

Chief Executive's Update

Recommendation that: **a The Authority is asked to note the update on key topics since the last meeting.**

1 75th Anniversary Commemorations

- 1.1 Next year will mark the 75th birthdays of the UK's first four National Parks, the Peak District, Lake District, Dartmoor and Snowdonia National Parks.

- 1.2 The four National Park Authorities have combined to commission a report that will look back and celebrate the importance and achievements of the first 75 years, explore the challenges and opportunities of the present, and outline a shared vision for our National Parks in the future.

- 1.3 The report will be written by Andrew McCloy, Chair of the Campaign for National Parks and former Chair of the Peak District National Park, with a launch event planned for the Peak District in the Summer of 2026.

2. Elterwater Quarry – Judicial Review

- 2.1 On 15 October 2025 the High Court of Justice Planning Court upheld our decision to grant planning permission 7/2023/5767 for the use of Elterwater quarry slate caverns for heritage tourism (with associated facilities and works). The ruling was made following legal action by Friends of the Lake District.

- 2.2 In his ruling, the Honourable Mr Justice Mould concluded Development Control Committee and officers acted lawfully, accurately and fairly in assessing the application. He dismissed all grounds of claim and agreed with our interpretation and application of the Sandford Principle. The court ordered Friends of the Lake District to pay our costs.

3. China visit

- 3.1 In October the Lake District National Park Chief Executive visited the Giant Panda National Park in China to speak as part of the ongoing knowledge exchange partnership funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO). The UK delegation also included representation from Forestry

England and National Parks Partnerships and gave lectures on the English Planning process and Local Plan development within National Parks, planning and delivering outdoor activities and public access, and developing and growing Nature Finance Markets.

- 3.2 In 2026 we will enter the final year of the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Lake District and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Parks and the Giant Panda National Park. The FCDO are keen to renew or extend a partnership between UK and Chinese National Parks and explore possibilities for expanding the partnership to include other UK National Parks and wider stakeholders.

4. Coniston Race Week

- 4.1 Coniston Record Attempts Committee recently applied for an exemption from the speed limit on Coniston Water under Byelaw 6 of the Coniston Water 2020 byelaws, as their current exemption ends after the November 2025 Records Week. The event provides facilities for qualified power boat drivers to attempt a world or national straight line speed record in their class. To be able to do this the competitors need to exceed 10 knots per hour and therefore need to request an exemption from the byelaw under byelaw 6 of the Coniston Water Byelaws 2020.
- 4.2 Following an assessment, evaluation of the application and feedback from the consultation that took place with the local community, the application has been approved. The exemption has been granted with conditions for 'Records Week' for five years, initially from Monday 2nd November to Friday 6th November 2026 (the week immediately after the October school half term) and the respective week for the four following years (2027-2030).

5. Archaeology Conference

- 5.1 On Saturday 15 November over 130 delegates met in Ambleside for the annual Archaeology Conference organised by the Historic Environment team. Talks ranged from archaeological surveys in the Troutbeck and Deepdale valleys to excavations at St Paul's Church, Irton, Lowther Castle and a late prehistoric settlement site in Deepdale. The day was rounded off by a talk on early medieval sculpture found in Cumbria, including the crosses at Irton and Gosforth and hogback stones in Lowther Church. It was a fascinating day, focused on the interesting and varied work carried out in the Lake District over the last year.

6. Distinctive Area Parish Forums

- 6.1 Our Distinctive Area (DA) Parish forums / cluster meetings concluded in late November, with the Southern DA meeting held in Hawkshead being the final event.
- 6.2 As was the case last year, the meetings were well received and appeared to be appreciated and valued by Parish Councillors. They certainly provided an invaluable opportunity for the LDNPAs Members and Officers to hear directly from Parish Councillors and to explain some of the key processes, policies and regulations that guide much of our work.
- 6.3 We will be writing out to all Parish Councils following the conclusion of the meeting to address some of the issues raised during the session and outline our engagement programme and plans for 2026.
- 6.4 This update also provides a good opportunity to thank the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) for their support in arranging and administering the programme of meetings this year.

7. Second homes and short term lets

- 7.1 Following recent correspondence with the new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government we have received a letter from Baroness Taylor of Stevenage (under-Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government) addressing concerns we raised regarding second homes and short-term lets. The letter outlines several important steps that Government have taken to address the recognised imbalance, including abolishing the furnished holiday lets tax regime, introducing higher rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax on additional dwellings, and allowing Councils to apply premiums of up to 100% extra on council tax bills of second homes. Additionally, the letter confirms that DCMS is progressing work on a new national mandatory registration scheme for short term lets.
- 7.2 Importantly, the letter recognises more needs to be done for certain areas, such as the Lake District, where challenges are particularly acute and states “we are actively considering what additional powers we might give local authorities to

enable them to respond to the pressures created by second homes and short-term lets". Such recognition is welcomed, and we intend to follow up this correspondence to explore if and how the Lake District may offer to pilot any new approaches.

Background Papers

Author/Post

Gavin Capstick/Chief Executive

Date Written

25/11/2025