

# Cumbria Local Access Forum Annual Report 2012-13



*Drigg*

## Chairman's Introduction

Welcome to Cumbria Local Access Forum's Annual Report for 2012/2013.

We started the financial year in April 2012 facing continuing budgetary cuts to the running costs of the Highways & Transport Section of the Environment Department, where Countryside Access sits in the Council's hierarchy; this inevitably led to structural rearrangements within the department, including the loss of a number of posts. In September we bade farewell to Kathy Miles, our designated CLAF Secretary, whose post was not re-allocated and as a result led to LAF members taking more responsibility for many of the activities that a LAF Secretary normally carries out. She left us with our grateful thanks for all she had done for us.

We also, sadly, bade farewell to John Bevan at the end of December; John was a founding member of the LAF, was elected Vice-Chairman in 2003 and had worked tirelessly for the Access Forum in a number of roles including chairing various Sub-Committees and Working Parties and his wise counsel is greatly missed by the Forum and me in particular. He also left with our very best wishes.

As a result, we elected a new Vice-Chairman in Jim McQueen and this appointment was confirmed at our January meeting and I continue to be very grateful for his input and knowledge of a range of topics. We have seen the membership grow with expertise added to areas where we were short on knowledge and experience and I am very grateful to all of the membership who continue to give their time voluntarily to the workings of the LAF especially as they have been asked to take on more responsibility for some keys areas of our work.

You will read below a synopsis of the extent of our activities this year, including our work with various Section 94 bodies and I have no doubt this will continue into the forthcoming year. Cumbria Local Access Forum will continue to work closely with Cumbria County Council both as its statutory advisor and critical friend in all matters pertaining to CRoW and countryside access and we look forward to another successful year to come.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Access Team both in Carlisle and out in the field as well as all the members of the LAF for the continuing success of our work

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Ecroyd". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Charles Ecroyd – Chairman

## What is the Cumbria Local Access Forum?

Cumbria Local Access Forum was set up by Cumbria County Council in 2003 under section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

The Forum is an independent statutory advisory body and advises on the improvement of public access for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the countryside. It must be consulted on specified access matters, and may also advise on other forms of lawful public access, which might include using land (or a right of way) to get to work, school, shops, or local amenities.

The Forum aims to provide strategic advice, taking into account statutory guidance, the needs of landowners and access users, and wider conservation, landscape, social, economic and educational factors.

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

## Who is on the Local Access Forum?

The Forum currently has 18 members. They 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, or
- (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 rights of way (walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers).

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

Name	Areas of Interest
Elizabeth Barraclough	Walking, Volunteer Ranger, Flora
Douglas Chalmers	Country Land & Business Association: Regional Policy Director
Jo Cleary	Sustainable transport: Cycling
Oliver Coles	Walking; Rural Transport, Green Tourism, Recreation and Health
Alan Dougherty	Upland land use; Mountaineering, Fell-running, Mountain-Biking
Charles Ecroyd <i>Chairman</i>	Land Management and Conservation
Terry Jolley	Walking, Footpath projects, Environment
Nicholas Lloyd	Natural History, Walking and Equestrian, Angling
Jim McQueen <i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Countryside Access and Recreation
Mike Murgatroyd	Conservation and Recreation; Health; All-ability paths
Bridget Pickthall	Farming; Walking, Horse-Riding; Heritage; Link-path development
Ian Robb	Walking, Mountain-biking and Fly-fishing; Village Green Reclamation
Tim Ward	Walking, Running, Wildlife, Countryside Access
Sylvia Woodhead	Landscape, Geology, Tourism, Sustainable Transport
David Young	Walking, Mountain-biking and Driving

The Forum has 3 County Councillors appointed as members by Cumbria County Council:  
Nick Cotton, Elizabeth Mallinson, and John Murphy.

## What Cumbria LAF achieved during the year

### Site visits & Presentations:



A morning site visit to view a stretch of multi-user footpath alongside the River Lune, from Devil's Bridge into Kirkby Lonsdale, realigned above flood level and 'future proofed' against further flooding.

A visit to Ricker Gill Packhorse Bridge, Hartside, on the popular C2C cycle route. This was rebuilt with grants from HLF & CCC, using traditional materials and skills. It forms part of the North Pennine AONB Living Packhorse Trails. This historic crossing point has been commended for its sensitive rebuilding



Danny Moores (Coastal Access Team: Natural England) gave a Coastal Trail Update on Cumbrian Stretch 1 (Allonby to Whitehaven) and an introduction to Stretch 2 (Whitehaven to Silecroft). This was followed by a site visit to the Drigg sand dunes.

Route options for this part of Stretch 2 of the English coastal trail were discussed, and potential approaches to the River Irt crossing, an example of the challenges to be overcome in connection with estuary crossings for the Trail.

An indoor meeting at Newbiggin concentrated on CCC Access Strategy Review and new working arrangements for the CLAF.

Four formal meetings were held, one each in the North, South, East & West of Cumbria. Meetings were, on occasion, attended by members of the Lake District and Lancashire LAFs, and the NW Regional LAF Co-coordinator.

March 2012	Kirkby Lonsdale
June 2012	Gamblesby
October 2012	Drigg
Jan 2013	Newbiggin

## CLAF achievements:

- Responded to a range of National and Local consultations
- Liaised with Lake District & Yorkshire Dales National Parks to review and produce a combined Strategy for Access to Cumbria's Countryside.
- Achieved new ways of working, with more input for meetings from members in terms of arranging venues, speakers and training for meetings, preparing responses to consultations, writing papers to be presented at CLAF meetings
- Continued to vary the location of meetings across Cumbria, to view good practice in improved access to the countryside.
- Achieved funding for 'Paths for Communities' (P4C).
- Responded to proposed fencing works on open access/ common land
- Participated in Triennial Review of Environment Agency/ Natural England.
- Made access input to Management Plan of Sandscale Haws
- Liaised with NE over dedication of selected Cumbrian NNRs as open access

## Roles undertaken by CLAF members

Attended meetings on the proposed footway/cycleway across the Arnside viaduct

Attended meetings of the Morecambe Bay Partnership



*Arnside Viaduct, Morecambe Bay*

## Cumbria LAF Consultations

- NE: National Trails Review- CLAF response was a guarded welcome to proposals for a single 3 year grant from NE, but concern on planned reduction of funding. CLAF stressed that National Trails (3 in Cumbria; Hadrian's Wall, Pennine Way & Pennine Bridleway) need national leadership and unified standards, which may be difficult to maintain in the proposed new 'Trail Partnerships'
- NE: response to Allonby –Whitehaven consultation, welcoming the overall approach, but commenting on the need to secure an appropriate route through any future extension to Workington Northern Docks, and the former Corus steel works
- NE Coastal Scheme Review – CLAF felt the Scheme had worked well in practice in finding a route for the English Coastal Trail in Cumbria, and that no changes to the Scheme were needed.
- NE: responded to proposals to fence off areas of Open Access or Common Land, in Irthing Gorge, Tebay Common, and Moorhouse Common. Support was given subject to maintained public access, including access to areas of geological interest and eventual fence removal.
- NE: supported dedication of the Cumbrian NNRs of Findlandrigg Woods and Great Asby Scar as Open Access.
- CCC Footpath Modification & Diversion Orders. CLAF representatives visited and reported on orders to modify or divert public rights of way, including, in the south of the County, several footpath and bridleway creation orders, Beetham, Grange-over-Sands and Kendal
- Welcomed NHS/ NICE public health guidelines for walking and cycling
- Response to Triennial Review of EA and NE, to keep the two disparately sized organisations separate.
- Defra: improvement to policy & legal framework for public rights of way
- Commented on the Draft Management Plan for the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB



*Ruskin's view, River Lune, Kirkby Lonsdale*

## Cumbria LAF Pending Issues

- The CLAF eagerly awaits the approval of the Secretary of State for Stretch 1 of the English Coastal Trail, from Allonby to Whitehaven. This will be the culmination of much work, effort and liaison between the Coastal Access Team of NE, landowners and members of the Cumbria LAF. After the expected announcement there will be work to identify the infrastructure needed, and cover by NE for the necessary funding. The planned launch of this first stretch of coastal access in Cumbria will then follow.
- The Cumbria LAF will respond to the Report for the route identified by NE for the Second Stretch of Coastal Trail in Cumbria, from Whitehaven to Silecroft
- Reviewing the possible outcomes for access with the expected enlargement of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.
- Press for continued funding and allocation of staff from CCC recognising the difficult competing interests it faces.



## Contact Details

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Cumbria LAF is funded by Cumbria County Council

Cumbria LAF meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be found at:  
[www.cumbrialaf.org.uk](http://www.cumbrialaf.org.uk).

The website also provides details of members, the Forum's terms of reference and other information. Please contact the Secretary if you require any documents or paper.

Cumbria LAF meetings are advertised on the website in advance. Members of the public are welcome and may ask questions, make statements or present petitions to the Forum, provided these reach the Secretary 7 days before a meeting. The Chairman, at his discretion, may invite members of the public to comment or ask a question during a meeting.

