

Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum meeting January 2017 Threlkeld and Newbiggin

Members of the new joint Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum (CALLAF) met at the northern office of the Lake District National Park (LDNP) to hear Cath Johnson explain the Keswick to Threlkeld Railway Path Reconnection Project. The former railway line, a very popular path, was severed in several places on 6 December 2015, as the flood swollen River Greta washed away bridges, trees, and caravans together with lengths of paths. The £5m brief for the project is to provide an accessible route for the wide range of former users, while not compromising its possible future use for a restored railway. Access for horses could be considered depending on the surface decided upon. Three options are being proposed and members were urged to submit their feedback responses via the LDNP web site.



Along the path from Low Briery, members examined the former tunnel to Keswick. Although now infilled (with debris from the building of the A66), and up to 10m below the present surface, tunnel restoration technology has advanced so much that it may be possible to re-open the tunnel. Members reported on similar tunnels reopened for modern use in other areas. The 'iconic' boardwalk suspended above land slipping into the River Greta is nearing the end of its intended life span.



Where the severed bridge had to be removed to comply with Environment Agency regulations, over 100m of track, formerly protected by 1ton boulders, has all been washed away. Reports suggest that the river was moved when the railway was built. The new single span bridge must allow for the river's new course. Meanwhile a new link path to Brundholme Wood is planned. Members thanked Scott Henderson and Cath Johnson for a most useful explanation and visit.

At the afternoon meeting at Newbiggin village hall, Charles Ecroyd was nominated as Chair of the new CALLAF with Carole Barr as the Vice Chair, and a new simple logo and priorities for the new joint LAF were agreed.

Members had many news items to raise.

- New routes for 'trampers' should be published shortly by Morecambe Bay Partnership.
- Kendal is planning a 3 day Walking Festival for June.
- The National Park has been awarded £3m for storm damage repairs.
- Projects are ongoing to train leaders to get more black and ethnic minority groups into Cumbria's countryside.
- Work on Lost Ways is continuing, as are access issues at The Helm, with investigations of links to Open Access land in the South Lakes.
- The Hierarchy of Trail Routes for motorised use in unsurfaced county roads has resurveyed 200 routes, covering 200miles of UCR.
- In north Cumbria reports on 4 footpath planning cases were submitted, two near Cockermouth, where there was concern over the closure of one footpath, while a further 3 footpaths were planned to be added to a new housing area. In south Cumbria 4 planning cases were reported, 2 in Kendal, one approved a new flood-relief bridge at Grayrigg, but the extinguishment of an unrecorded footpath in Barrow was not approved.
- There has been little progress recently on Health and Welfare links.
- ROW in the new Yorkshire Dales NP are now delegated to the YDNP and Rangers have been appointed to a new base in Orton. Repairs to bridges still rest with CCC; great co-operation has seen the restoration of bridges at Barbon and Sedbergh.
- The Arnside viaduct project is progressing well. The ATOG (Arnside to Grange) group are about to tender for a feasibility study. Network Rail have confirmed that provision for a cantilever route was made when the viaduct was rebuilt, but this is likely to cost £1-5m.

In other news, Coastal Access is progressing well. Members were asked to respond to a request for higher rights (cycling or horse riding) near Ulverston. Some sample clearance of willow woodland on Walney Island will be undertaken by Natural England to assess its effects on access and conservation. Further agenda items were fully discussed. All agreed it had been a very successful meeting.