



**Meeting of the Lake District National Park Partnership
Monday 2nd February 2026 at 10:00-15:00 – Rheged, Blue Room**

APPROVED MINUTES

Partner Name	Organisation	Apologies received
Celia Caulcott	Independent Chair	
Fran Richardson	ACT	Lorraine Smyth
Peter Frost-Pennington	Business Task Force	
Sarah Mitchell	Cumberland Council	
Rachel Kelly	Cumbria Association of Local Councils	
Robert Frewen	Country Land & Business Association	Harriet Ranson
Carole Barr	Cumbria & Lakes Local Access Forum	
Gill Haigh	Cumbria Tourism	
Steve Trotter	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	
Jen Cormack	Enterprising Cumbria	
Ellyse Mather	Environment Agency	Carol Holt
Mark Holroyd Keith Jones	Forestry Commission/Forestry England	Kevin May
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 (am only) Chloe Swift Hanna Latty Tim Duckmanton Tiffany Hunt Peter Walter	LDNPA LDNPA Member LDNPA Member	
Veronica Fiorato Adrian Anderson	LDNPP	
Kerry Rennie	Natural England	
Jez Westgarth	National Trust	
Adam Briggs	National Farmers Union	David Hall
	RSPB	James Archer
Jodie Mills	West Cumbria Rivers Trust	
Angela Jones Judith Derbyshire	Westmorland and Furness Council	

Kate (John Gorst)	United Utilities	
Helen Manns	University of Cumbria	

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

1. Welcome and introduction (Chair)

The Chair welcomed attendees to Rheged 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 - 5 November 2025 (Chair)

No amends received, duly considered approved by Partners.

3. Chair's announcements (Chair)

Gavin Capstick (LDNPA) gave an update on a number of 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 mentioned his involvement in discussions with Hilary Cottam (social scientist working with government) regarding the 'Uplands Experiment' project involving nature protection and cultural heritage in two upland specific areas (Dartmoor and Cumbria). A pilot is being developed for this.

ACTION: Partnership to be kept updated on these initiatives

Partners agreed that devolution was also a real opportunity to ensure the LDNPP was in a position to influence key decision makers, and present a coherent approach to many of the challenges impacting the National Park (and wider Cumbria). The various initiatives underway are an opportunity for the Partnership to decide how to invest at landscape scale.

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

Steve gave an update on the State of Conversation report, with the project board focussing attention on the monitoring of the use of Green lanes, as well as progressing work on a Hefting Strategy. There will be a meeting with Defra to further the latter..

Nick Lancaster (former BTF Chair) is now the Chair of the Interpretation Strategy Delivery Board and the Board is now activity driving delivery of the Action Plan, which will be a key demonstration of commitment to delivery to UNESCO..

Comments from Partners (*largely related to hefting*):

- Pace of change in farming can be interpreted in different ways by different farming groups (NT tenants for example)
- The economics is a constantly changing picture and result in different responses from land managers
- Need to find a model that supports small upland farm viability

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

The steering group has developed and agreed a strategy to deliver a plan to manage Lake District deer populations. Previous 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' (FiPL) funding has been used to look at deer numbers, with a whole park survey a longer-term aspiration.

The group is looking at how to further the knowledge and expertise in this space, including how to ensure the Lake District has the skills (stalking, butchery etc) to help implement the strategy. Steve also mentioned work is progressing on developing a Lake District venison market and branding, including the involvement of a commercial operator. Gill Haigh noted this tied in well to the Destination Management Plan which has a local food strategy section.

ACTION: further update on the Deer Strategy to be provided at future LDNPP meeting

Break

6. Funding Partnership activity (Various)

HEART lottery project (Sarah Swindley, LDF)

Sarah gave a presentation (see slides) outlining how the English Lake District World Heritage Site is under increasing pressure from climate change. Flooding, biodiversity loss and rising temperatures are already affecting the landscapes, traditions and heritage that make it globally significant. The HEART (Heritage, Environment and Resilience Together) project, funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, will respond to these challenges by combining research, inclusive engagement and on-the-ground delivery-embedding climate resilience into the future of the Lake District's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

ACTION: share slides (including milestone dates)

Partners asked questions around which communities this will focus on (the answer being interest and geography, farming and business, people without much existing Lake District connection and marginalised communities). Other Partners noted the need to respond to the fundamentals of owning old buildings, and what this means for retrofitting (and how this can impact OUV and what appetite UNESCO may have for these compromises in terms of building appearance). The need to protect the World Heritage Site from an increase in invasive species due to climate change was also discussed.

Landscape Connections lottery bid (Hanna Latty, LDNPA)

Hanna gave an overview of the HLF Landscape Connections Programme (including funding and timescales – *see slides*) which aims to support:

- Recovery of landscapes, habitats and species
- Celebrate cultural heritage
- Improve access for all
- Deliver HLF's 4 principles - saving heritage, protecting the environment, inclusion, access and participation, and organisational sustainability

There are 3 main asks of Partners:

1. Enable staff to contribute to the co-design process interviews /workshops/ meetings / document review - as needed during **March – July** period (details to follow)
2. Explore match funding support you could offer or opportunities you could help unlock (*match funding can also be in kind*)
3. Consider the role you wish to play in the project from the Development Phase onwards.

ACTION: share slides with Partners

Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FiPL) (Steve Ratcliffe, LDNPA)

Steve reminded Partners that new funding is open for new applicants and initiatives, including a capital pot for 30 by 30. It is likely to be competitive and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Workshop 1: funding ideas/opportunities

Partners undertook the following task:

- *Discuss/propose ideas and put these on post-it notes on flip-chart paper*
- *Group ideas by Objective theme if appropriate*
- *Agree as a group what your top 3 are to feedback*

All output was photographed and collated into a feedback document for use in further developing the Plan. The output document is available to Partners on request.

7. Plan update (Veronica Fiorato) – see slides

Veronica gave an update on Plan process (*see slides 5-8*), specifically targets and action planning (including what is missing in the Plan and invitation for Partners to offer further assistance and get in contact with the drafting team). A 'lunchtime' task was outlined - to capture the 'big ticket' projects or pieces of work that Partners are aware of that will help deliver the Plan objectives over the 5-year life of the next Plan.

8. Public consultation and initial review (Veronica Fiorato) – see slides

Veronica gave an update on high level trends from the consultation responses (noting it had only just closed on 30th Jan and that online response, and free format responses, need to be reviewed more deeply) – *see slides 10-22*

When further analysis has been undertaken, results and suggested next steps ('you said, we did') will be brought back to Partners (most likely at 16th March Partnership meeting). Partners agreed that the results showed the core themes of the Plan are correct, and it is clear how interconnected they are. It will be a challenge to ensure the ambition of the

plan, and the scale of projects, is matched with commitment and adequate resources particularly given the ongoing high levels of uncertainty and challenge (political, funding, climate, farming change etc).

Lunch (provided) and networking

9. Workshop 2: Plan delivery (looking back) (Chair, Partnership Manager and Facilitators)

Partners undertook the following task:

- *Use post-its on flip chart paper to capture what has worked well, and why*
- *Use different coloured post-its to capture what hasn't worked so well and why*
- *Agree as a group your top 2 of each to feedback*

All output was photographed and collated into a feedback document for use in further developing the Plan. The output document is available to Partners on request.

10. Workshop 3: Plan delivery (ideas for the future): (Chair, Partnership Manager and Facilitators)

Partners undertook the following task:

- *4 facilitated groups*
- *Discuss ideas for how we could deliver better together (including using examples from other partnership projects, and why they work)*
- *Capture these on post-it notes/flipchart paper*

All output was photographed and collated into a feedback document for use in further developing the Plan. The output document is available to Partners on request.

11. Plan timetable update (Partnership Manager)

Veronica provided an update on plan timescales, as currently understood (including contingency until October). See slide 7 in pack.

12. AOB (Chair)

The Chair noted that given numerous mentions of devolution at the meeting, it would be a good idea for the Partnership to hold hustings with Mayoral candidates (probably in April 2027).

Following discussions today the Partnership should look to establish a Devolution task & finish group to look at how best to prepare for the opportunities devolution and a Combined/Mayoral Authority can bring to Cumbria. Angela Jones (W&F) offered to scope this.

ACTION: The Chair also asked Hanna Latty (LDNPA) and Sarah Swindley (LDF) to consider whether a Partnership Task & Finish group should be considered to look at Partnership funding.

The Chair thanked Partners for a productive meeting and workshop sessions.

REMINDER: Next Partnership Meeting: 16th March, Bassenthwaite Parish Room
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