

CALLAF meeting April 2017 Coniston



The Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum met in April at the Bluebird café in Coniston, to hear from the Lake District National Park about Natural Capital.

Natural Capital is an approach, previously called Ecosystems Services, being advocated by the government to recognise the value of ecosystems, to well-being and flood defence, and also in economic terms. The government aims to incorporate Natural Capital into its accounting by 2020. United Utilities, Environment Agency and the Lake District National Park have all carried out pilot valuations. Under DEFRA's 25 year Environment Plan, Cumbria is to be one of three national pilot areas, with a focus within Cumbria on Patterdale, Braithwaite and Staveley. LAF members heard about Natural Capital, and took a short walk on the well-used footpath, where cycling is permitted, over National Trust land to Coniston Old Hall. Natural Capital assessments for Cumbria are ongoing, for the review of the Lake District Local Plan.

The formal afternoon meeting took place at Coniston Institute. The agenda included items raised by members:

- A common approach to reporting on public rights of way diversions was discussed.
- The Ordnance Survey is to be asked if the temporary fences for woodland planting which have been mapped by LAF members can be shown on OS maps.
- A request was made for information on parking suitable for group events for disabled ramblers.
- Members were urged to claim more footpaths within their parishes before the cut-off date of 2026.
- Visual access to Ullswater shore was reported to be much improved by the cutting down of some trees.
- The permit system for off road vehicles using Gatesgarth Pass is working well, though the locks on the gates are frequently vandalised.
- Some progress is being made towards a cycling and walking trail across the Arnside viaduct.
- Morecambe Bay Partnership are introducing a scheme to hire electric bikes for use around Morecambe Bay.
- The Secretary of State has approved Stretch 4 of the England Coast Path, around Walney Island, though local concerns have been expressed about a possible impact on fishing from the shore.
- Decisions are awaited for Stretch 3 of the England Coast Path to Gretna.
- There is a huge amount of work still to do on rights of way damaged by 2015 flooding.
- Local Access Forums in the Manchester area are experiencing problems.



The next meeting is planned for 4 July 2017.