



**Meeting of the Lake District National Park Partnership
Tuesday 31st October 2023 at 14:45-19:00 – Theatre by the Lake, Kewswick**

MINUTES

Partner Name	Organisation	Apologies received
Celia Caulcott	Independent Chair	
Fran Richardson	ACT	Lorriane Smyth
Peter Frost-Pennington	Business Task Force	
Michael Barry Markus Cambell- Savours Darren Crossley Michael Barry	Cumberland Council	
Sonia Hutchinson	Cumbria Association of Local Councils	Rachael Kelly
	Country Land & Business Association	Lucinda Douglas Robert Frewen
Carole Barr	Cumbria & Lakes Local Access Forum	
Jennifer Cormack	Cumbria LEP	
Gill Haigh	Cumbria Tourism	
	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	Steve Trotter
Andy Brown	Environment Agency	Carol Holt
Kevin May	Forestry Commission/Forestry England	Keith Jones Mark Holroyd
	Friends of the Lake District	Mike Hill
	Historic England	Marie Smallwood
Sarah Swindley	Lake District Foundation	
Richard Leafe Hanna Latty Steve Ratcliffe Tiffany Hunt Gavin Capstick Emma Moody Michael Carter	LDNPA LDNPA Member	
Veronica Fiorato Adrian Anderson	LDNPP	
Kerry Rennie	Natural England	
	National Trust	Jez Westgarth Jane Saxon
James Airey	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
Simon Johnson	Fresh Water Biological Association	
	West Cumbria Rivers Trust	Jodie Mills
Simon Stephens	Theatre by the Lake	

SITE VISIT (14:45): Ahead of the meeting a number of Partners undertook a ‘walk and talk’ site visit from the Theatre by the Lake to Friar’s Crag and the adjacent bay on Derwent Water. Speakers from the National Trust Ranger Team (Roy Henderson), and the LDNPA (Emma Moody and Steve Ratcliffe), covered topics related to visitor management both locally and more widely in the Park, including the Miles without Stiles programme of accessible routes and the importance of World Heritage Site Status.

1. Welcome/minutes/matters arising (Chair)

The Chair welcomed Partners to the meeting, noting the site visit and late afternoon/evening format of the session as requested by Partners at the 2022 Rheged Ways of Working session. Partners provided brief introductions, given there were a number of new faces/observers and substitutes.

DECISION: Notes from the 25th July LDNPP meeting was **approved** with no changes

The Chair briefly outlined the proposed agenda, focusing largely on the ‘deep dive’ of visitor management.

Richard Leafe reminded Partners about the provision of information on their net-zero and carbon reduction plans. This information, related to Partner business plans and progress towards the Partnership’s 2037 net zero aspiration, is needed.

ACTION: Partners to provide this information if they have not already done so.

Steve Ratcliffe gave an update on the WHS Hefting and Grazing Paper, as shared with and discussed with Partners at the July LDNPP meeting. An action had been taken to discuss further with CWT and UU. Such discussions had taken place to reassure Partners on the drafting, which had been done by the World Heritage Steering Group and had involved considerable negotiation, compromise and many hours of work. There is a general view that this paper should not be re-opened by the Partnership, given the effort so far. The recommendations of those are the steering group not the Partnership. It is therefore proposed that Partners note the paper (rather than ‘approve’), which allows the WHS Steering Group to take the recommendations forward. LDNPP KOGs will also consider the specific actions in the paper.

DECISION: Partners agreed to *note* the paper, as described above.

The Chair noted that the Partnership Team will shortly begin a **review of Key Outcome Group Terms of Reference and governance** related to the delivery of the Management Plan. This is timely as the groups have been operating under current arrangements, and leadership, for some time and it is prudent to sense check these processes.

2. Welcome to the Theatre by the Lake (Simon Stephens, Executive Director)

Simon welcomed Partners and gave an overview of the operation and activity of the Theatre by the Lake. This included their history and future plans (including the challenges

of the pandemic), and the vital importance of the creative industries in the Lake District. He outlined the producing activities of the theatre, and how its outreach work in schools aims to encourage wider participation and enjoyment in the arts. The Theatre is keen to widen its social and geographic boundaries, and play a part in the increasingly important well-being agenda. Simon highlighted the approaching Christmas Programme, and events next year to celebrate the Theatre's 25th anniversary.

3. Partnership Business

a. **New Partner: Cumberland Council (Chair)**

Partners were reminded that they had agreed in August that the Partnership would consider Cumberland a 'de facto' Partner. In line with the LDNPP MoU Partners were officially asked their agreement to Cumberland becoming a Partner, and this was **unanimously agreed** by those at the meeting. The Partnership looks forward to working with Markus Campbell-Savours and Michael Barry as member and officer reps from Cumberland.

b. **Update from Plan Coordination Group meeting, 25 October 2023 (Michael Carter, see also Highlight reports for information)**

Michael Carter gave an update on Key Outcome Group activity, based on the recent PCG meeting and highlight reports. It is a mixed picture with a diverse range of activity across outcome groups, dependent on resourcing and capacity. Michael also highlighted areas where KOG activity overlaps with external groups, such as the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership. The LDNPP Annual Report provides a useful high-level synopsis of activity and can be shared to spread awareness of the Partnership's work. Michael also advised that group that the Lake District Foundation had been chosen as supplier to develop a tracking dashboard of data focused on plan actions. The PCG will also consider DEFRA guidance for the next Management Plan when available, as well as proposed timescales – Partners will be kept updated on this.

c. **Collaboration Hub update (Fran Richardson - see slides)**

Fran gave an update on Collaboration Hub activity, where ACT (supported by Esmee Fairburn) and working with the Partnership Manager has been facilitating difficult conversations (climate change, water quality and visitor management as examples), on various topics between Partners and stakeholders. The approach also uses citizens panels to facilitate these conversations. Schools have also been engaged, often through the use of various alternative media (music, photography, art, wordplay etc).

ACTION: Partners to be kept up to date on this project at future meetings.

d. **WHS update (Steve Ratcliffe)**

- The Ukraine war resulted in a postponement of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in 2022
- The WHC did convene in September 2023, in Riyadh with an extensive agenda. Within that meeting the WHC considered reports relating to six World Heritage Sites managed by the UK Government. Of these six, four including the English Lake District, have

been asked to submit State of Conservation reports (SOC) by December 2024, whilst two have been given an earlier submission date of February 2024. The request of a SOC was expected by the State Party (UK Govt)

- There appears to be an unwelcome WHS focus on the UK at the moment, possibly driven by ICOMOS' concern over the UK planning system (and its "balancing" approach)
- However, the State Party is trying to build confidence and improve relations, as illustrated through WHS sites gaining statutory protection in the Levelling Up Bill and recent consultations on permitted development rights
- The US Govt's decision to re-engage with UNESCO (and provide funding) is also seen as positive
- The WHC decision does recognise progress with certain of the nine recommendations made at the point of inscription, including the adoption of the LDNPA Local Plan and the Partnership's Management Plan, but progress is seen as too slow. Additional recommendations have now also been included
- In addition to the WHC decision, Steve referred to the receipt of a Technical Review received from ICOMOS, concerning a recent Elterwater planning application. Within that Review ICOMOS recommended suspending any similar tourism-related planning decisions until an interpretation strategy was prepared. However, after due consultation with the State Party, the Elterwater application was determined. It was refused (with reasons for refusal relating to sustainable transport grounds only)
- Steve highlighted the challenge of various parties directly contacting UNESCO and bypassing the LDNPA/WHS Steering Committee (which contains many Partners) on contentious issues (4x4s, and Windermere). Steve reminded Partners of the benefits of WHS for the visitor economy, including recent grant awards and also as a USP to attract visitors (particularly international) and the significant suite of branding assets available in the [WHS Toolkit](#)
- Steve also advised that work was underway on the interpretation strategy, particularly looking at aspects to ensure access to the Lake District for all sections of society. This work should be largely complete by the end of the year
- Steve again called for Partners to all try to make the most of the WHS in terms of promoting the Lake District, and use the brand to appeal to a range of audiences. The status can also be a significant vehicle for accessing grants and funding
- Steve outlined that he had recently provided a similar update to the Business Task Force (BTF), and also encouraged them to leverage the benefit of the WHS and not see it as an additional barrier to doing business
- Peter Frost-Pennington (representing the BTF) welcomed Steve's update and reassurances, and reaffirmed that businesses are largely supportive of the designation. However, they are not in favour of additional restrictions and don't want external interference on local planning policies. It must be remembered that the designation is for a 'cultural landscape' that evolves depending on the activity of people, not a tool to restrict all activity
- In response to a question on the compatibility of Natural Floor Management with World Heritage Site attributes, Steve noted that nature recovery and similar schemes can be compatible if done in a way that sustains the World Heritage Site (guidance can and is provided)

ACTION: an update on the State of Conservation report will be shared with the Partnership, likely at the October 2024 meeting

e. Annual Report 2022-23 review (Veronica Fiorato)

Veronica provided a brief overview of the development of the LDNPP Annual Report, which has been more challenging to produce and taken longer than expected. The result is an informative and useful document, which provides an excellent overview of the progress of actions in the LDNPP Plan. Veronica reminded Partners of a few key highlights, and visuals from the report.

Veronica noted that the start of the next report will not be far off, and the team is hoping the provision of data will be easier, given progress in developing a Dashboard. This is a collective endeavour for the Partnership and timely provision of information is much appreciated. The Chair also thanked Lois Mansfield for her efforts and contribution to the report.

Veronica asked Partners for their help in promoting the current Annual Report, both internally to Partner organisations and among connections, as a means of promoting the Partnership's collective endeavours.

f. State of the Park report (Hanna Latty – see paper)

Hanna gave an overview of the State of the Park (SOTP) process, which is a statutory report national parks must produce every 5 years focusing on the condition of Special Qualities in the Park and their trend direction (it was noted the Local Plan is more focused on planning policies, and economic/population data). SOTP also forms a key piece of evidence for the development of the next Partnership Plan.

There have been some challenges on getting all the data needed from Partners, and Partners were reminded of the 9th November deadline for further submissions. Hanna noted that LDNPA members have provided helpful feedback on SOTP work so far. Information submitted suggests there are some positive signs in the data, but also some challenges related to wildlife and habitats, and nature recovery and climate. There are also clear risks on cultural heritage and sustaining farming families. The data capture process will be reviewed following the production of the SOTP report, to learn lessons for the next report.

DECISION: Partners agreed to note progress on SOTP report

Various comments from Partners:

- Possible issue of jargon, needs to be sense checked?
- Are wetlands and nature metrics underrepresented?
- Need to be clear what the trends show and how this is best explained (HL advised there is a range of indicators and analysis at the back of the report)
- Need to find best way to release the information to wider stakeholders in a timely and comprehensive way

The Chair confirmed that the Deep Dive at the February 2024 Partnership meeting will look at the State of the Park.

4. Deep Dive: planning for sustainable visitor growth + creating a world class experience

a. Introduction to our Deep Dive (Veronica Fiorato)

Veronica gave an introduction to the deep dive theme, noting a number of statistics on visitor numbers in the National Park. Visitor management and experience is also a key theme throughout the LDNPP Management Plan's key outcomes - Veronica highlighted a variety of strategies, and specific actions, related to this. In this deep dive session Partners would hear from the new Cumbria Local Authorities, Cumbria Tourism and also discuss the issues and feedback to the group.

b. Westmorland & Furness Council (Angela Jones – see slides)

Angela gave an overview of the recent changes in setting up and stabilising the new W&F local authority. Many of the key aims of the council align closely with the themes of sustainable visitor management and experience. This involves working closely with Partners in areas such as sustainable travel, climate and environment and engaging with the destination management plan. Angela also noted that many of the aspects that make W&F a world class destination for external visitors also contribute to the quality of life of local residents and communities, with 'pride of place' being very important to the council

c. Cumberland Council (Darren Crossley and Michael Barry)

Cumberland gave a similar overview to their recent organisational changes, including the establishment of 8 community panels of local councillors and network panels in support (including partners, residents and businesses), The financial challenges facing local authorities across the board was noted. Cumberland's strategic focus is on 'people and place', with health and wellbeing at the heart of everything that the council does, which aligns well with themes related to visitor management and experience, as well as tackling inequalities and the challenges of climate change.

d. Questions/comments for our speakers for clarity (all)

- Importance of visitor views in forming local policy
- Use the Lake District brand to attract visitors (and residents)
- Important to think of the metrics of success of policies, and understand what progress has been made on plans
- Need to build health and wellbeing into plans – a huge emerging agenda, need to understand what the metrics for this could be (link to the work of the Lake District for Everyone KOG)
- There were expressions of support from Partners for the new Local Authorities, recognising the challenges of setting up new administrations and the desire to work collectively on shared challenges. Collaboration across the public and third sector organisations (as largely represented on the LDNPP) is vitally important for success
- Needs to be a continuous recognition that housing and accommodation are critical challenges for both residents, and visitors (they are linked)

e. Destination Management Plan (Gill Haigh, CT – see slides)

Gill (briefly – due to time constraints) outlined the importance and development process of the Cumbria Destination Management Plan, which is a collaborative effort involving a number of LDNPP Partners and stakeholders. The slides contain

a depth of further information on how the evidence will be collected, the plan developed and the guiding principles supporting this process.

ACTION: Partners to visit DMP website and support the call for evidence.

f. Discussion on tables (All)

Partners were asked to work in groups on one of the two (responsible, sustainable and inclusive) objectives from the DMP. Feedback was then compiled. *Partners were asked to discuss and expore what they were already doing in the following two areas, and what further opportunities there were:*

Group 1

Objective 2D: Encourage, educate, and engage visitors in responsible tourism, protecting and valuing our environment and communities

Group 2

Objective 2E: Ensure Cumbria's infrastructure and welcome is accessible to all

g. Feedback session

Due to time constraints it was not possible to conduct a feedback session as part of the meeting but the raw output from the discussion is attached for information and was *was then passed to Gill at Cumbria Tourism to feed into the DMP consultation process.*

5. AOB & Close (Chair)

The Chair thanked all the contributions to the meeting, and welcomed the site visit and evening meeting format. The meeting had been well attended and the deep dive on Visitor Management timely, interesting and had generated useful discussion. It was good to hear from the two new Local Authorities in Cumbria. The Chair again thanked the Theatre by the Lake for their hospitality.

United Utilities mentioned their upcoming 5 year plan development process, with the hope that Partners would also engage with this (see UU website).

ACTION: LDNPP Annual Report will be shared with all Partners and Key Outcome Groups.

REMINDER: Next Partnership Meeting: **8th February, time and venue tbc**

Appendix 1: Raw Output of discussion exercise (Agenda Item 4f)**Group 1**

- education about the harm of 'flycamping'
- outdoor kit suppliers to provide information on clothing and equipment to make LD and all year round destination
- geocaching
- teaching outdoor education/teacher training/formal outdoor courses
- 'Visitor packs' highlighting environmental information (not just tourist attractions)
- schools – space in the curriculum for environmental topics, visiting speakers from communities
- improving the impact and reach of countryside code
- risk assessments can rule out (negative?) interactions with the environment
- daily talks (interactive) on environmental issues esp in relation to birds of prey
- promote examples of sustainable tourism 'community of practice'
- no greenwashing!
- visitor giving – the next generation. Opportunity to educate, engage and offer opportunity to contribute where they can
- securing investment to maintain and improve environment and nature
- Impact of high visitor numbers on Carbon, water quality and air quality
- school visits with overnight camps
- cultural talks
- Partnership working with Ratty railway
- Parkruns (Muncaster)
- coordination of volunteers who welcome visitors for countryside code type messaging
- tourist code about respecting residents, take litter home, leave no trace, be kind. Helps to make visitors realise they are entering somewhere special
- education in Cumbria schools about the National Park and how to care for it
- low cost shuttle buses between visitor destinations (review learnings from Ullswater Hopper)

Group 2

- promote and use £2 bus fare initiative
- miles without stiles
- help visitors understand how communities and businesses work in the National Park
- respond to demand for longer hours, Tourist Information Centres (TICs) and other businesses
- training to help businesses accommodate different audiences
- understand the economic value & opportunity of making opportunities more accessible
- genuine 'warm welcome' approach and saying no carefully if not a good fit (training need?)
- Lake District for Everyone Key Outcome Group Journeys Project
- brown tourist sign review/refresh
- Arts bringing a wider audience
- maintaining footpaths
- countryside code awareness
- open farm visits/shows
- inclusivity
- minimise cultural barriers (or perceptions) e.g. national programme to increase diversity of visitors
- provide digital accessibility too e.g. Visit England providing digital details of what is accessible

- economic accessibility?
- e-bike routes
- trampers i.e. Whinlatter
- apps/websites – destination responsive to bespoke needs

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
FOTP	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