



**Meeting of the Lake District National Park Partnership
Tuesday 25th July 2023 at 09:30-14:00 – Freshwater Biological Association, North
Campus, Newby Bridge Windermere**

MINUTES

Partner Name	Organisation	Apologies received
Celia Caulcott	Independent Chair	
Fran Richardson Lorriane Smyth (online, partial)	ACT	
Peter Frost-Pennington	Business Task Force	
	Cumbria Association of Local Councils	Sonia Hutchinson Rachael Kelly
Robert Frewen	Country Land & Business Association	
Carole Barr	Cumbria & Lakes Local Access Forum	
Jennifer Cormack Nigel Wilkinson	Cumbria LEP	
Gill Haigh	Cumbria Tourism	
Steve Trotter	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	
Alison Whalley	Environment Agency	Carol Holt
	Forestry Commission/Forestry England	Keith Jones Kevin May Mark Holroyd
Mike Hill Laura Partington	Friends of the Lake District	
	Historic England	Marie Smallwood
	Lake District Foundation	Sarah Swindley
Richard Leafe Hanna Latty Steve Ratcliffe Tiffany Hunt Michael Carter	LDNPA LDNPA Member	Gavin Capstick
Veronica Fiorato Adrian Anderson	LDNPP	
Kerry Rennie	Natural England	
Jez Westgarth	National Trust	
James Airey (online, partial)	National Farmers Union	
	RSPB	David Morris
Judith Derbyshire Angela Jones	Westmorland and Furness Council	
Kevin Sayers	United Utilities	
Helen Manns	University of Cumbria	
Observers/Speakers	Organisation	Apologies received
Lynsey Harper Louise Lavictoire	Fresh Water Biological Association	Simon Johnson

Observers/Speakers	Organisation	Apologies received
Caitlin Pearson	West Cumbria Rivers Trust	

1. Welcome/meeting management/purpose (Chair)

Seventeen Partners enjoyed an informative boat trip on Windermere (from 09.30), kindly arranged by Windermere Lake Cruises. Points of interest on and around the lake, including those relating to monitoring water quality, were pointed out.

The Chair welcomed Partners to the meeting (her first as Chair) in the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) boardroom, and thanked the FBA for hosting.

Following introductions around the room the Chair welcomed a number of new faces, substitutes for usual Partner representatives, or observers/speakers, including the newly established Westmorland and Furness Council at their first full meeting as a Partner (having been elected to the LDNPP in May).

The Chair briefly outlined the proposed agenda, focusing largely on water quality. There were no matters arising to address.

DECISION: Notes from 8th Feb and 2nd May LDNPP meetings were **approved** with no changes

2. Introduction to the Freshwater Biological Association *Louise Lavictoire, FBA*

Louise gave an overview of the operation and activity of the FBA (*see slides*). This included their history and future plans, and the vital importance of understanding freshwater ecosystems. The FBA have a strong ethos of participatory citizen science, and undertake long-term projects and datasets such as those focused on Freshwater Mussels. The FBA are an observer organisation on the LDNPP.

3. Partnership Business

a. **Update from Plan Coordination Group meeting, 18 July 2023** (*see also KOG Highlight reports for information*) – *Michael Carter, LDNPA Member*

Michael updated Partners on the most recent PCG meeting in July, highlighting the following:

- the quarterly highlight reports from each KOG
- agreement of FFNC KOG and PCG that there should be a new action in the Plan to support the Love Windermere Partnership
- the intention of the STT group to respond to the consultation on closure of railway ticket offices
- the resource challenges across areas of the plan, which may require prioritisation of activity and the mobilisation of charitable funding
- the LDNPP Annual Report will hopefully be approved by Partners at the next meeting
- that Lois Mansfield had given an update at the PCG on the monitoring dashboard and the LDNPP research programme, and possible involvement of a number of Northern universities

ACTION: Peter Frost-Pennington (BTF Chair) objected to the portrayal of the BTF as 'solely interested in parking' to the detriment of other transport matters in the Highlight

Reports, and it was agreed the wording of the STT KOG report would be re-drafted accordingly. (complete)

b. **Climate Action KOG update: Race to Zero, and Partner business plan update** –
Richard Leafe, LDNPA

Richard gave an update on activity of the Climate Action KOG, noting the wide lobbying work (beyond just the Partnership as a wider alliance is needed) on removing VAT for retro-fitting historic buildings. There needs to be a broad evidence base and better guidance related to Energy Performance Certification and traditional buildings, as the current 'one size fits all' approach is not working well. A number of Partners agreed with this approach. Robert Frewen informed Partners that the CLA is lobbying government on the challenges of EPC for traditional buildings and Peter Frost-Pennington (BTF), a council member for the Historic Houses Association, advised that it was lobbying on VAT, and would raise the Partnership's concerns with that body.

ACTION: Richard Leafe to liaise with any Partner that wants to add their voice to this effort.

Richard also highlighted the UN 'Race to Zero' initiative which aims to be at the Vanguard of the net-zero movement. The LDNPA has asked to join this as a useful platform for organisations with a territorial focus, and Richard also noted other National Parks also have carbon baselines similar to that the Partnership has developed.

Richard highlighted the data request that has been sent to Partners to update the log of carbon reduction activity they are undertaking. The deadline for this work is **8th September** (via MS Form return to Tim Duckmanton).

ACTION: Update on carbon baseline work at the October 31st Partnership meeting.

Steve Trotter (CWT) asked what consideration was being given to adaptation/mitigation to climate change, rather than just net zero. Richard replied that this was being looked at, with examples being river re-meandering, land management changes and improvements to infrastructure such as highways and bridges to better withstand extreme weather.

However, there is more to be done and this will be raised at the next CA KOG
(ACTION).

c. **State of the Park report update** – *Hanna Latty, LDNPA*

Hanna provided a brief update (*see slides*) on the progress of the State of the Park report, which will be completed by the end of the year. Hanna thanked Partners for supplying data, but recognised that the SOTP is not an exhaustive survey of the Lake District but focuses on relevant trend data that relates to the Special Qualities of the National Park.

A number of Partners raised questions/points related to hefting and grazing, the broadened scope of tree targets (which will in future include hedgerows and lone trees) and rights of way. How these are captured in the report is important, and Hanna advised some of these are being picked up in the data, and will check on the others with the SOTP Project Manager (Paula Allen).

Partners were also interested in how 'new/emerging challenges' are picked up in the report, particularly as it is used to help inform future LDNPP Management Plans. For instance, if there are novel issues in the Lake District they need to be identified and have a sufficient evidence base to allow informed actions.

ACTION: Hanna to check how new challenges are incorporated into to the report.

d. **Collaboration Hub update** – *Fran Richardson, ACT*

Fran updated the meeting on the journeys communities had been on to find new ways of working together. This project has also played a supporting role in fostering links between the LDNPP Climate Action Key Outcome Group and Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership. This is a very busy, ongoing piece of work with a further update proposed at the October Partnership meeting.

ACTION: Update at October 31st Partnership meeting.

e. **Deer/heft/grazing paper from WHSSG** – *Steve Ratcliffe, LDNPA*

Steve referenced the paper on this topic which had been shared with Partners ahead of the meeting (*see paper*). The paper is the product of intense discussion at the WHSSG and through compromise a balanced outcome has been reached. The paper includes recommendations for the LDNPP and State Party. The paper has also been endorsed by FFNC KOG. This will be taken forward via the Plan Coordination Group and he asked Partners to endorse the paper (noting this paper is NOT policy but an attempt to agree a collective agreed approach).

DECISION: the paper was endorsed by Partners, subject to checking approval from UU and CWT (via liaison with Steve).

On WHS more broadly Steve updated Partners on the publication of the papers for the forthcoming September World Heritage Committee (Saudi Arabia), noting an extract and recommendations relating to the English Lake District. He advised Partners that the Partnership's WHS Steering Group is meeting on Thurs 27th July to begin discussing this and other matters to assimilate and respond to all aspects of this report.

If endorsed by the World Heritage Committee, there will be an obligation for a further State of Conservation report to be submitted by the State Party to UNESCO by December 2024, and Steve is satisfied with that option, noting this was the best outcome that could have been hoped for given the circumstances.

ACTION: Public paper will be shared with Partners (complete)

ACTION: Reactive statement from LDNPA to be shared with Partners (complete)

ACTION: Further updated on this aspect of WHS at the October 31st Partnership meeting

4. Deep Dive: Water Quality

a. **Introduction to our Deep Dive** – *Veronica Fiorato, LDNPP*

Veronica set the scene for the 'Deep Dive' on water – an approach Partners had requested and used at the two recent Partnership meetings. The **Lake** District clearly has an interest in water quality and this look into the subject was timely given the recent press coverage, and the formation of the complementary Love Windermere Partnership.

Many Partners undertake activity that impacts, or relies upon, the Lake District's aquatic resources and it is important that the Partnership as a whole has an awareness of the issue, including the science of hydrology and measuring water quality. Discussions about Windermere will provide a useful case study and basis for further activity related to other water bodies in the National Park. Water and water quality are implicit in the many of the Key Outcomes and actions, and water is one of the 25 strategies, in the LDNPP Plan. However, there are no specific water actions in the document (other than the new one just agreed on Love Windermere). Veronica also highlighted the important of placing the Partnership's activity related to water within the wider context of the Government's Plan for Water and Environmental Improvement Plan (Jan 2023).

b. Rivers Trusts & Why water matters? - *Caitlin Pearson, West Cumbria Rivers Trust*

Caitlin introduced Partners to the varied and extensive work of the Cumbria Rivers Trusts (who are collectively observers on the LDNPP), and the catchment based approach they use to undertake interventions (*see slides*). The importance of water quality and the aquatic environment was covered (recreation, ecosystem services, flood management, habitat, economy), as well as the threats and sources of pollution facing waterbodies. Via a series of maps Caitlin highlighted the specific issues, and current status, of water bodies and courses throughout Cumbria.

c. Environment Agency & the Love Windermere Partnership – *Alison Whalley, Love Windermere Partnership*

Alison gave an overview of the Environment Agency's regulatory focus and responsibilities on Windermere, both as a stand-alone agency and also in various Partnerships (*see slides*). Alison outlined the governance structure of the Love Windermere Partnership (including those organisations involved – which has considerable overlap with the LDNPP), and the main pressures now affecting the Lake (nutrient input and extreme weather events linked to climate change). There have already been a number of early outputs from the project which is encouraging, with more to come. She reminded Partners that Love Windermere is not a funded Partnership, relying on partners putting in resource to deliver.

d. United Utilities & Windermere catchment – *Kevin Sayers, United Utilities*

Kevin gave an overview of UU's operations within the Windermere catchment, particularly in relation to treatment work infrastructure and associated investment plans (including the possibility of spending money on non-UU assets) (*see slides*). He provided an overview of the overflow/storm discharge events which have made up much of the recent media attention, and happened due to the Victorian combined sewerage and rain water network (upgrading these will take until 2050 and there are no easy, or low cost solutions).

However, despite the sometimes sensationalist headlines sewage is only part of the picture on Windermere which can more accurately be described as a nutrient (particularly phosphorous) issue. He noted many bathing areas have excellent water quality and meet standards. Kevin gave an overview of the (expensive) phosphorous stripping infrastructure on the Lake and the issues relating to agricultural run-off and legacy septic tanks on west Windermere (limited mains sewer network) were also discussed. Kevin made an offer to take Partners to the Low Wood treatment works to see the phosphorous removal technology.

e. Windermere water quality: the science – Lyndsey Harper, FBA

Lyndsey gave a comprehensive and detailed overview of the science behind Windermere's water quality, including current pollution/input challenges and how the situation is monitored and measured (see slides). This included details of the citizen/volunteer science 'Big Windermere Survey' and associated laboratory analysis of the results. The next steps for this research, in terms of ecology, biodiversity and community engagement were also covered.

f. Questions to our speakers for clarity

A number of Partners had questions/comments for the speakers:

- It was agreed that other catchments in the Lake District are not as well studied or understood compared to Windermere.
- Source location of pollution/nutrients are not always known or are hard to identify
- Need to understand the specific impacts of % increase or decrease of pollution inputs to determine most effective actions
- Waterbodies such as Windermere are 'not dying, but under threat' – much of the recent publicity is sensationalist
- Partners noted that Windermere is still important for abstraction, and for the visitor economy

g. Discussion

Partners were asked to use the (limited) remaining time in this session to discuss the following questions, and note down ideas on flipcharts. That output is detailed below:

1. Taking our Strategy as a starting point, how do we as a Partnership support the range of water-based initiatives taking place in the National Park?

- Specific water quality actions in LDNPP Plan (via change requests) and new actions in next iteration of Plan
- Data sharing and communication, education and single point of information?
- Sharing resources, collaboration and good practice (e.g. septic tank replacement)
- Clear agreed set of data indicators
- Prioritisation of actions and clear trajectory– where can Partnership make most difference?
- What problem are we trying to solve? (nutrients, bacteria, temperature, oxygen etc)

- De-bunking myths and sensationalist media reporting
- Avoiding duplication
- Authentic challenge/critical friend to each other
- Prevention rather than cure
- Engagement with catchment Partnerships
- Education role and identifying audiences (users of lakes, visitors/tourists, residents, businesses, young people/schools) – about how to reduce nutrient loading (empower individuals to take action)
- Product labelling 'lake friendly' etc (like reef safe sunscreen)
- Collectively leverage sources of funding and grants, including possible use of private finance/green finance
- Raise awareness of nutrient neutrality

2. How do we take lessons from Windermere to other catchments? What/where might be our next water-related focus of activity after Windermere?

- Ullswater, including establishing research/date baselines and sampling programmes
- Wast Water
- Recognise water projects have long lead times from action to results
- Issue of temperature rise, not just nutrients
- Possibility of geo-engineering (e.g. water source heat pumps cool lakes)
- Widespread opportunities for change of land use/restoration of riparian strips
- Shading and cooling input rivers with trees, thermal capacity of water is high
- Understand impacts of nutrient neutrality legislation
- Re-interrogate the lessons from Bassenthwaite Reflections project
- Important to have business and industry (including farming/land management) engagement
- Communication and engagement approach is important
- Have a programme of research ambassadors and a wide spectrum of voices
- Expand use of citizen science and volunteers

3. Thinking ahead to the next Plan, do we want to make the theme of water stewardship of catchments more explicit, and if so how? – the Partnership answered 'yes' to the first part of this question but ran out of time to answer the 'how' element which Partners were asked to discuss informally over lunch.

h. Next steps

ACTION: Slides from each speaker to be shared with Partners (complete)

5. AOB

The Chair thanked all the contributions to the meeting, which had very clearly shown the importance of water quality – the 'deep dive' format is a useful structure for Partnership meetings. It is clear that water will focus increasingly prominently in Partner's plans and the LDNPP Management Plan overall. There is much to learn about the current situation in the Lake District and more research is needed, with wide ranging ramifications across the environment and economy. Communication regarding this topic is very important, given the recent (and sometimes sensationalist) media reporting.

Gill Haigh (Cumbria Tourism) thanked Partners that had contributed to the work on developing the Destination Management Plan, on which there will be an update at the October Partnership meeting.

The Chair again thanked the hosts for their hospitality, and invited Partners to enjoy a buffet lunch.

REMINDER: Next Partnership Meeting: **31st October pm, time and venue tbc**

General list of acronyms used at Partnership meetings:

AES	Agri-Environment Schemes
BA	Breakthrough Actions
BDUK	Broadband Delivery UK

BTF	Business Task Force
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CLS	Carbon Landscapes Scheme
CHF	Community Housing Fund
CLT	Community Land Trusts
CLH	Community-led Housing
CW	Cumbria Woodlands
CWT	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
FC	Forestry Commission
FLD	Friends of the Lake District
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FFTP	Fibre to the premises
FTE	Full time equivalent
GS	Gain Share
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LDNPA	Lake District National Park Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
NCA	National Character Area
NE	Natural England
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NFM	Natural Flood Management
NFU	National Farmers Union
NT	National Trust
SOTP	State of The Park Report
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TOR	Terms of reference
TVGM	Tactical Visitor Management Group
UU	United Utilities