



CUMBRIA LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Annual Report 2005

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1. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Annual Report for the third year of the Cumbria Local Access Forum (LAF). We were set up in March 2003 to provide independent advice to Cumbria County Council, the Countryside Agency and other bodies on matters relating to open access, rights of way and recreation in the countryside within Cumbria outside the National Park areas. Our members represent a balanced cross section of those with interest in and knowledge of these matters.

When we held our very first meeting I recall how surprised we were to discover the contrast between the potential of Cumbria, outside the lakes, in terms of recreational and tourist potential, and the inadequacy of the provision historically made by the County Council with only 40% of footpaths accessible, no frontline field staff and as a consequence no volunteer involvement. We saw pressing the County Council for major improvements as our major task, together with lobbying for a higher profile for access and recreation in the County.

The intervening years have seen an enormous effort put into our task and, I am delighted to report, with increasing success. Following upon the appointment of a Countryside Integrated Access Planning Officer and two Rangers in the financial year 2004 -5, there will be in 2006 -2007 a senior Countryside Access Manager, a Rights of Way (Planning) Officer, two more Rangers and a Volunteer Co-ordinator. The Forum now has its own full time officer.

Relationships with both officers and members of the County Council have become increasingly cordial and productive and in the autumn of 2005 a formal partnership was established to further our joint aims and aspirations. We were able together to oversee the successful introduction of open access in large parts of the County in May 2005 with a comprehensive array of signposts, access points, and gates. We assisted the Countryside Agency in a successful dialogue with landowners and English Nature which ensured that there were almost no restrictions with the emphasis being on informing the public and seeking their co-operation. This accords well with our policy that access should be available to all and that it should be exercised in an informed and responsible manner.

We have met with neighbouring LAFs and hosted a seminar for all the Forums in the North of England attended by Jim Knight MP the Minister with responsibility for rural affairs, landscape and biodiversity. We have been involved in a review of the powers and operation of LAFs and have established good relationships with the three AONBs which work in the County [really!]

My thanks go to all my colleagues, some now in their second term, who give so generously and unstintingly of their time and expertise. We are grateful for the support of our advisers in government agencies and from the growing band of

officers of the County Council in particular Rob Terwey, Abi Mansley and our new officer Simon Boyd and his predecessor Jackie Currie.

There are many challenges ahead ranging from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan due for completion in 2007 to plans for Coastal Access where we are already taking part in a pilot scheme. We are in good heart and look forward with enthusiasm to what lies ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duncan Graham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'G'.

Duncan Graham CBE
Chairman
April 2006

2. CUMBRIA LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

2.1 Statutory Purpose

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the County Council was required to set up a Local Access Forum. The main role of the Forum is to advise the County Council and the bodies that are about to form Natural England on all the issues covered by the Act, including how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open-air recreation, in ways which take account of social, economic and environmental interests.

The Forum covers the whole of Cumbria, excluding the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National parks.

The Forum gives advice on four main topics:

- (a) the development of integrated recreation and access strategies which cater for a wide range of people;
- (b) strategic improvements to the rights of way network and related plans;
- (c) the implementation, management and review of the statutory rights of access to the countryside; and
- (d) the development and implementation of related information and educational strategies.

3. THE FORUM

3.1 Members and Representation

The Forum, when all vacancies are filled, has 22 members, all appointed by Cumbria County Council. The members of the Forum represent:

- (a) owners and occupiers of access land or land crossed by local rights of way, or
- (b) any other interests especially relevant to the authority's area

- (c) users of the new right of access introduced by Part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (principally walkers) and users of local rights of way (e.g. walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers).

The membership is balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group or coalition of like interests and includes a cross section of local interest in the countryside. The Chair, Vice Chair and members other than County Councillors (3) are independent of the County Council.

The current independent members of the Cumbria Local Access Forum are:-

Name	Area of Interest	Interest Detail
Colin Barr	Other	Walking
Robert Benson	Land	Land Management, User, Conservationist
John Bevan (Vice Chairman)	User	Walking, Youth Work, Adventure Activities
Douglas Chalmers	Land	Director of the Country Land & Business Assoc.
Charles Ecroyd	Land	Land Management
Elizabeth Fell	User	Conservation, equestrian recreation, walking
Duncan Graham (Chairman)	Other	Countryside, environment, recreation, rural transport and deprivation
Harry Hawkins	User Other	Walking, canoeing, wildlife and archaeology
Bryan Jefffrey	User Land	Bird-watching, fell walking and land management
Brian Leah	User	Walking, cycling, canoeing and skiing
Jim Loxham	User Land	Conservation, recreation, access, rock climbing and mountaineering
Jim McQueen	User	Countryside, access and recreation
Jonathan Morley	User Land	Land management and conservation
Jean Rogers	Land User	Conservation, equestrian recreation
Chris Woodley-Stewart	Other	Conservation, recreation, walking and bird watching

David Young	User	Walking, mountain biking and driving
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The Forum has 3 members appointed by Cumbria County Council; Elizabeth Barraclough, Duncan Fairbairn and Jack Richardson.

The Forum agreed that Members will usually serve for three years, on a suitably staggered basis, so that it develops a continuity of membership. Members may be reappointed for a further term.

3.2 Advisers to the Forum

The Forum invites the following to its meetings:-

Mr Rob Terwey	Cumbria County Council
Ms Abi Mansley	Cumbria County Council
Mr Chris Smith	Countryside Agency
Ms Kate Doughty	Rural Development Service (DEFRA)
Mrs Erica Donnison	English Nature

the latter three bodies are coming together to form Natural England

3.3 Secretariat

Cumbria County Council provides the secretariat to the forum:

Simon Boyd, Countryside Access Partnership Officer, Cumbria County Council, The Courts, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8NA

4. ACTIVITY DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

4.1 Regulations and Appointments to the Forum

Regulations

The Cumbria Local Access Forum was established under Statutory Instrument 2002 No 1836 – The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002. The Regulations were laid out before Parliament on 16 July 2002 and came into force on 7 August 2002.

Appointments

The Forum elected its Chairman – Duncan Graham at its first formal meeting on 3 March 2003 and elected its Vice Chairman – John Bevan at its second meeting, on 23 September 2004.

4.2 Formal Meetings of the Forum

Five formal meetings have been held during the reporting period. The dates of these were:-

3 March 2005
11 April 2005
22 June 2005
6 September 2005
15 December 2005

The agendas have embraced a variety of topics including:-

- (a) The Cumbria Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- (b) The Appointment of {County Council} Countryside Rangers
- (c) The Cumbria Countryside Access Strategy
- (d) The Cumbria Access Management Plan
- (e) The national Review of Local Access Forums
- (f) Fire {and other} Restrictions
- (g) Open Access: issues of principle
- (h) Open Access: implementation on the ground
- (i) The possible development of a Volunteer Warden Network
- (j) Motorised Access
- (k) Access to MOD land at Warcop
- (l) Red Squirrels
- (m) draft Open Access Leaflets developed by the North Pennines AONB
- (n) Cycle Routes
- (o) Pack Horse Trails
- (p) DEFRA's High Level Stewardship Scheme

Minutes, agendas and reports of meetings are available on the website at www.cumbrialaf.org.uk

4.3 How we Operate

Terms of Reference

These were agreed at the third meeting of the Cumbria Local Access Forum in June 2003. These Terms of Reference set out the purpose of the organisation

and the way it operates both for members and the general public (see Appendix 1).

Philosophy

As a general approach the Forum:-

Favours access as far as it is legally provided for and practically sensible to provide it;

Believes that access should be available (within the bounds of reasonableness) to all existing and potential future users;

Believes that access should be exercised in an informed and responsible manner.

Area Representatives

The Forum appointed a number of area representatives, who then became the Cumbria Local Access Forum's delegates on the County Council's Area Transport Advisory Groups.

Representatives are:-

Allerdale	-	David Young
Barrow	-	Vacant
Carlisle	-	Bryan Jeffrey
Copeland	-	Vacant
Eden	-	Brian Leah
South Lakeland	-	Jim McQueen

Website

The Cumbria Local Access Forum has a mission statement which sits on the front page of their website:-

"The CROW Act gives us a wonderful opportunity to increase responsible recreational enjoyment in Cumbria; the Local Access Forum will help to ensure that we do not let such an opportunity slip through our fingers".

4.4 Training and Development

Before each of the Forum meetings we hold training sessions, during the reporting period members received training on the following:-

- (a) DEFRA's High Level Stewardship Scheme through the Rural Development Service
- (b) Capita Symonds; and the Rights of Way Programme
- (c) Countryside Access and Recreation in Cumbria – Needs and Preferences
- (d) RSPB work in the North Pennines
- (e) The role of the Countryside Agency

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1 April 2005 – 31 December 2005

Expenditure to end Dec 05

Administration	3357.09
Training	
Communications	
Research	

£3357.09

Appendix 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 TITLE

1.1 Cumbria Local Access Forum.

2.0 GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

2.1 The area covered is the whole of Cumbria excluding the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.

3.0 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The primary role of the Cumbria Local Access Forum is to provide advice to Cumbria County Council and to the Countryside Agency on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open-air recreation, in ways which address social, economic and environmental interests. The Forum will encourage and assist access provision.

3.2 The Cumbria Local Access Forum will give advice on four main topics:

- a) development of integrated recreation and access strategies which cater for a wide range of people;
- b) strategic improvements to the rights of way network and related plans;
- c) implementation, management and review of the statutory rights of access to the countryside; and
- d) the development and implementation of information and educational strategies.

3.3 In providing advice the Cumbria Local Access Forum will have regard to:

- the needs of land management;
 - the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area for which it is established, including flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area;
- guidance, including this document, given from time to time by the Secretary of State

3.4 The Cumbria Local Access Forum will work to:

- a) develop a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside;

- b) respect local circumstances and different interests while operating with national guidance;
- c) provide advice on issues of principle and good practice which is consistent with national guidance;
- d) engage in constructive debate and seek consensus wherever possible; and
- e) where consensus is not possible, make clear the nature of differing views, and suggest how they might be resolved.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The membership is:

- a) balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group or coalition of like interests; and
- b) includes a cross section of local interests in the countryside.

4.2 The membership includes:

- a) an independent chair and vice chair; the latter from a different membership category;
- b) a maximum of 22 members, including the chair and vice chair.

4.3 Members in total must bring a wide range of experience, including:

- a) recreational use, for example walking, riding, climbing and cycling;
- b) land management, for example, tenants, landowners and occupiers, and others with an interest in land;
- c) 'other' including tourism, health, business, trade unions, transport, nature conservation and heritage.

4.4 Members not necessarily experienced in the topics at 3.2, or aligned with any particular interest group may also be appointed. Three members will be appointed by the County Council.

4.5 The Forum should contain roughly equal numbers of members ascribed to each of the categories in 4.3 a, b or c. Members who genuinely have experience and credibility in relation to more than one category in 4.3 will be particularly useful.

4.6 Before appointment members will be asked to confirm;

- a) their support of the positive purpose of Local Forums;
- b) commitment to working within the terms of reference and achieving the aims of the Local Forum through constructive working with other members; and

- c) that they are able to devote the necessary time to attend meetings, training and to network with a wide range of interests outside meetings.

5.0 ADMINISTRATION

- 5.1 Meetings will be held at least twice a year, and more frequently when necessary.
- 5.2 Meeting agendas will be agreed between the chair, the vice chair and the adviser.
- 5.3 Meetings will be in public and advance notice will be given.
- 5.4 Agendas, papers and minutes will be available to the public.
- 5.5 Observers will be appointed to the Local Access Forum.
- 5.6 Observers will be able to contribute to the proceedings at the discretion of the chair.
- 5.7 The public will be able to ask questions on the business of the meetings at the discretion of the chair.

Appendix 2

BACKGROUND OF MEMBERS

Colin Barr

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Colin worked for the Centre of Ecology & Hydrology for 32 years before taking early retirement and setting up an ecological consultancy. He has been responsible for multi-million pound projects to monitor changes in the GB countryside and to report results to Government departments and agencies. He is familiar with national policy development having worked with a wide range of agencies including DEFRA, English Nature and the Countryside Agency. Colin served for several years as the Natural Environment Research Council's representative on the UK Countryside Recreation Network, where the importance of balancing recreation, nature conservation and other interests were clearly outlined.

Locally, Colin is currently working within the Cumbria Biodiversity Partnership to deliver BAP Action Plan commitments in relation to hedgerows. He has lectured extensively on countryside matters to a wide range of locally based organisations.

Colin is the son of a small time Suffolk farmer and has lived in Cumbria for 32 years. He fully enjoys the recreational and access provisions within the Lake District National Park and surrounding areas. He is interested in all aspects of the countryside and particularly enjoys walking at home and abroad and has traveled extensively to fulfill this passion.

Robert Benson

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Robert has lived and worked in Cumbria for the last 30 years, working for the Lowther Estates. Responsible for all sporting management, the 40,000 acres of Estates Uplands and Commons.

Robert is a Moorland Association Committee Member, and he is also Chairman of the North Lakes Red Deer Group, the Eden Valley Deer Management Association and the Penrith Red Squirrel Group.

He combines his countryside work and interests with being Show Director of Lowther Driving Trials and Country Fair.

John Bevan

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Appleby
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Mr Bevan qualified as a scientist, and is now a retired Ombudsman doing consultancy work, mainly on activity safety and child protection issues. Mr Bevan has previously worked in the nuclear industry, in a university and in educational administration as a Director of Education and as Chief Officer of a Higher Education Funding Agency.

John is currently the chair of the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (originally established by the Health & Safety Commission} and has been for the past 2 years.

He is a hill walker and occasionally active on Rights of Way issues. He is responsible for drafting national submissions to DfES, DEFRA and the Countryside Agency on Activity Licensing, CROW and other access issues.

Douglas Chalmers

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Douglas is Director of the Country Land & Business Association in the North West and North East Regions, and as such represents landowning interests on many groups. He and his wife also own a small farm running Herdwick sheep and free range chickens.

His other community activities include being a Governor at Orton C. of E. School, and youth coaching at Upper Eden R.U.F.C.

Charles Ecroyd

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Born in 1959, Charles was brought up near Armathwaite and was educated at Harrow School and RAC Cirencester. After some 20 years experience in Estate Agency handling residential and commercial sales and lettings in London and the East Midlands he returned to Cumbria in 1996 and now manages the family estate in the Eden Valley which totals approximately 1,600 acres and comprises: 5 tenanted/let farms, woodland (400 acres), let cottages, salmon fishery and a commercial shoot.

He has been a member of Country Land and Business Association (CLA) Cumbria Branch Committee since 1998, a member of CLA Council since October 1991, was elected to CLA Executive Committee in January 2001 and subsequently to CLA Legal and Property Rights Sub-Committee in October 2003. He also represents the CLA in growing debate over the provision of affordable housing in rural areas and sits as a CLA representative on Cumbria Rural Housing Trust. He was appointed a Foundation Governor of Calthwaite C of E Primary School in 2003, is Chairman of Armathwaite Old School Hall Committee, a member of Armathwaite PCC and is actively involved in various county-wide fishery and woodland bodies.

Charles is married with two children, aged 8 and 6 and when not engaged in any of the above activities assists his wife in the running of her catering business. He enjoys most countryside activities and foreign travel.

Harry Hawkins

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Harry is an active member of the Ramblers Association and is currently the Chair of the Lake District Area (Cumbria and North Lancs). Harry has lived and worked in Cumbria for 24 years but has been visiting it since 1961, he is now retired. Work and outside activities have taken Harry all over Cumbria and there are few places he has not visited. Other interests are reflected in his membership of the British Canoe Union, the Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, Appleby Archaeology Group and the Society for Landscape Studies.

Harry is currently working on the history of Shap Abbey and its lands and developing an archaeological project at Kirkland in the Eden Valley, in between times he wanders about the uplands studying the landscape and admiring the views.

Duncan Fairbairn (County Councillor)

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Duncan was born in Darlington and spent his early years here and in Bishop Auckland, moving to Cumbria in 1969. He is married with 2 daughters and a son. Mr Fairbairn has been a County Councillor for 2 years (also served as a County Councillor from 1977 – 1981) and a parish councilor for 33 years, with 2 parishes, but mostly with Aitkon PC. During the mid 90's he was Chair of Aikton

PC and during this period brought into the parish £16500 to provide footpath/bridgeway furniture and three footpath pamphlets.

Duncan is a member of the Lake District National Park Authority and the Solway Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As a County Councillor Mr Fairbairn covers the parishes on the Allerdale/Carlisle & Eden Boundaries, all rural; they all have Footpath/Bridleway issues. Duncan spent many years in Financial Services and now works in Business Services.

Elisabeth Fell

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Allithwaite
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Lis qualified as a scientist and continued in this role after moving to Cumbria in 1976, first at Farley Health Products in Kendal and then as Technical Director of Day Son & Hewitt in Lancaster.

She was a founder member of the Cumbria Bridleways Society and a member of the Ramblers' Association and has a particular interest in access to Rights of Way as well as researching historical routes. Chris Clark was her mentor in the latter role. She is Secretary of the Grange & District Natural History Society and has a particular interest in the flora of Cumbria.

She is currently fully occupied with organising the survey of the Use and Condition of all Rights of Way in Cumbria outside the LDNP (about 5,500 routes). The Lost Ways Project was commissioned by the County Council to carry out this work. As well as assessing use and condition the survey asks questions about hedges and verges, signs of ancient use, the possibility for Right of Way Improvement and the potential for access by disabled people.

Lis is married with one teenage son.

Duncan Graham CBE (Chairman)

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Colby
Appleby
Cumbria

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Duncan is married with three children and three grandchildren. His career was spent in local government and the civil service, but he is now retired. Duncan has a lifelong interest in the countryside, specifically the environment, recreation, rural transport and rural deprivation.

Duncan became Chairman of Eden Rivers Trust (ERT) after a successful pollution compensation claim: involved in habitat restoration, conservation of fish stocks, improving access and the economic regeneration of the wider Eden Valley.

Duncan has a number of active interests including walking, cycling, motor-cycling and fly-fishing. He is the Chairman of the Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership and of Fellrunner Village Bus. His ambition is to see the CROW Act implemented with the support of all those with interests, and as far as possible, consensus.

Bryan Jeffrey

Cleugh Head
Longtown
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA6 5TX

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Bryan was born in Gateshead in 1936 and began bird watching and fell walking at Newcastle RGS in 1948. In 1960 Bryan obtained his Veterinary Degree from Cambridge and spent four years practicing in Brampton and then in County Durham. In 1971 Bryan took over a farm practice in Preston. He spent approximately half his time on farming from 1981 – 1989. Then he became a full time farmer. He retired to his present small-holding in 1998.

Bryan has been a member of the Council of British Veterinary Association and the Society of Practising Vets. He has been President of Lancashire Vets and British Cattle Vets and the Chairman of the local and Lancashire county NFU. Bryan was also on the Lancashire Rights of Way Forum.

He is still fell-walking, though less vigorously these days, and does guided walks for the East Cumbria Countryside Project and naturalist bodies. He had 11 footpaths crossing his land whilst living in Lancashire but in Cumbria he only has 1.

Brian Leah

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Brian is a solicitor and a partner in a firm based in Manchester but working most of the week from home in the Eden Valley. Brian specialises in employment law. He is a keen walker, cyclist (on and off road), canoeist, and when conditions allow, skier.

Brian was previously a social worker, working with young offenders, and was involved in outdoor activities with young people.

Jim Loxham

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Jim has worked in Countryside Management for the past 25 years, mostly in land management working with tenant farmers on farm projects, conservation, recreation and access, and also ESA, walls, hedges, and woodland re-establishment.

Jim is experienced in upland erosion management and has strong inter-personal links with many organisations involved in land and recreational management.

He is a member of the Countryside Managers Association, a retired member of the Association of British Mountain Guides and a member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club.

His interests include rock climbing and mountaineering, mountain bikes and walking.

Jim McQueen

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Jim worked for the Countryside Commission in the Northern Region and then in the North West with a variety of responsibilities including, giving advice on the funding and policies for National Parks and AONB's; Groundwork Trusts and giving advice towards landscape enhancement. He was also involved in the early days of the setting up of Community Forests in Manchester and Merseyside. Jim was required to respond to consultations on Local and County Plans and for Highway proposals. Jim was also responsible for the establishment of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail from the original proposal, the consultation process through to Government approval, along with a small team on the practical research and report writing. Jim retired from the Countryside Commission in 1996.

In 1996 he joined the British Horse Society as Director of Access and Rights of Way for the UK. Although not a rider himself, he understands the problems of the lack of bridleways and byways.

Jim is married to Maureen.

Jonathan Morley

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Jonathan has been a moor manager for 25 years and is the winner of 5 conservation awards. He is the Chairman of the Game Conservancy Upland Steering Committee, a Moorland Association Committee Member and a member of the Moorland Management Advisory Group (CROW Act).

Jean Rogers

Birkby Cottage
Cartmel
Grange over Sands
Cumbria
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Jean has lived in Cumbria all her life, and has been associated with since she was a child, her father used heavy horses on their farm. Throughout her life she has competed in all equine disciplines. In her teens she ran a riding school from the farm in Cartmel. Jean qualified as a British Horse Society Instructor in the mid 70's and for many years was a chief examiner. She still teaches people for BHS exams and carries out riding and road safety tests.

In 1999 she became Chairman of the British Horse Society – Cumbria and amongst her responsibilities in this capacity are bridleways and access, and training and welfare in the County. Jean was the founder member of the Cumbria Bridleway Society over 30 years ago.

Chris Woodley-Stewart

North Pennines AONB Officer
North Pennines AONB Partnership
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Chris Woodley–Stewart has been the North Pennines Area Of Outstanding Beauty Officer since June 2001. He is based in Stanhope in Weardale, Co Durham, but works across the whole of the North Pennines AONB to co-ordinate effort for the implementation of the North Pennines AONB Management Plan. Chris is also the Secretary to the North Pennines (Durham and Northumberland) Local Access Forum.

Previous work in the conservation field includes roles as the Chilterns AONB Countryside Officer, running a Countryside Management Project in North East Essex and being a Ranger in Cheshire.

He has extensive professional experience in all aspects of countryside management, including access and rights of way work, and has a broad knowledge of countryside issues.

As a 'user' of the countryside, his main interests are bird-watching and walking, though having two young children, these days he walks neither as far (or as fast) as he would like.

David Young

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David has lived and worked in Cumbria most of his life. From an early age he has been able to enjoy the countryside, first as a walker and then as a mountain biker, exploring the network of quiet country roads, bridleways and byways. For the last 10 years this access has been supplemented with the use of four-wheel drive vehicles.

David's interest in rights of way led to becoming the North Lakes 4 x 4 club's Rights of Way Officer. Via the club outings have been organised for users with physical and learning disabilities and this has given the groups access to areas they would never have been able to appreciate. With this position David became a member of the Lake District National Park Authority's 'Hierarchy of Trails' Panel. He believes this has been successful in using consensus management to help control vehicle access to the Lake District National Park. David hopes these experiences will benefit the Cumbria Local Access Forum.

Elizabeth Barraclough

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Elizabeth retired in 1993 from running the IT Service at Newcastle University and moved permanently to the Lake District. She is a councillor on all three councils i.e. Town, District and County. It is as a County Councillor that she has joined the LAF.

Elizabeth has a keen interest in the countryside and has lead a Flora of the Fells walk. She has been a Voluntary Ranger in the National Park for about 30 years and has helped with many tasks from litter sweeps to bridge repairs. Elizabeth is also a Footpath Secretary for the Ramblers Association and looks after path problems in the area round Keswick.