

## (The last) Cumbria Local Access Forum (CLAF) meeting, Ambleside 21 October 2016



The first joint meeting of the Cumbria and the Lake District LAFs took place in Ambleside to visit two path improvement projects. The steep path rising up to Jenkin Crag was visited first. The December 2015 floods had washed large stones out of the path and onto the main road. Working with the Lake Parish Council and Ambleside Civic Society, a rather urban concrete path with a central drain was installed by CCC, to stop debris washing into the road in any future floods. Higher up, the path is now stepped with thick sandstone flags from a former mill. Match funding was gained for this ROWIP project.

The second site was to two bridges in Rothay Park, where new signs, asking cyclists 'to dismount and take care', were examined. Members learned how many agencies have to be involved before any remedial work can take place. Repairs to the packhorse bridge which takes the Loughrigg footpath were paid for by various agencies. Divers had to inject grouting into the bridge to fill voids inside the bridge, and CCC contractors replaced the stone wall coping. Flood water rose to a height above the footpath sign adjacent. Members posed for an historic photograph of the two Chairs Charles Ecroyd and Carole Barr shaking hands on the bridge.



Before the afternoon meeting members heard brief backgrounds of the Lake District and Cumbria LAFs to set the context for the discussion of the procedures for the new Joint LAF. Members were pleased to be joined by two County Councillors and a representative of the Lake District National Park Authority. Issues discussed included the title (**Cumbria and Lakes LAF** was agreed), Chair, membership, Councillor representation, secretariat, meetings, logo and budget. All discussions were amicable and positive. Members raised fewer issues than normal in this special meeting. Progress on recording fences erected on Open Access land, to exclude stock for habitat restoration, was mentioned. Members agreed to urge the Lancaster Canal Towpath Group towards multi-user routes along the proposed new paths. Morecambe Bay Partnership is leading attempts to draw funding for a survey of the likely cost of an access route across the Arnside Viaduct. Members were asked to respond to the report on Stretch 4 of the England Coast Path, around Walney Island. Carole Barr thanked everyone for working well together. The next meeting of the Cumbria and Lakes LAF is scheduled for 17 January 2017.

