LAF to make that point to CCC.

SW agreed with everything that GW had said and was reminded of one issue that might be data protection in that the information that came out from the Planning

Inspectorate they named ten people who were objectors. They didn't name anyone who was speaking for NR nor did they say who the supporters of the closure were and she feels this is a great miscarriage of justice to identify solely the objectors and not the other people involved in this. She felt very strongly about this that those wanting the access to be continued because there is so much evidence that it was an established right of way for cyclists well before the railway. She regretted the stance that CCC have taken and wondered how the LAF could take forward their objections.

CE then asked DG if he had anything to say on behalf of CCC. DG said no. CE then asked HW and she said she agreed with GW and SW and her reaction was to go to the press. She felt a very strongly worded letter should be sent to the Chief Executive.

CE asked if there were any other comments.

AN asked what the normal route would be for a LAF to give advice and guidance to the appointing body which is also in this case the body that is making the decisions.

CE said that we have the ability to send a communication, strongly worded or whatever to NR and the Highways Authority because we are independent.

AN agreed but wanted to know if that could be done jointly with the county councils involvement.

DG said that the point is it is an inquiry and is not run by CCC but by the Planning Inspectorate so it is something that is out of their hands at the moment.

GW agreed that what DG had said was right and at this relatively late stage in the process we as a LAF are not in a position to influence the public enquiry but what he is seeking to achieve is to influence CCC to not place the responsibility of presenting cases such as this one in the hands of prejudiced interests. There are two parties here, NR who want to close it plus a body of individuals within the area but there is also a body of individuals who don't want it closed and CCC has some responsibility to represent both of those interests and make a proper and balanced case. But CCC should still be advised that they should not place the presentation in the hands of a prejudiced interest in this way. It is the duty of a local access forum to advise a council if they have done something wrong and that they should not repeat it in future.

CE then asked what would be the next step that the membership would like to take. CB agreed with what GW had said and suggested writing a strong letter and she also picked up on SW point regarding one list of names being in the public domain and one list not. Generally speaking she believed that anyone who had made a representation be it for or against should be included in the paperwork. So CB proposed sending a strong letter to CCC.

CE agreed and asked if a letter should also go to the Planning Inspector. CB suggested copying him in to the letter sent to CCC. CE agreed. SW said she would draft a letter and distribute it next week. GW said he would be happy to work with SW on the draft letter.

**Action: SW to draft a letter to CCC regarding this matter with the help of GW and distribute asap.**

- 7.2 Tilberthwaite – CB told the members that there had been a second meeting of the working group and they had also had a site visit with the National Park Ranger Sarah Spicer. They had looked at pulling up a maintenance programme. The route following repair had held up very well but there were a few places where if the repair is not done before the autumn/winter rain sets in there will be deterioration. There had been lots of offers of help, particularly from the motor vehicle groups so they were at the point of sending off the maintenance programme to the National Trust and CCC to make sure they are happy and then get a working agreement to move forward on that. CB was hopeful that by spring next year some maintenance will have been done and they'll be in a good position to know how the route is holding up and they will also have a draft management plan pulled together which can go to the Lake District National Park Rights of Way Committee. The group is only set up for a couple of years but will probably look at having an annual meeting to check what is happening.

CE thanked CB for the update.

- 7.3 GDPR – CB had sent round a report prior to the meeting for members to look at and had put in a couple of questions to see if there was any response. EM had given some feedback. CB asked if there were any comments regarding the privacy notice and members attending meetings.

GW had read the paper and made some notes and wanted to know if he could send those to CB. He said he did have concerns regarding the level of privacy that seemed to be applied even between members, that when information is sent out everyone is copied blind so he doesn't know who messages have gone to. One note he did want to make was that when members are appointed it should be on the basis that members addresses will be at least apparent to all other members and then we can communicate between each other. He also had the view that as the LAF is a public body, representing the public, how can the public get in touch if they don't know our address, either private or email.

CB was happy for GW to send her any notes he had made and felt there may be some guidance regarding what to do about letters and emails sent by the public. She asked if everyone was happy for her and GW to complete this task.

CE said he was happy for them to do that and asked if there were any further comments.

AN said there was an opportunity for members of the public via the facebook page to contact the LAF and if that happens he would then contact the relevant person

**Action: GW to send notes to CB and then both to complete this task.**

- 7.4 Potential Research Possibilities – CE felt that in the absence of BM this should be deferred to the next meeting.

**7.5** Keswick to Threlkeld Route – CB said following the discussion at the last meeting she had walked the route with a local rider one Friday afternoon. They had met a few people but it wasn't particularly busy. They had looked at the bridges and the tunnels and anywhere they felt might be issues for equestrians. CB had then contacted Hannah Latty at the Park and asked when the review would take place that had been postponed until autumn. Hannah Latty has been newly appointed but has been with the NPA for some time. CB requested a site visit with a rider and pony present. Hannah had been very non-committal but EM added that she had agreed to set up the site visit. CB welcomed this and felt CALJLAF members could attend too.

MM said he had voiced his views before on this matter but added that he lived close to the terminus of the route and was aware of the usage on a daily basis and felt that CB was being optimistic if she felt it was safe to incorporate equestrians onto the route as well. He felt the surfacing of the route was also encouraging excessive speeds by a lot of the cyclists and had an unhappy mix of users at busy times. He felt it was narrow, the surface encouraged speed and couldn't see a happy mix of users on it. He felt it went back to the wrong choice of material on the surface and not enough thought given to who would use it and what would be a safe width in order to incorporate that level of usage.

CB pointed out that many multi user routes already exist. She used ones near Newcastle as an example where routes could be very busy at times but mixing users was not a problem. She also pointed out that the BW close to the K2T was as busy, not as wide and with poor visibility in places but users managed. The width of the K2T was wider than some multi use paths she knew of. It has additional wide verges for most of its length and good visibility. Tarmac could be a problem to horses where the finish was too smooth but most riders have little choice but to ride roads and they are all tarmac.

**Action: CB and EM to organize a site visit and invite everyone to that.**

**7.6** User Impact – CE said this had been put on the agenda to see how things went as spring went into summer. In the Eden Valley he said there was not a huge impact on usage but the Lake District is being impacted by multi users, caravans, motor homes, camping etc. He then asked EM what the authority felt the impact had been over the last month.

EM told members that it is busy and they are working hard to keep on top of it. More resources had been put into managing the visitors but this was impacting on the longer term work that needs carried on with. Rangers have been diverted onto patrols when they would normally be repairing footpaths etc. They estimate around 5% more traffic on the roads based on traffic counts but they are often concentrated in certain areas which can create pinch points. Particularly with the warm weather they have noticed more pinch points around water so anywhere with easy access to a lake is really popular leading to parking issues in those locations. Camping continues to be a problem, not wild camping up in the fells but the fly campers who bring a crate of beer, leave their rubbish behind, play music and chop down trees to start fires. That is happening and we are having to intervene EM said - last weekend we had to move on around 50 groups. We have people employed now

specifically to move people on and it's not a pleasant or easy job but it has to be done before the damage occurs. It is working, we have been able to respond to requests from landowners and communities and intervene before things get too out of hand because there are wider concerns at the moment with everything being so dry and fires. If we can't move the group on because they are too drunk to move, we ensure they clear up afterwards, come back in the morning check fires are out and try and help minimize their impact on the environment and communities. The conclusion is it is challenging but we are working to keep on top of it. We were prepared from last year and have used those lessons. EM then wanted to thank all staff who had worked hard on this, including volunteers who were really dedicated to educating people before problems occur.

CE asked what effect was being seen regarding the extension of 28 days to 56 days. EM replied that a lot of pop up car parks had opened up and these were working in taking the pressure of fly car parking and helping in putting money back into local farming communities. Camp sites again were taking pressure away from fly camping and she felt a lot of groups they work with weren't aware that you can't just camp anywhere. So it was a simple job of telling them there are camp sites you can go to and they are relatively affordable.

CE thanked EM for her report. He then asked DG if he wanted to give a CCC perspective on user impact.

DG told the group that the user impact was not as severe with regard to fly camping but what is severe is the new user that is out there expecting every footpath to be signed and he had a number of complaints regarding this.

CE asked if there were any particular geographical locations for that or was it across the county. DG replied that it was right across the county but it was something they were aware of.

MM said he had just returned from the Peak District and was amazed at the levels of visitors there. Car parking and fly camping were a problem there too. So we are not alone in suffering this incredible influx of people. He is in a group that does litter picking and they have noticed that the amount of litter being left is reducing.

CE asked if there were any further comments.

CB wanted to ask EM if they were likely to shut the east side of the lake again at Coniston – EM said that at the moment it hadn't reached the point where this was necessary but the order was still in place so CCC could bring that in at some point. The trigger is if it becomes dangerous where people can't get through so she couldn't say it won't happen but at the moment it is manageable.

CB then asked EM about the 56 day rule that was again extended to cover this year. She could see from a treasury point of view it's been good but if it's likely to be extended again will there be some consultation where communities can feed back into that and the impact some of the pop up campsites have had on communities.

EM replied that she wasn't sure what the Government's thinking was on that but felt it would be good if there were a level of scrutiny of the locations. The extension was due to close at the end of 2021.

CB then asked EM about cattle grids. She had been down at Brown How and that cattle grid is regularly blocked by vehicles on both sides of the gate so if anyone is riding along there you can't get passed the cattle grid. It was impacting on farmers who were bringing stock down off the fells and can't get through the cattle grid gates. She asked EM in her multi user group if she could raise this issue.

EM said she would and that signs had been put up.

CE thanked CB for her input.

**Action: EM to raise the issue of cattle grids in her multi user group.**

## **8. Fix the Fells**

EM said that the fix the fells ranger Annie Duckworth was on leave and had sent a report to EM which she would run through.

Scafell Pike Machine work has been completed – 350m of digger path and side drains have been built on a section above Lingmell Col. There was also a considerable amount of landscaping work undertaken to block off the side paths that crisscross the entire area. The intention behind this work is to keep people on the main line and avoid eroding the surrounding area.

Scafell Pike – 230 bags of stone have been flown up to begin hand work on the main route up from Wasdale head. The path on this section will be double the usual width.

Skiddaw/Jenkins Hill – Machine work is currently in progress. A machine will work on sections covering a total of 3km up the nose of Skiddaw along the original machine path line. In some sections an entirely new surface will be created using material won on site, while in other places there will be considerable work on the drains to try and move water off the path and make it more resilient to erosion. A great deal of landscaping work will be undertaken to try and encourage people to stay on the main line rather than take any of the shortcuts that have appeared alongside. We are currently looking at some subtle barriers to encourage people to stay on the main path. Unfortunately there is still a real reluctance among some users to remain on the main line which causes significant wear lines to appear in the softer surrounding vegetation and the process is a continuous cycle of ongoing lateral erosion.

Gillercombe – is almost complete there is a section of brand new hand pitching up from Sour Milk Gill.

Coniston Old Man – this seems to be another particularly popular fell especially with the younger visitors. Between Low water and the summit there is ongoing hand pitching works to restore the main line and bring people into a clearly defined path. Some great examples of creative realignment have been achieved here.

Loughrigg – The terrace path to the summit is almost complete. The newly laid path is wider, has a more gentle gradient and is by all accounts a pleasure to walk on. Work has been slower than anticipated due to the sheer numbers of people but the almost finished path is well worth a visit to see just how much path work has evolved and changed over the years.

Gowbarrow – a mix of pitching and gravel surfacing work is ongoing on a section of the Ullswater Way to create a clear obvious line and keep people on a single line as far as possible.

Looking forward we have had some helicopter lifts in the area recently with lots of bags of stone being flown in across the park ready for the next programme of works including Easedale tarn path, Stythwaite Steps Grasmere, Fleetwith Pike and Haystacks, plus smaller repair jobs as well.

CE thanked EM and asked if there were any comments from members.

SW asked if the report could be circulated.

EM agreed and CE asked her to forward to JR and she would circulate to members.

**Action: EM to forward report to JR who would then circulate to members.**

## **9. LAF Work Programme**

### **9.1 SWOT Analysis Review & Recommendation for a CAJLAF Improvement Sub-Group.**

CE said he would defer to GW and CB on this subject.

GW said it would be CB and AN speaking on this point.

CB said that leading on from what CE had said at the beginning of the meeting where he and GW had had a meeting about the Chairmanship, a group had then met to review the function of the LAF. CB had sent round a paper prior to the meeting but said they wanted to pick up on the SWOT analysis and how this might be taken forward and then a separate issue to generally review the LAF, the relevance, role and current format. Included with the paper she had sent round was a piece done in 2005 which was a checklist of good and poor practice of the various LAF's. In the discussion they had talked a lot about areas where they thought some improvement could be made. She had also reorganised the SWOT analysis to make it a more easier document to read. She felt that we might need to add new strengths, new opportunities, new weaknesses to that. For example she had put something in about zoom meetings because without those we would have really struggled over the last year and a half to have any meetings at all so that was a positive thing to add. She had also suggested some actions and one of the main ones would be to have a sub-group to look more closely at the function of the LAF. CB then asked if anyone had any comments.

RL said that he does struggle with Teams and could we just use zoom in the future. CB replied that the reason was that CCC don't do zoom so if EM could set them up as zoom that would work.

CE said he would like to back CB recommendation for a LAF functions improvement sub-group to be created and that CB should request volunteers for that. He asked if CB would be happy to Chair and she said that she and AN would be running it jointly. CB said that if anyone would like to join the group they could tell her now or email her at a later date. The idea would be to do a review between now and the next meeting and there might be a mini meeting in between where they

could hire a village hall and have a discussion with all members on how they feel about the LAF and any improvements they want to make about things. This would then be reported back at the November meeting.

RL wanted to point out that he had only got the papers that CB had sent round when he switched on for the meeting and felt it was too close to the meeting to send out more papers the night before.

AN said that the hope of the improvement group would be to capture any problems that anyone on the LAF currently has. He felt that when he joined he would have benefitted from an induction pack or a list of reading or a mentor. He wants the group to be an effective sub-group so if anyone has any areas of concern about the way the LAF is run this will be the chance.

CE said they would need volunteers to work with them and encouraged members to put themselves forward. CE said he would not be putting himself forward. EM said she was fully supportive of the process and thanked CB for doing the report but she didn't feel it would be appropriate to join the group. TH welcomed the sub-group but also felt she couldn't join but if she had any further thoughts she would email CB.

MM said that on whether we use zoom or teams he found the way in which some documents were sent made it impossible for him to open and could they all be sent either in word or as a pdf. SP seconded that and CE noted it.

AN added that what MM had said as an improvement is exactly what the sub-group would be looking for and urged him to come and join the sub-group. He also said that if EM and TH had ideas or issues please let them have them even if they felt they couldn't join the group because they were on the LAF as members of the appointing bodies.

GW replied to AN regarding this last point and said that the appointing bodies should expect to be approached by the sub-group because some of the concerns identified relate to the appointing bodies and the things for which they are responsible for.

RL said he and CL wouldn't be volunteering for the sub-group.

AN said he only wanted to be involved in the sub-group if they were going to make improvements, it's not a paper exercise, it is something that is going to lead to change otherwise there is no point in doing it and if people couldn't be on the sub-group they had to be aware that change is likely to happen.

CE thanked AN for that and said it all sounded very positive.

CE again urged members to volunteer and said this was an ideal opportunity to look at the whole process of how the LAF operates and see what improvements can be made. He then thanked members who had sat on the sub-group and for their input including JC who wasn't at today's meeting. CE also said he felt very confident that the group would lead to benefits.

**Action CB and AN to lead an Improvement Sub Group**

- 9.2** Upland Fencing – GW had submitted his report prior to the meeting which CE thanked him for. GW apologized that there was a mistake at the bottom of page 1 of his paper and that the final paragraph should have been deleted. CE noted that. GW then asked that members formally accept that report.

CE asked if there were any comments on GW report. There were none so his report and recommendations were accepted.

- 9.3** Carlisle Southern Link Road/A66 Improvements – CE said he would start with the A66 Improvements and said that there had been a hastily convened meeting 3 weeks ago but there was nothing new to report. There were no amendments to the M6 to Temple Sowerby, the area around Kirkby Thore was still up for grabs and unfortunately the website had not been updated so it would appear that the eastern route by the Gypsum factory is a preferred route whereas they are still considering two additional routes to the west of the village, one of which goes very close to the river. There are still deliberations over Warcop. The Parish Council there have strongly recommended to HE to move the route into the AONB, further east into the MOD land. The inference from the people from HE and the contractors was it is probably going to be extremely difficult as when you start encroaching onto AONB there is a completely different area of legislation. There will be a number of PROW that will be affected, there will be a lot of mitigation measures – under passes and the like, when they have confirmation of both the Kirkby Thore and the Warcop sections that is when the sub-group will come into being to be able to inspect on the ground and advise CCC what we as an access forum would like to see. CE then asked DG about the new member at County who is working on the dualling and would he like to pick up on that.

DG said they had a new manager that was driving it forward they also have employed the services of a consultant, WSP who is going to bring all the different aspects of the consultation both from the CC and Eden District Council into one document to present to HE. He then went on to say he had had a meeting and was very disappointed at what was on the latest drawings where there was no east west connectivity and the north south connectivity through the road was very poor. He has another meeting coming up with WSP with a large map and highlighter pen to show them exactly what the council is looking for. He hopes to get a case together to show where they require links to be as they seem happy to put an underpass in for a farmer and then divert a footpath half a mile to go under it. DG went onto say that they had also asked what they were going to do for equine use. He had made recommendations that the underpasses that they are putting in for the farmers be segregated and that is one thing that has appeared on the maps.

CE asked for any comments. GW asked if this was a situation where the LAF could make its presence felt. It's terrible to think that because a public footpath allegedly isn't used that it should be abandoned or closed and that equestrian use isn't being considered. I think we as a LAF should be reinforcing the points made by DG direct to HE.

CE said he sits on a group called the non-motorised user group and he didn't get that negativity from the last meeting that DG had expressed in the dealings he had been having with HE and the head contractor. Although a gentleman that sits on Penrith Town Council and the local Ramblers Association did ask a very pointed

question about access from Centre Parcs to Penrith and back again and their response was we'll have to look at that. We do need to be very conscious of the steps that they are taking but there is a Highways Law that they can invoke over and above county council in terms of modification and diversion orders. CE asked DG if that was right and DG replied that once it gets into a side roads order there is little the council can do and he feels this is why the authority has employed WSP to take it forward and strengthen the councils case.

CB said that at one point it had been suggested that a sub-group work on this and GW and SW had put their names forward. She asked CE who represented equine users on the non-motorised user group and he said there was someone from BHS but they had not attended and at the last meeting it was access forum, cycling and ramblers.

CB said that DG had mentioned some good points and so was it not at a good point for the LAF to write and let them know our feelings. CE said he would be happy to put something together, run it passed GW and CB and get it off to the contractor. CB said she didn't wish to join another sub-group but if it got to the point of sitting with maps and she could be of help she was willing to join.

**Action: CE to draft a letter to the contractor**

CE then said they would move onto the Carlisle Southern Link Road – DG told the members that the contract had been awarded but hadn't seen any further movement. He had been asked about upgrading a bridleway to a highway but that was all that had happened.

- 9.4** Lake District National Park Partnership – CB said that the consultation on the new plan had gone out a few weeks ago and they were starting to work through responses. It was disappointing no-one responded to the consultation response to be sent on behalf of the LAF but she hoped people had responded as individuals. As a LAF we need to look at how we might support some of the actions in that plan and agree which actions we could have our name put against. CB felt that sustainable transport would be the one that the LAF could agree to help with and obviously we have no money so we can't give money but we can bring our expertise to that so she would circulate the paper and people could come back to her with where they might like to get involved. As a partner we need to at some point address climate change and how as a group we try to improve our green footprint so that will need to go onto the agenda at some point.

SW said she had some information via Friends of the Lake District who were involved in the Partnership Plan and that a litter survey was conducted to see why people drop litter and what actions could be taken to stop it. She asked CB if this survey was available and could it be distributed to the group although she wasn't sure if litter was within the remit of the LAF but it does detract from walking in the countryside.

EM said she had a copy and would check with Friends of the Lake District that they were happy for it to be circulated.

EM also wanted to thank CB for all her work on the Lake District National Park Partnership and it's great that the LAF is one of the 26 organisations that are part of

it . The Partnership gets many requests from different groups to be a member so it is good CALJLAF represents many interests but feedback when requested is important.

**Action: CB to circulate the Partnership report to members and EM to check with Friends of Lake District as to whether the litter survey can be circulated to members of the LAF.**

- 9.5.** Potential Local Government Re-Organisation – CE said that it would appear the proposal is for Allerdale, Copeland and Carlisle to merge and Eden, South Lakes and Barrow to merge.

HW said that CCC, the district and borough councils will continue to operate until the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023 and in May 2022 there will be elections to two shadow districts and they will start to set themselves up and then on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023 CCC will vanish, Barrow Borough Council will vanish and people will start to make themselves town councils instead of being districts and boroughs if they want to. For instance Barrow Borough Council has been talking about being a town council mainly because we still want to have a say in what's going on. But most of Cumbria is parished and Barrow isn't and so parish councils will continue and they'll feed into the main decisions made by the new little counties.

CE thanked HW and said that we would have to watch this space and see how the re-organisation would affect the LAF.

CB said that she had raised the point about the parliamentary boundary review where some of the parishes from the Lake District National Park are likely to be put with West Cumbria and feels there is a disconnect there. She is a little concerned that some issues around access would be lost because of the bigger issues of West Cumbria. There is a consultation which closes on the 4<sup>th</sup> August which you can do online if anyone wants to. CB said she would send the link to the consultation.

CE noted her comments.

**Action: CB to send out the link for consultation.**

- 9.6** Windermere Gateway Project – SW said that she had learnt of this project through the Friends of the Lake District and understands that any comments are required within a week. She had found the presentation difficult to understand, it seemed to imply the building of a lot of houses without provision for public rights of way for those people and the effect on Windermere town didn't seem to have been impeded. She had read that there was a proposal to close two public footpaths crossing the railway south of Windermere. Her general comment is that she didn't feel that public access via walking, cycling or horse riding had been adequately considered in this gateway project which just seemed to be wanting to bring more car based people into Windermere to add to the problems already there. SW wanted to know if it was appropriate and possible at this stage for the LAF to make some reply to this very large project, probably the largest development project the Lake District had ever seen.

CE said he had just clicked onto it and the consultation closes this Friday afternoon so what he recommended was for the LAF as individuals to make personal

comments and that if there were going to be PROW affected he would make a comment to that effect. He then asked EM if she would like to comment.

EM wanted to point out that this was an early consultation so this was not giving it planning approval so there would be further opportunities to comment. She didn't have the full details but believed that the proposal for the rights of way was about them crossing the railway so NR believed that if you are creating additional users onto a rights of way such as this they will request that you close those crossings because it's adding additional danger to their railway regardless of the fact that sending them round via the road will also add additional danger.

EM continued that the intention of this housing development will be entirely local occupancy housing to address a serious need within the community for affordable housing so that should be seen as a positive thing in terms of the community but it has to be done right. The land belongs to the NT so they are very keen on this being a very sustainable development with high design principles. She suggested putting in comments on behalf of the LAF as well as individuals but if that wasn't possible by Friday she would look into seeing if there was a possibility to extend that deadline.

CE said that would be very helpful.

GW said that he had looked at the document on the NP website and wanted to know who the driving force was behind the document.

EM said that it was agreed as a housing allocation in the local plan which was put forward by the NT as landowner. Their response was that there clearly was need for affordable local needs housing in that area and there are very few locations where you can build housing around Windermere. It did go through the entire Inspectorate process of the local plan and was approved. They were then very keen to work with the NT to ensure a development of such a scale was done sustainably. They don't have to do a supplementary planning document but it is on such a scale that it needs to have more scrutiny and a bit more opportunity for the public and our members to look into the wider implications.

CB agreed that something should be sent from the LAF now because if we get involved at the supplementary level then at least when it moves onto a planning application we get asked about it in good time. CE said he would look at the consultation document later today.

**Action: EM to see if the deadline to the consultation could be extended.**

- 9.7** Water Safety – CE thanked MD for raising this point and said there had been alarming levels of fatal accidents connected to access to water at Brothers Water, Derwentwater, Crummock Water and the River Eden recently.

MD said that as part of the Lake District LAF they had done some work on water safety messaging and he wondered if this was something that could be done again. It should particularly target those visitors mostly at risk, normally male between the ages of 16 and 30. There is a lot of generic work going on but nothing specifically targeting those at risk groups. There were 3 deaths in Cumbria a couple of weekends ago and 31 across the country so far so he felt it was important that we as a LAF look at trying to improve the public education.

CE said there had been an article in the News & Star where a senior manager of the Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service had commented about drunken swimming and they had been called to a situation round Glenridding or Watermillock where people had been in the water in trouble but by the time the fire brigade got there they had extricated themselves but what was apparent was that they had all been drinking heavily and it was a prank that had gone wrong. So this is another aspect of the education side of it that water and alcohol do not mix. CE said he was struggling to see how us as an access forum could take a lead on this issue but felt it was something that we could help the authorities with in terms of flagging up potential dangers and perhaps we could put something on the facebook page. He then asked MD if he would work with AN to put something together for that.

MD said he would but reiterated that a few years ago the Lake District LAF produced a little booklet with water safety messages on and wondered if that could be found somewhere. He also said that he does work with the fire service and one thing they look at is how to get messages out in the right way.

CE then asked EM if she was aware of the booklet that MD had mentioned but she felt it had been produced before her time but if anyone had a copy they should share it with her and she would look at what could be done to re-issue it. She also said that she had put lots of posts on their facebook page regarding water safety and if AN wanted to share those he could.

AN said he would do that.

GW said that it was JC who worked on the booklet but he thought it hadn't related to safety matters in water but more as to where you could swim in the Lake District.

TH said that it was on the website but there was also a swim safe code and that she had noticed that Richard Leafe had tweeted promoting swim safe so she felt the park were trying to use social media to get the message across. The average age of the people who have drowned are quite young so it's probably better to put something on social media rather than a leaflet.

CE agreed with TH. He then thanked MD for raising the point for the agenda.

CB said it was James Thurlow who had worked on the where to swim guide but if MD had ideas about messaging that we could do she was quite happy to work with him on that and she felt it would be good for the Park for Everyone because we are going to be attracting more people to the area who don't know how to use water, mountains or footpaths.

DG said CB could contact NE as they were trying to find a medium for getting the new country code across to people.

AN said he had shared the article that EM had mentioned on the LAF's facebook page. CE thanked him.

**Action: CB to work with MD on ideas for a swim safe guide.**

## 10. Members News

RL & CL said they had nothing to report.

GW said he wanted to link up with DG report regarding the number of questions raised by people on public footpaths and said he had experienced the same increase in those questions and wondered if DG could send out the parish rota. DG said that was no problem and he would send out the annual parishes that were going to be addressed.

SP said there had only be two consultations since the last meeting and in both cases the concerns were would Forestry England ensure that when they are finished the paths are restored to as good as or better standard than they were before.

CB said she had nothing to report.

MD said there had been a lot of work on inclusivity outdoors going on over the last six months in Cumbria. A number of organisations had had webinars regarding that.

SW said that an area south of Barrow where the footpath network had been there to service the iron ore mines had closed, their legacy is writ clear in the landscape where fields are full of gigantic subsidence valleys and hollows. She mentioned that Geoff Fewkes had done a huge amount of work working with the farmers there and it was a complete rationalization of the footpath network. The LAF had supported the diversions even though one footpath was going to go diagonally across a field. She said there was some really good practice in this area which she would like to point out – the fingerposts indicate the destination and the distance and it's hoped that the new fingerposts for these new diversions will also indicate the destination because one of the destinations will be to Donkey Lonning which is a very attractive footpath. She said she had another survey to do next month at Dunnerholme Golf Course north of Barrow where there are a large number of footpaths which are going to be rationalized to avoid cutting diagonally across the golf course. The issue at Brougham arose because satellite technology allows you to discover whether or not the contractors have put the bridleways to the exact metre identified on the map so another order had to be called up as the footpath had been slightly misaligned. She also wanted to say that having criticized the Lake District's website she was really pleased to hear about the mini bus service from Cockermouth to Buttermere which included the bus timetable and she felt that was an excellent move to sustainable transport.

SW also mentioned that CE had sent information about woodland creation on an estate between Crook and Winster to the east of Windermere which she had gone to view on Monday last. She said it seemed to be an exemplary request. They were consulting early about woodland creation parcels of land, two of which are on open access land. One of the parcels of open access land couldn't be accessed because they couldn't get over the wall into the open access land. The letter SW has drafted for CE to approve is that we support this. They did submit a lovely map and the plan is that they will install four or five new gates to this woodland area.

MM had sent his report prior to the meeting and wondered if DG wished to respond to any of the comments he had made regarding the CC decisions in relation to three recent applications. DG said no, he was aware of the matters raised.

AN said that the point SW had made regarding the bus from Cockermouth is helping with two other issues touched on today. There was a drowning at Crummock Water just as the bus service was starting up and it was a multi-agency response to that drowning and they had a really difficult job getting up the valley because of abandoned cars so the bus is a great idea and wondered if it was something the LAF could support. He also asked if anyone had anything of interest to people who use facebook let him know and he'll push that.

TH had nothing to raise and felt EM had covered all NP points.

EM wanted to respond to AN comment regarding the bus service and thanked him for what he had said and she hoped that funding permitting they would be able to do more with that. She said there was an opportunity to comment on the National Bus Strategy and CCC's bus service improvement plan and she felt it would be good to get across that it's not just about urban areas but about getting people out from those urban areas to the places they want to visit for recreation and hopefully get more resources into rural links to enable people to get out to the places that benefit their health and wellbeing. She said there was a link to a survey which she would send to JR to circulate.

DG said he had been to the North Pennines meeting and they had discussed the country code again, Sarah (NE National Trails Manager) hoped that would be refreshed before the schools broke up and they were looking at various media options for distributing that. They also discussed the new coast to coast national trail which was something the group thought were other issues to be addressed principally the Pennine Bridleway Northern Extension, looking at that prior to trying to create another national trail in the area and Sarah from NE thought there may be opportunity to completing coastal access and dedicating some time to that. At the time of the meeting there was nothing concrete on that it was just pressure being brought on from the Government. Since the meeting they have been contacted by the national trails team and the pressure has worked and the coast to coast will be leapfrogging the ones that are there already. An officer has been attributed to it and DG is trying to make time to go and look at things with them. They were also looking at the Pennine people doing Pennine Way surveys and doing a rolling survey on that to keep that up to date. Some test surveys would be held between Garrigill and Alston.

EM did say that coast to coast was important and should be put on the agenda separately next time.

**Action: EM to find link to survey, forward to JR and she will then circulate to members.**

## **11. Farming & Protected Landscapes**

EM said that as time was running short she would circulate her presentation following the meeting as it was quite long. She explained that this was a new fund released by DEFRA specifically for protected areas, NP and AONB's. The amounts given are based on the amount of upland farming within the protected landscape so we've got quite a large amount, £1.164 million which is to cover the Lake District over three years. North Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales have got quite substantial lumps too, the Solway and outside Silverdale have a smaller amount

due to their size and the amount of upland farming they have within their protected landscape.

It is part of the agricultural transition scheme so as we move away from the common agricultural policy it's not replacing that the Elm Scheme will replace that but it is part of that transition to supporting sustainable farming. There are four objectives, climate – supporting delivery of net zero, nature – which is nature recovery network and improving nature on farmland, people – which is probably the most relevant to us as a LAF and the wording they give is “providing a natural health service that will improve the nation's public health and wellbeing through increased access to nature across all parts of society as part of our green recovery” and place – which again has relevance to us supporting the landscapes as centres of excellence and green innovation that are flourishing places to live and work each with a strong identity and cultural heritage and high recognition as attractive visitor destinations.

So it has to meet at least one of those four themes and has to align with some very detailed guidance but it also needs to link with the Management Plan of that protected landscape which in our case is the Partnership Plan that we discussed earlier. A panel has been set up to evaluate these which involves a wide range of people including those from farming backgrounds as well as the recreation side of things and am pleased to say that MD is one of the people on the panel who will be evaluating the schemes as they come through - it's called the Local Assessment Panel. It will be a rolling programme where people can put in schemes throughout the three years but there will be more money available in the first year so things in the first year are more likely to get funding because it is likely to be over subscribed. The maximum amount one bid can be is £250,000 per annum so as you can imagine that will quite quickly eat into the funding. We've appointed a part time programme manager called Kelly Taylor and an assistant farming officer who will be working with Andrea Meanwell to go out and engage with farmers and land managers but whilst the bids have to benefit farming they don't have to come directly from farmers so EM is looking to put in an over-arching bid around accessibility and education for visitors, it's just at an expression of interest stage at the moment. Also one about increasing accessibility not just miles without stiles routes but replacing stiles with gates and resurfacing.

EM felt this was a good thing the LAF could work on going forward.

CE thanked EM for her report and said it would be on the agenda for the next meeting as well.

**Action: EM to forward her presentation to JR who would then circulate to members.**

TH had to leave the meeting and CE thanked her for attending today.

## **12. News from National & Regional Access Bodies**

CE said that a meeting had been held of the regional chairs but there wasn't a great deal to report. The urban LAF's were still suffering from lack of funding and Lancashire LAF is virtually moribund through lack of interest and funding from the CC. Going east, Yorkshire was fairly active as was Northumbria and it would be

nice to think when everyone can meet up there might be a northern LAF meeting to exchange opinions although that wouldn't probably happen until next spring.

**13. Coastal Access**

CE – stage one NE are re-assessing four areas for sites on that stretch as they had been told to do so by the Planning Inspector. A portion of stretch three is now open.

DG added that they were on the ground on the first section of stretch five and were just putting in a grant bid for the establishment works that requires to get that in. They've also walked the course of stretch three to remind what needs to be done but there are the areas that the Planning Inspectorate asked to be re-appraised as some landowners in that area are vehemently stopping people accessing their property. On the coastal path subject there are two new members of staff starting at the end of August beginning of September who will be assisting Hazel with the work she is currently doing. One will not only be looking at being a countryside access officer but they specialize in setting up the partnership to actually run the new national trail and to draw down the funding from NE. He is currently working on core paths in Scotland and has a very strong background in access and with community involvement so he should be well suited to the job. The other new member is going to be concentrating on the Gretna to Allonby section and hopefully there will be something to discuss when Jerry has some powers of entry. She is currently in Suffolk and is a BHS field officer.

**14. Updates from the Authorities**

CE thanked both DG and EM for their reports which were sent prior to the meeting.

**15. Dates of Future Meeting**

CE hoped that the next meeting would be in person with a training session, possibly the one CB had mentioned as the Keswick to Threlkeld trail. Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November was then proposed by CB with the meeting at 1.30 p.m. following the site visit.

CE thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.