

**Minutes of the Cumbria and Lakes Joint Local Access Forum
Meeting held at Threlkeld Village Hall, 8th November, 2021**

Attendees			
Charles Ecroyd (Chair) CE	Carole Barr (Vice Chair) CB	David Gibson (CCC)	DG
Emma Moody (LDNPA) EM	Jonathan Brooks	JB	Andrew Nelson
Mike Murgatroyd MM	Steve Pighills	SP	John Crosbie
Kathy Miles KM		Judith Ruddick (Sec)	JR
Apologies			
Ben Mayfield BM	Ron Lyon	RL	Chris Lyon
Geoff Wilson GW	Sylvia Woodward	SW	Vicky Hughes
Helen Wall HW			

1. Welcome

CE opened the meeting and welcomed members.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3. Membership & Chairmanship

CE said there were no new members. Regarding the Chairmanship CB said nothing had been done and considering everyone's membership had come to an end that would need to be addressed first.

DG said people would need to reapply and reiterate their specialism. CE asked if DG would email everyone to ask them to reapply. DG said yes he would do that within the next fortnight.

Action: DG to email all members and ask them to reapply for their membership.

4 Public Participation

CE welcomed Peter Sappsford

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 28th July, 2021 were accepted.

7 Matters Arising

- 7.1** Grange Railway Crossing – CE said that SW had sent in her findings on the matter. DG said that SW had mentioned that the council didn't uphold what the LAF decision was but council officers did uphold the decision, it was the council committee that went against what the LAF and officers had said and that was what had generated the public inquiry originally.

CB suggested the item be deferred until the next meeting. CE agreed.

- 7.2** Tilberthwaite – CB said that the working group was well on the way with a management plan and there had been some surveys out on the routes.

- 7.3** GDPR – This had been talked about when going through the minutes of the last meeting.

- 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 – JB told members about an article in the Keswick Reminder about getting permission to allow horses to use the path. He said that Cumbria Bridleways Society had applied to the National Park to get permission. He went on to say that there had been a discussion at Keswick Town Council about it and that one councilor was terrified by it and JB agreed. He felt that if passing a horse on a cycle it would frighten the horse into kicking out. The path is busy enough with everyone now without adding to it. He said the path was acceptable apart from a zig zag section at the Threlkeld end and that the bends were too sharp. He wanted to put forward an idea to make the corners easier.

CB replied that Cumbria Bridleways Society had not applied to the National Park but had asked the National Park if they would allow horses on the path which is meant to be multi user. She had seen the article which said that Cumbria Bridleways had been asked to comment which they hadn't been asked. CB also mentioned that multi users including horses manage on the nearby Latrigg path. She then went on to mention other trails which are used by horses as well as cyclists and pedestrians very successfully. CB was disappointed that the Councilor mentioned in the article didn't make it clear whether the views were his or those of the council. She then asked DG and EM if there was any evidence to suggest any incidences between horses and other uses on the bridleways.

EM said not to her knowledge. She also added that she had spoken to another Keswick Town Councilor regarding the issue and they said that it was the particular view of the councilor in the article, the item was not on the meeting agenda so the whole council had not come to a resolution or agreement on the matter.

CE then asked EM that if as JB had suggested the bends could be altered. EM replied that unfortunately once you try to straighten one bend you then have to straighten them all and this would cost a serious amount of money.

AN then said he was surprised that the LAF had no policy on certain subjects and felt that the Park Authority when putting together the route had not considered a user group. He then asked members what they thought about future similar situations where there might be similar omissions. He asked that as a group what

were thoughts on the omission and what should happen now – what was the policy on this?

CE said that a statement had been made by the LAF that it was regrettable that the forum had not been actively contacted on the matter in the beginning.

MM added that if horses had been allowed on the route prior to the improvements being carried out it may well have been raised as an issue if horses were then going to be excluded, but horses had never been permitted on that route. He then went on in support of JB in that he felt the majority of local people using that route are extremely concerned if horses are allowed to use it because of the narrow track and smooth surface.

CB then said that when the path had been washed away and the Highways Authority gave £7.9 million to mend the path, the information put out by HE was that this money was put out there to take vulnerable users off the A66 and it actually said in black and white that was walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Somewhere between that being put out publicly and the money being accepted to do the path, horse riders disappeared off the public information.

She went on that the point AN was making regarding consultation was that normally consultations go out to stake holders and then the LAF would have had an input but this was handled differently in that there were online surveys and drop in centres. She felt that AN point about contacting the authority and saying that in the future could we be involved was a valid suggestion.

CE felt this was a valid point and felt the LAF should have been contacted. He then asked CB if Cumbria Bridleways would be taking the issue forward and she replied that there had been a meeting between them and the ranger and the NP and once they had been out and looked at the tunnels etc. they would make a decision.

JC said that he agreed with AN that as a LAF we are representing user groups, landowners and environmentalists and that if a user group was being denied then as a group we should have a policy to represent them. He also said that the route was incredibly busy at certain times of the day and he would be concerned to see horses then, however, he didn't see a problem with horses as there were so few of them in relation to the number of people.

JB stated that when he cycled the path this morning it was covered in leaves and felt it would be quite unsafe for walkers. He also wondered whether white lines could be put down the middle to encourage people to stay on their own side.

EM said that there would be a leaf sweeper going down the path within the next fortnight and regarding the consultation she didn't think it was fair to say that the LAF hadn't been consulted as they had had a site visit when the plans were proposed, there were a number of public meetings that the LAF would have been invited to and there was an online survey. She apologized if they hadn't been approached formally.

CE said they hadn't been approached formally and felt that was a chronic oversight on behalf of the authority.

EM said she felt it had been presumed that the site visit was the consultation.

DG then said that as this was not a designated PROW that was probably why the LAF had been overlooked.

AN then asked should the issue be discussed at the LAF if it wasn't a PROW.

CE said that was a very good point and that because the Highways Authority had put a lot of money towards the path it had become de facto a PROW.

MM asked EM about leaf removal and wondered if there was regular litter removal to which she replied there was and there were bins at the end of the route.

MM said he goes with a litter picking group round the lake and they did the path for the first time but saw very little litter. EM thanked him for that and for the positive feedback on the path.

CE thanked everyone for their comments. AN then said if asked what is the LAF's response to whether horses should be allowed on the route and CE replied that if it's a permissive route then yes they can have individual views but not as a group.

AN then asked that if in the future we should be discussing matters like this if we can't do anything about it as a group.

CE said he took AN point and perhaps we should stick to PROW and if it's permissive we should just comment.

7.6 Fix the Fells

CE said that EM had covered this a little earlier and asked if anyone wanted to add anything.

JB said just what a good job they do.

8. LAF Work Programme

- 8.1** Recommendation for a CAJLAF Improvement Sub-Group – AN said there was now a list of proposals after looking at best practice nationally. They had looked at other LAF's to see how they do things and it was clear that advice and consultations are their currency. The next step was to meet with CE and run the proposals passed him and hopefully implement them for the next meeting. Basically sticking to agreed actions and accountability on those actions and that would help the group focus on what it's here for. He also said there was a chance to name some policies that we have so that if a matter arises we already know how we're going to respond to it. He mentioned that GW had circulated some papers on use of sub-groups but felt it was only fair to wait until he was back so he could explain how he sees them benefitting us. There would also be a number of tools to make JR's job easier.

CE expressed his thanks to AN, CB and GW for their work in this matter and really appreciated it and thought it would be really helpful going forward.

AN said he appreciated the comment.

CE said this would be raised again at the meeting in the New Year.

Action: Meeting to be held between sub-group and CE to go through proposals.

CE asked if everyone was happy with the proposals. JC was very supportive.

- 8.2** Upland Fencing – CE said that GW had circulated his papers prior to the meeting and CE thanked him for taking these forward and that this matter would continue to be on the agenda. CE said that GW had visited the island site at Armathwaite at his request and GW had met Julia Aglionby whilst there and she had mentioned the meeting between herself and CB. CB said that when GW returned she would get in touch with him about it and try and set up a meeting.

CE asked members if they were happy to approve GW report and they were.

- 8.3** Carlisle Southern Link Road – DG said that the second consultations had just taken place and he was now waiting for the outcome of those consultations. CE asked for a timeframe and DG replied work should start in February, 2022.

- 8.4** A66 Improvements – CE advised that the consultation expired at 11.59 p.m. on Friday 5th November. JR had circulated the suggestions made by CE he had also had further thoughts helped by MM, SW and GW. The substance of their submission was that they would like to see a continuous east/west route so that non-motorised users would not have to be on the new road and would have the opportunity to use the old road where necessary. The main thrust was that if PROW had to be severed that the realignments should be as sympathetic as possible, they did not want to see any closures but the most important thing was that all non-motorised users are treated equally. The County Council had put in their submission. The other specific point was to make sure a footpath was created preferably public but if need be, permissive, from Penrith to Centre Parcs. The owners of Centre Parcs were not keen for a continuous footpath to be there as they want to keep their visitors on site. GW had suggested that the footpath be accessible for all users, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and users of tramper type vehicles - that submission had gone in and await the next development.

CB asked if that could be circulated and CE said he would send it to JR and she could circulate it to members.

Action: CE to send paper to JR and JR to circulate.

- 8.5** Lake District National Park Partnership – CB told the group that the new management plan had been accepted by the Trustees and now the sub-groups needed to work out how they were going to deliver the actions. She said there would be a meeting before Christmas but the main thing was to get the management plan signed off.

CE asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

EM said it was worth looking at the main strategies and that it was important that aspirations meet reality and it was down to all 25 partners including the LAF to keep on top of that.

- 8.6** Local Government Re-Organisation – DG had circulated a paper and he added that new names had now been suggested for the new authorities and they were Cumberland and the other was Westmorland & Furness. He also mentioned that the council's CEO was leaving shortly.

CE then asked DG what was meant by a shadow authority. DG said these could be put in place to structure the new managing council so that members from all the district councils and members from county council are going to set up a shadow council to create a structure on how those councils are going to be run. On 1st April all councils will be dissolved and the new council will be constructed in that way.

CE asked if that was 2023 and DG said yes. He added that the shadow council was so they could still go out and do all consultations with the concerned people.

CE asked if there were any questions on the re-organisation.

EM said that not to decide now but it needed bearing in mind how as a LAF we work with the two authorities and the LDNPA and will the two Cumberland, Westmorland authorities be prepared to work together as part of the LAF.

- 8.7** Water Safety – CE said this had been touched on earlier.

- 8.8** Cumbria Wildfire Group – CE said that there would be another meeting in a fortnight, they had already had an in person meeting four weeks ago and once the minutes were agreed he would ask JR to circulate them. Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service were running the group, financially and with manpower. They were very keen to get wildfire in the public domain and the group was on a course of education. Hopefully by next April there will be more public awareness as to what people should and shouldn't do. The Chairman of the England & Wales Wildfire Group lives in the County, Simon Thorpe and he would be attending their next meeting. CE said there was a great concentration on management plans and fire plans for the estates – this is a pan Cumbria group not just the area this access forum covers, working closely with Northumberland, County Durham and North Yorkshires rescue services. He said there was a lot of positives coming out of the group and would report further at the next LAF meeting. CE went on that he would circulate the membership of the group which encapsulates land owners, foresters, national park authority, national trust, fire service, NFU and basically anyone with interest in the uplands.

Action: CE to send JR minutes of meeting and JR to circulate. CE also to circulate membership of group.

9. Members News

MM had circulated his report prior to the meeting and asked if anyone had any comments.

CE mentioned that Deer Park in Carlisle was an emotive issue with the locals.

SP said he had visited one site which was a new footpath going round the back of the old asbestos factory in Kentmere which will be up to wheelchair standard. The other was regarding the traditional annual Grisedale Rally he'd had notifications of footpath closures within the Park. He said that SW had mentioned to him whether

this was appropriate within a National Park. SP said he had emailed Nick Thorne who wondered whether the LAF want to request the Park to do a review on whether this should take place or not.

CE asked for comments from the members.

DG said that the rally uses PROW which run on a yearly closure so they can get two events in, the Grisedale and the Malcolm Wilson stages. Permission is given by the FC who is the owner - there is a large fee which is used for reconstruction of any damage caused. So the maintenance of the track is coming from the FC which takes the money off the event. The closures are only for the days of the events. He said there was more of a problem with timber extraction than motor sport events.

SP said it was a traditional event and had been going since the 1950's. He went on that it was a long time since the NP had done a review and maybe it wasn't such a bad idea for the strategy team to be asked.

CB agreed with DG regarding timber extraction. She said there were lots of events run in the forests and maybe within the review they could look at not shutting all PROW for the event.

DG said from a personal point of view he recommended that that should be the way it's done because in other places where they had only closed the affected paths, people were going down those paths, finding they couldn't get any further but still carrying on.

CE asked the group whether the LAF should formally ask the authority to review or not. DG and CB said it could do no harm. JC said he supported a review. CE said we are not objecting we just think there should be a review and as CB said is there a need to close the whole thing and not just certain areas.

MM wanted to add on timber extraction that he believed any damage caused should be rectified at the end of the works and wondered if this could be strengthened.

SP agreed and CB said they could only ask to put the PROW back.

EM said to be careful when wording comments. She said the previous survey was round the economic impact, CB suggestion regarding closing only certain areas was a good point and she didn't feel there would be any harm in having a discussion with FC regarding this.

Action: CE to ask the authority for a review.

SW had submitted her report prior to the meeting.

JB mentioned the development of the route around Bassenthwaite for cycling and walking. He said that round the Western side there was a good footpath between the main road and the lake but the surface and crossing could be improved. He said they should also look more at cycling within the Borrowdale valley. The other issue he wanted to raise was Newlands Beck where the path has been closed because of flooding. The bank has been eroded because tree roots were left in it and allowed it to change - it might be allowed to keep its new line and go naturally through the valley but the only problem he felt with that was that it was going to end

up in Portinscale at the entrance to the village. The previous Thursday the bridge was closed for a number of hours, you couldn't get round by Ullock because that road had also been eroded badly. JB also wanted to mention the discussions surrounding the planning application for the car park at Portinscale. It hasn't been approved yet, there is going to be a site visit but he felt it was very important to sort out.

JC had nothing to report.

CB said she had nothing to report.

AN said that following on from the improvement group he would be coming to ask members about strategic issues they might want to bring forward, the Discovering Lost Ways. He asked if there were any issues on a national level that the LAF might want to have an opinion on. He didn't feel that he understood the LAF's position on Discovering Lost Ways issue. Do we have one? Do we need one? He said that also canoes and fishermen, there was an access issue there and do we need or have an opinion on that and what do we do with that.

CE said both those topics had been subject to discussion in the past and the Discovering Lost Ways is a Government policy. AN asked if that came to pass, as it seems it's due to, what effect would that have on our patch? How much would it cost the people that we are here to represent?

CE replied that the Discovering Lost Ways is giving the general public the opportunity to make a case if they think a right of way did exist in the past but hasn't been used for some years. AN said that in his opinion the definitive map would be closed in 2026 and after that if it's not on the definitive map then it's not a right of way. He said some other LAF's were discussing this issue and should we be.

SP said it may be useful to get someone from the Ramblers Association to come to a meeting. DG said the BHS might be better.

EM said that because in the Lake District everywhere is well walked there is good awareness and she hoped that anything that is used regularly isn't a lost way on the definitive map. She asked that if anyone in the group knew of a route that was well used and wasn't on the definitive map in the Lake District then let her know and it would be looked at. She said there were some routes that were footpaths but should be bridleways so that might be something to get on with. She felt as a general point it would be good to have more liaison with the Ramblers Association because as a group the LAF doesn't have a representative and maybe we should invite them to a meeting.

CB said that the problem with Lost Ways was it depended on people having a lot of time to be able to go to Records Offices. The BHS and CBS were working on routes but there weren't enough people. She went on that there had been a lot of time lost because of Covid as you still couldn't get into the Records Office in Carlisle as it was closed, so that should add weight to an argument for extending 2026 because of Covid.

KM had nothing to report.

10. Farming & Protected Landscapes

EM said that a number of applications had come through and there had been a lot of interest from the farming community. So far none that have been approved have involved access improvements. There are two about to be submitted one of which includes improvement to the nature trail at Low Bridge End Farm at St. Johns in the Vale and the other is around creating a new footpath that will form part of the Penrith to Pooley Bridge walking route that is being developed. She didn't know whether the LAF as a group could push that side of things.

DG reported that there was a permissive path down the alignment of the old railway path at Hallbankgate which is something that has been put forward by the North Pennines. He was disappointed that it was a permissive path as this was public money and it ought to be a definitive path as that would link into everything else happening with the Hallbankgate hub. There was also a landowner in the same area changing his stiles for kissing gates who had put in for funding so that was backed as its good for access. With regard to the Solway, he said he had a meeting later in the week where their areas would be discussed and they hadn't had any feedback from Arnside and Silverdale with regards to what is going on with access down there.

CE thanked both DG and EM and asked if anyone had any comments or questions.

CB said that as it's called farming and protected landscapes did that encompass it all or was it two separate things to be covered.

EM said it was actually farming in protected landscapes so it is about farming but about what is different about farming within a protected landscape so it has to have that connection. There are four categories, one is people which is around access and education, one is carbon reduction, one is farm diversification and the fourth is the natural environment. They don't have to meet all of the criteria.

CB then asked if parish councils could put in the application or did it have to be the farmers and EM replied that no it didn't have to be the farmers. It doesn't have to benefit the farmer but it has to benefit the farm landscape. The LDNPA could put in an application and EM said she had looked at putting one in with regard to the country code and behavior on farm land but had to be careful that it didn't look like they were giving the money to themselves. She went on that MD is also on the assessment panel and it was unfortunate he wasn't here so get his point of view on the decision making.

Overall EM felt that the LAF could help identify projects or push to be more proactive about access projects.

CB asked if the funding ran until April and EM replied that it was nearly three years of funding and this had been the first year of which there had only really been six months. Initially more money had been given in the first year but because it was only over six months they realized it was unrealistic so have now allowed money to be moved into years two and three.

CE thanked EM

11. News from National & Regional Access Bodies

CE said there was a meeting of the North West regional chairs due to take place at the end of November. Nationally he said there wasn't a national access body regrettably.

AN asked if it was possible to get a copy of the agenda for the meeting and KM said yes.

CE went on that regarding the national body, numbers had dwindled and there are very different issues facing urban LAF's as opposed to rural ones and he said that its present configuration is based entirely upon the former development agency. There had been high hopes that the Mayor of Manchester and his ambitious plans for transport whether access and PROW etc. could piggy back onto that.

KM said there was a lot happening that is good.

Action: KM to circulate a copy of the agenda.

12. Coastal Access

CE said that they had had the formal opening of stretch two at St. Bees in September. MD had made a presentation on behalf of pressing the case for BME, for greater inclusion in the way things are run and to encourage people in the BME communities to feel more engaged with walking, access and recreation. He also mentioned a wonderful lady from Yorkshire who was disabled but was not stopped from going anywhere. She showed them photos of her 4 wheel drive tramper which she can take almost everywhere.

CB said that part of MD being on the LAF was to introduce inclusivity and maybe he should give a presentation to the group at a later meeting. EM agreed this would be useful.

Action: MD to report to the group on inclusivity at a later meeting.

DG said that on the paper he had circulated they now had the green light to do some of the Gretna sections, Anthorn to Abbeytown was still a no go area as they were having trouble with the landowner access there and also at Grune Point. There were also another three landowners that had got together and were proving difficult so Gerry was in the process of finding what powers of entry he's got to get on the land and look to where the path has got to be. At the moment they don't want it on the land or the road because it creates an area of open access. That's where the feedback from the Secretary of State comes in to see if there is another alignment, well there are two and they've asked us to look for a third so Gerry needs to go back to see where there could be another alignment.

DG went on that on the positive side the Gretna to Anthorn and Abbeytown to Allonby sections should be starting soon. Hopefully by Christmas and along with the work on stretch five to get down to Greenroad station.

CE asked if there were any comments for DG, there were none.

13. Updates from the Authorities

EM and DG had circulated their reports prior to the meeting. EM wanted to update and said that JB was right to raise Newlands Beck as that was a live issue for the

LDNPA and the community – a year ago the river eroded the bank which had the right of way on top of it and those involved in this area know you can't just divert the right of way around that without the landowners permission which hadn't been forthcoming. It's only getting worse and so they applied to the EA at the time to remove the blockage within the river that was causing but they didn't give that permission nor are they prepared to rebuild the banks. It may mean having to re-naturalise the river but that would have to be done carefully and properly as it would also have impact on other infrastructure and on the farmland itself. That is a big future project being discussed with the Rivers Trust and the landowner. In the interim the authority was looking at what remedial measures they could do to reopen the path as a public footpath. It was a miles without stiles route but unfortunately they can't envisage it being brought back to that standard. The TRO emergency closure ends at the end of December so it could be back open by the start of January, but this is only if it is safe to do so. EM said she would report back that it had been raised at today's meeting.

JC mentioned a miles without stiles footpath at Little Braithwaite bridge that used to go through a farmyard, there was a permissive path however the signpost has been moved so the footpath sign avoid the farmyard and points people to the permissive path which now makes that non-accessible as a miles without stiles route.

EM said she was not aware of that and that would need to be looked at.

Action: EM to report this matter to the ranger dealing with miles without stiles.

EM then went on to say that Borrowdale and Derwentwater was very live at the moment. There was some funding for it and they were looking to apply for some more. They had been held back by staff capacity but there was now a northern area ranger in place so hopefully they could make a start on that. She suggested that maybe at the next LAF meeting there could be a site visit to look at the routes they were looking at for that. They were currently looking at the western side of Derwentwater not all the way around.

AN wanted to reiterate that this was the third meeting where the route that is on the table had been mentioned. It is really steep and will put a lot of family users off, even if its resurfaced.

EM said they needed to bear in mind the sensitivities locally and this is why she felt it was important to have a site visit. She said they would also be looking at creating it as a bridleway as well as for

cyclists and pedestrians.

With regard to Bassenthwaite Lake EM said that it had stalled. She said they were working with HE who seemed to have put it on a back burner as they didn't seem to have as much money as they used to have. However, if the LAF would like to see this progress to a point then she thought it would be a good idea if the LAF wrote to HE to ask them to progress it.

AN said that someone had suggested at a previous meeting to get the various user groups to write in support of a route which he had done some work on but would have to have another look at. He had got in touch with Cycling UK who told him

how to map out the route, so he had mapped out all the businesses around the lake that would benefit, then he'd mapped out the bits that were currently ok to use, bits that were pinch points. He said he had drafted a letter to give to the local cycle groups to ask them to support it but then covid happened and everything stopped. AN did say he had visited the mapped out businesses around the lake and put a proposal to them that there could be a letter that they could choose to sign in support of.

EM said that would really help.

CE asked if anyone had any further comments for EM there were none so he moved on to DG report.

DG had circulated his report prior to the meeting but wanted to add that the parish survey had suffered owing to the priority for the team being the environmental fund work. There is also a backlog on site visits to people who weren't responding to written communications. On the environment fund – they are active on four sites with a fifth coming along shortly. The work has to be delivered by the end of the financial year at the end of March and hopefully by then the £1/2 million worth of funding should have been spent. They were only given the green light in July so it is a very tight timescale so they are focused to keep it going. They had just finished off the storm damaged challenge funding also which they had until September.

The other item he wanted to touch on was the adoption of the England Coastal Path as it reports in the document they were getting no feedback from NE on this but since his report which is from September, Danny Moore has got the job in charge of the National Trails Team now so he's been contacted regarding the routes adoption with a hope that he can assist.

DG stated that since then a meeting has been organised to discuss the matter next week with the National Trails Team and they would be looking at how the adoption of the sections are going to be done. Hopefully the impasse will be sorted out with a logical solution and then we can start pulling maintenance funding down from the ECP through DEFRA. The other thing not reported was they were proposing some bridge inspections in Northumberland on the Hadrian's Wall Path. The Northumberland team only had limited staff members left running all the PROW in the area. Subsequently Northumberland National Park were concerned regarding bridge structures on the trail and the risk and liability to everyone, so they've agreed to pay for the council to go and do the bridge surveys.

CE asked if anyone had any comments for DG, there were none.

14. AOB – Grisedale Rally

This had been covered earlier.

15. Dates of Future Meeting

Wednesday 9th February, 2022 was agreed.

CE thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

