



**Meeting of the Lake District National Park Partnership
Monday 16th March 2026 at 10:00-15:30 – Bassenthwaite Parish Room**

MINUTES

Partner Name	Organisation	Apologies received
Celia Caulcott	Independent Chair	
	ACT	Lorraine Smyth Fran Richardson
Peter Frost-Pennington	Business Task Force	
Sarah Mitchell Sally Lansbury	Cumberland Council	
Rachel Kelly	Cumbria Association of Local Councils	
Robert Frewen	Country Land & Business Association	Harriet Ranson
	Cumbria & Lakes Local Access Forum	Carole Barr
Gill Haigh	Cumbria Tourism	
Steve Trotter	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	
Jen Cormack	Enterprising Cumbria	
Ellyse Mather	Environment Agency	Carol Holt
Kevin May Jake Thompson	Forestry Commission/Forestry England	Keith Jones Mark Holroyd
Simon Johnson	Fresh Water Biological Association	
Mike Hill	Friends of the Lake District	
Kristof Fatsar Catherine Dewar	Historic England	
Sarah Swindley Keith Ashcroft	Lake District Foundation	
Steve Ratcliffe Gavin Capstick Rob Allison Phil Drane Chloe Swift Hanna Latty Tim Duckmanton Alice Collier Tiffany Hunt Peter Walter	LDNPA LDNPA Member LDNPA Member	
Veronica Fiorato Adrian Anderson	LDNPP	
Kerry Rennie Clare Argent	Natural England	
Dan Taylor	National Trust	Jez Westgarth
	National Farmers Union	David Hall Adam Briggs

Phil Bolam	RSPB	James Archer
Jodie Mills	West Cumbria Rivers Trust	
Angela Jones Judith Derbyshire	Westmorland and Furness Council	
Kate Stark John Gorst	United Utilities	
Helen Manns	University of Cumbria	

Observers	Organisation	Apologies received
	Woodland Trust	Pete Leeson
	Local Nature Partnership	Jody Ferguson

1. Welcome and introduction (Chair)

The Chair welcomed attendees to Bassenthwaite and outlined the agenda, noting the importance of the workshop sessions and keeping the big picture in perspective whilst continuing work on the Plan.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting – 2nd Feb 2026 (Chair)

No amends received, duly considered approved by Partners.

3. Chair's announcements (Chair)

Whilst the Partnership had asked the Combined Authority for a representative/s to come to the meeting to discuss devolution (a topic Partners have expressed an interest in learning more and being kept up to date) unfortunately none was able to attend on this occasion. The Partnership hopes they can join a future meeting.

It is known that the Combined Authority has now been established with John Barradell as Interim CEO, with the first meeting on 18th March. Three mayoral candidates have declared so far: Libby Bateman (Lib Dem, YDNP Board Member), Mike Starkie (Conservative, ex-mayor of Copeland) and Dave Allen (Labour, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner).

ACTION: Partnership to be kept updated on Devolution developments as applicable

4. DEFRA initiatives update (Gavin Capstick, LDNPA)

Gavin Capstick (LDNPA) gave a further update (having already mentioned at earlier Partnership meetings) on DEFRA pilots including a place based 'Pathfinder' project (involving a number of DEFRA 'family' partners) to develop a coordinated, common, aligned vision for nature recovery across stakeholders. This is designed to help remove the barriers 'customers' may face across dealing with multiple organisations.

Gavin also reminded Partners of his involvement with the (Hilary Cottam) 'Uplands Experiment' project involving nature protection and cultural heritage in two upland specific areas (Dartmoor and Cumbria). The new Secretary of State is supportive and committed to providing budget for the initiatives. A team is currently being built in Dartmoor (funded by *revenue*). A pilot is being developed for this, with active discussions with DEFRA on how the Lake District can be similarly involved.

ACTION: Further updates to be provided at Partnership meetings as applicable.

Comments from Partners (various):

- Important for transparency to understand who is involved in initiatives and who has been invited
- Needs a balanced guest list
- Needs local and national stakeholder buy-in
- Admin capacity issues to support further initiatives
- 'Radical Help' (authored by Hillary Cottam) recommended to Partners
- Need to understand scale of initiatives (Park, valley, Cumbria etc) – *Gavin advised the Pathfinder work would be Lake District National Park, the Cottam work Cumbria as a whole*
- Use learnings from similar scope projects in past, such as Pioneer work

5. World Heritage Site updates (Steve Ratcliffe, LDNPA)

Steve gave an update on the State of Conversation (SoC) report, which will go to the UNESCO committee in December 2026, with the first draft to be ready by September. This involves regular discussions with Historic England and DCMS (as State Party). Two key areas of focus will be an agro-pastoral system strategy and the impacts of vehicles on unsealed roads. There are concerns around the viability of aspects of agro-pastoral and hefting practices and both will be integrated in an agro-pastoral strategy. Partners cautioned that measuring nebulous activities such as hefting can be challenging as data is scarce and can be problematic. The strategy will need to overcome this.

Hanna Latty updated Partners on the nine (off-road) routes in the Lake District that have been proposed for monitoring over a 9 year period – which would allow the data to be analysed over this period. UNESCO has requested that this be speeded up and options are being explored, but there are significant cost implications.

The LDNPP will have oversight of the SOC report, with sign off by the LDNPP due in September.

Steve also updated Partners on the Windermere Villas conservation area, which will be considered by LDNPA in June following a public consultation and amendment of the proposed boundaries. This will aim to preserve WHS attributes related to the Villa movement alongside Windermere, and protect against detrimental development.

6. Deer Management Strategy update and next steps (Steve Ratcliffe, LDNPA)

The management strategy arose from the LDNPP Partnership Plan and subsequent steering group. There is now an agreed Lake District Deer Strategy, which is a first for an English National Park, and comes ahead of an expected national policy statement (later in March). The strategy will involve landscape scale management and the promotion of wild Lake District venison products (and accompanying branding/marketing), this will also involve skills development (stalking qualifications) and quality standards. The strategy will aim to minimise non-native species of deer.

Steve thanked Partners, such as the BTF and others, who had been involved in this work to date.

7. Delivery: Other partnerships, groups + strategies (Various)

The Chair explained that this section of the meeting had been included as an opportunity for Partners to hear updates from various other 'Partnerships' that organisations are involved with. These Partnerships are equally important for delivery in the Lake District and important for the LDNPP Partnership Plan as there is complementary overlap in aims and activity. This raises interesting questions about how to best use shared workforces and resources.

Love Windermere Partnership Action Plan (Ruth Forrester, Love Windermere)

- *see slides*

Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership (Bex Stamper, ZCCP)

- *see slides*

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Angela Jones, W&F)

Angela gave a verbal update on the LNRS which was launched last year, and W&F remains the lead partner. It is a spatial strategy and partnership, required by the Environment Act, designed to restore Cumbria's biodiversity by mapping specific locations for habitat creation and setting, which includes identifying, connecting, and enhancing habitats. It comprises a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and a Local Habitat Map, aiming to reverse nature decline, connect ecosystems, and deliver benefits like flood mitigation and carbon storage

The LNRS is not yet in the Devolution Bill but clarity will be needed on how this work moves across to the Combined Authority and how this work is continued; given this is something of a blank page there is an opportunity to influence.

Strategic Visitor Management Group (SVMG) (Steve Ratcliffe, LDNPA)

- *see slides*

Destination Management Plan delivery (Gill Haig, CT)

- *see slides*

Comments from Partners (various):

- could be useful to have matrix to show what LDNPP Partners are involved in other Partnerships
- Not all partnerships are delivery Partnerships, so useful to know where actual delivery sits
- Need to know how to effectively influence and also influence upwards (regional, or national level government)

ACTION: share slides with Partners in follow up email (complete)

Break

8. Consultation responses report discussion (Chair)

Veronica reminded Partners of the reach of the consultation and gave an overview of the responses and themes/trends (see slides), and the likely changes that have flowed from this (noting today's workshops would also influence these). Veronica thanked the drafting team for all their hard work throughout this process.

9. Workshop 1: draft Plan amendments (Veronica Fiorato)

Refining the Plan: Objectives and Measures of Success – see slides

Partners were tasked with discussing the proposed amendments to their group's objectives and targets, and these were captured on flipcharts.

Workshop output (photographs) available to Partners on request

10. Workshop 1 part 2: draft Plan amendments (Veronica Fiorato)

Refining the Plan: Objectives and Measures of Success – see slides

Partners moved around the groups and were tasked with discussing the proposed amendments to their group's objectives and targets, and these were captured on flipcharts.

Workshop output (photographs) available to Partners on request

11. Workshop 2: Action Planning (Veronica Fiorato)

Action Planning – see slides

Partners worked in four facilitated groups to prioritise actions with a view to refining down the overall number.

Workshop output (photographs) available to Partners on request

12. Plan timetable update (Veronica Fiorato)

Veronica provided an update on plan timescales and next steps, as currently understood with a summer sign off as primary scenario (although contingency until October). See slides.

Partners were asked if they thought, pending revisions as a result of the workshops, that a June sign off was realistic (the room largely felt yes?) Final thoughts:

- Need to ensure language is inclusive and non-technical where possible
- Enormous amount of work has gone into this, at some point need to decide it is done (otherwise edits become diminishing returns) and focus on delivery
- Whilst the Plan document will be a final version, the actions are not set in stone and it is the intention that the action plan will be iterative and regularly reviewed to ensure it is agile
- Plan needs to be socialised back throughout Partner organisations

13.AOB (Chair)

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and helpful workshop discussions. Further work will be done on the Plan draft ahead of the next LDNPP meeting, where it is hoped Partners will be asked for approval to progress the Plan to Authority sign off.

The Chair noted it was the final meeting for Catherine Dewar (Historic England) and Kevin May (Forestry England) and thanked them for the support of the Partnership over the years. They were each presented with a Lake District gift, a card and a bottle of wine.

REMINDER: Next Partnership Meeting: 12th May, Crook Memorial Hall. Agenda and papers to follow.

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
FTTP	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