



BMC LAKES AREA



View from Lonscale Fell over the Lake District.

REPORT OF CHAIR 2020/21

There have been 4 meetings through the year - all on zoom with 27/18 present.

Frank Bennett took over as Chair, from **Mike Parsons** - thanks to Mike for his six years as Chair.

The **Covid 19 Pandemic** and lockdown has had a major effect on the year with the authorities setting in place more controls over visitors following the experiences of 2020.

- Needless to say the huge volume of visitors has left its effect, particularly in the popular areas and valleys.
- Major issues of litter, fly camping, car parking, blockage of roads and knock-on effect for travel for all especially buses, ambulances, tractors and other large vehicles.
- Many visitors have no experience of the area and the mountains, with the knock-on effect of lack of awareness of dangers on the fell and attitudes to being in the countryside.

Dave Turnbull has had regular discussions with Richard Leafe (CEO – LDNPA), who also attended one of the meetings. At this meeting he told of LDNPA planned actions:

- Allowing a number of **temporary car parks** established with a 56-day limit.
- Looking to install additional **temporary toilets** in the area. Comment from Mike Parsons on only 3 public toilets between Patterdale and Pooley Bridge!
- **“Safer Lakes”** - with website and information
 - Have permanent staff
 - Linked with multi-agencies
 - 100 Visitor Management Volunteers
 - Located at major visitor points to give out information; get out the message about staying safe; do not litter or leave items on fells, lakeside etc



- Educate and inform people
- Very grateful of all the people who are helping - including Kate Willshaw & Friends of the Lakes and Nicola Bolton & Lakeland Plastic Collective.
- Definitely not the case that everyone is behaving badly - it is just a minority but a significant minority.
- Following message of the recently re-issued **Countryside Code**.
- For those living in the National Park and nearby we have been lucky to live here - particularly in lockdown.
- Many others have discovered the Lakes for the first time and are looking to return.

Hill to Oceans

- BMC initiative
- Bags and Pickers are available from Alpkit in Ambleside and Keswick
- BMC would welcome other shops to help with this - contact BMC accordingly

Nicola Bolton (Lakes Plastic Collective) attended meetings and reported on work done by her group in collecting litter.

- Been busying – working closely with LDNPA and other authorities.
- More Fly camping – reported via the Safer Lakes website has been useful.
- Lake shores are the main areas for issues.
- But also on the fells.
- Visitors keen to help – can direct to Alpkit.
- More issues with BBQs - Nicola B counted 14/15 campfires by Honister Pass.
- Not usual visitors and not all disrespectful.
- Fires etc in Borrowdale Woods - now area fenced off - this is a shame but necessary.
- Need more bins - and bins being emptied.

National Trust - Borrowdale - Joe Cornforth attended meeting and reported:

- Heaving at Bank Holiday.
- Last year was horrendous - this year not quite as bad - but!!
- Most people on the lake shores - less people on the fells - but still there.
- Still lots of rubbish to bring down from Sprinkling Tarn.
- Volunteer wardens (100) at fell access points been useful to get out messages to those going onto the fell

Friends of the Lakes - Kate Willshaw attended meeting

- **The Great Cumbrian Litter Pick** - 21-22 May 2021.
- **Research with Keep Britain Tidy campaign**
 - Looking at Who and Why drop litter.
 - 24 people admitted to dropping litter and being used in the survey.
 - Full report now published - [Understanding Littering and Related Anti-Social Behaviours in the Lake District](#) - with issues coming through as follows:



- Inconvenience of carrying litter.
- Bins full.
- Festival mentality – that “others” will pick it up and keep place tidy.

Parking for Catbells - there has been a long-term issue of parking for Catbells. A proposal for a new car park was discussed and put to the vote at one of the area meetings and voted against. Mixed feelings by members but an official objection was submitted to the planning authority (the LDNPA).

Transport and Parking in the Lake District - There was a consultation about this. Much discussion with following points:

- Feeling that the UK is “very primitive” in dealing with tourists, when compared to many places in Europe.
- Underlying issue of who pays for the infrastructure and ongoing costs - with limited resources and remit of LDNPA.
- Need to have a valley by valley approach for the Lake District – although the overall issues are similar – each valley has its own problems.
- NT looking specifically at Borrowdale and Wasdale.

LDNPA Management Plan 2020-2025 Consultation

- Douglas Chalmers (Friends of the Lake District (FOLD)) attended a meeting to give us insight into his “take” on the plan. He commented as follows
 - FOLD supportive of number of elements but huge reservations regarding transport.
 1. The aspirations do not go far enough to reach carbon reduction targets.
 2. Too many cars in the National Park.
 3. Major ask!
 4. Needs to look at feasibility study to look at management of transport.
 5. LDNPA (Partnership) under pressure from commercial areas to ensure there are no constraints whatsoever to the volume of visitors in the Lake District.
 6. There needs to be a better visitor experience – and not end up in a huge traffic jam (not everywhere!).
 7. In 2019 FOLD held a Sustainable Transport Conference - but nothing happened since – admittedly the pandemic and associated issues have not helped. Ideas such as road charging with exemptions for locals etc.
- Comments from others:
 - Series of comments put together and agreed by the BMC from executive of Lakes area - these were submitted to the LDNPA.
 - Ken Taylor mentioned that the Access Management Group is planning to set up a working group looking at sustainable transport policy for BMC nationally.



- Concerns raised by the local climbers and accessibility to the area for cragging. Similarly, re. access to the likes of the Central Lakes for climbing on Great Gable and also winter climbing.
- Feeling that each valley is different and has own issues and there is no solution of one size fits all.
- Concern raised that there is no user group on the LDNP Partnership -
 1. Closest group is the Local Access Forum – but no resources at its disposal.
 2. There is a business group!!
 3. BMC were there as observers.
 4. Dave Turnbull now has meetings with Richard Leafe and issues directed through him to RL.
 5. Rob Bishop (BMC) sits on the Local Access Forum, but has been relatively inactive due to furlough.
- There is an Ullswater Valley group looking at the area – which highlights usefulness for each valley. “CAST” - Cumbria Action for Sustainable Transport created initially focussed on the Ullswater Valley.
- Main concerns of FOLD:
 1. Management of visitors - making it easier to get about.
 2. Concerns of planning - big hotels are getting bigger!
 3. Upland farming families
 1. Land management needs experienced land managers.
 2. Farming needs focused flexible funding.
 3. Farmers need a secure future – not false promises.
 4. Too much uncertainty.
 4. FOLD had supported the Valley Action Plan but this was stymied by the NPP as too complicated. A new scheme has been launched in NPs across the country called “Farming in Protected Landscapes” for details of the Lake District one, see: <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/farming/farming-in-protected-landscapes>

ACCESS ISSUES

- **Bird Restrictions** - usual bird restrictions, however due to restrictions of access to crags more birds are nesting in new places so we need feedback from climbers and walkers of the whereabouts of birds, particularly peregrines and new nest sites.
- **Falcon Crag (Upper and Lower)** have had restrictions for many years. It was thought that the ravens on the lower crag had fledged and it was acceptable to climb on the right side of the Lower Crag. A report came back from members of the Carlisle Mountaineering Club that there was a nest in the centre of the crag and some agitated peregrines above. This was reported to Natural England and investigated to find that the peregrines were on the Upper Crag (since fledged) and Kestrels on the Lower Crag and restriction re-imposed.



- **Shepherds Crag** - unfortunately the car parking at High Lodore Farm, other than for residents there, has stopped. There had been a number of issues there and the final straw seems to have been a campervan stopping there overnight and the occupant not asking permission. Climbers have been very grateful for this parking over the years - as well as the café there! There is no suitable alternative so access, by car, to this crag is somewhat complicated, with the limited parking available. Other alternatives include bus, bike and launch - as well as Shank's Pony.
- **Block on the Fang, Swindale** - The block at the top of pitch 1 of The Fang has been trundled. After a report to the local BMC Access Rep about it seeming unsound three climbers went to check and found it unsafe and duly managed to safely trundle the block. They also cleaned up the ledge, where the block had been, for future climbers. Thanks to those climbers and helping to stop what could have been a terrible accident.
- **Hodge Close – Rockfall** - there was a large rockfall in the “Stiff Little Fingers/Secret Affair” on 27th June. Not sure if it has affected other routes in that area!
- **Kings Meaburn** - a large tree fell over but was lodged against part of the crag. Agreement made with the landowner to fund half the cost of removal of the tree through the BMC. That area of the crag is now much more open.
- **Armathwaite** - a cyclist jumped off the top of the crag, above Codpiece, with a ramp landing – this was a drop of 38 feet with 53 feet distance – and seems to be the highest drop on a bike in the UK. As it was, the bike was well away from the crag. The landowners (Forestry England) were not happy. The ramp has been removed.
- **Headend Quarry** - there were reports of a local farmer saying climbing was not allowed at the quarry. Access Rep contacted the Bolton Parish Council (Owners of the Quarry) and gave details of use of the quarry by climbers going back to the 1960's and various other information. This to be discussed at the next Council meeting.
- **Belay system at Upper Heron Crag** - the issue of the belay system at this crag has been raised over time. Vegetation at the top has grown over the years and now necessary to place belay rope at the top prior to climbing. Idea of placing belay bolts along the top has been suggested. Currently not agreed as national policy except in some situations e.g. belay system at Sergeant Crag Slabs, which was placed due to ecological reasons. This and with other locations is an issue for a future meeting or a separate special meeting!!

LAKES FEST - Duddon Valley

- The idea of a Lakes Fest was raised in 2020 and it was agreed that such a festival could be held in the Duddon Valley - based at Turner Hall Campsite.
- A wide mix of activities for rock climbers, fell walkers, skygazers etc was planned.



- With the Covid 19 pandemic this has been postponed and looking to have this on the weekend of 24th April 2022.

BMC LAKES YOUTH MEET - this has not been held since 2019 and the next Youth Meet is planned for the weekend of 1/3 July 2022 at the FRCC Rawhead Hut in Langdale. More details available from Ron Kenyon (email - ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com)

PDFs OF NEWLY DEVELOPED CRAGS IN CUMBRIA - there have been a number of new crags developed over the years since the appearance of the last FRCC definitive guides.

Information on these is often difficult to find therefore a collection of pdfs of many of these has been produced and are on the FRCC website in the Climbing section -

<https://www.frcc.co.uk/rock-climbing/mini-guide-downloads/>

There is a wide selection of crags including:

- Additional crags at Thrang Crag in Langdale;
- Castle Crag (Wythburn) and Lockdown Buttress (Standing Crag) near Thirlmere;
- Crags near the summit of Kirkstone Pass;
- Recent developments at Runestone Quarry
- The easy bouldering venue and place for kids at Middle Busk Scar, at the head of the Eden Valley;
- The latest sports crag “mecca” at Beck Wythop;
- ... and more!!

These are free download and available for anyone to use.

The pdfs will be updated over time and more pdfs will be added for new crags (there are at least three more currently in development !!) Comments on routes, grades, stars etc would be welcome on the FRCC website.

Frank Bennett
Chair - BMC Lakes Area



Pillar Rock - First ascent of Stalingrad E3