

**Southern Boundary Partnership meeting: 18:30 on 21 November 2018 at Grizebeck Community Hall**

**1. Introductions**

The meeting purpose, agenda and focus on tourism were agreed. The speaker for the discussion on housing was not available as indicated on the agenda so this topic would be covered at another meeting.

**2. Friends of the Lake District report**

Douglas Chalmers explained that work continues to investigate the suitability of the rough search area for inclusion in the National Park. The landscape consultant, Alison Falmer, is looking at historic information, cultural significance and other considerations including literary connections. The consultant is looking specifically at measures of the quality of the environment and setting both with and without guides to the area to ensure that an objective view is maintained. The consultant will identify areas that she judges to meet the criteria and these areas will be forwarded to Natural England who will then engage with DEFRA. A report from the consultant on this work is expected in Q1 2019 which should match the timescale for the Glover review.

At present, Friends of the Lake District (FoLD) are engaging with key individuals in Cumbria to ensure that they understand the process that is underway and to identify any issues they may have at an early stage. Engagement with local people was questioned. It was explained that FoLD are putting together the technical information on what areas could be suitable for inclusion in the National Park and that there will be roadshows in Spring 2019 to share information on the implications of a boundary change with local communities when it is known where a new boundary could be drawn. Information is being built up through the ongoing meetings and presented in, for example, fact sheets such as for farming. It was explained that there is a difference between engagement with local communities and the community consultation that Natural England would conduct as part of its process.

John Campbell introduced himself as the chair of Friends of the Lake District (FoLD) and outlined his support for the ongoing work. He indicated that FoLD were happy to fund the technical investigation of the National Park boundary and are grateful for the participation of the SBP.

**3. Focus on Tourism**

Dan Visser, a Board Director for Cumbria Tourist Board (CTB), presented information related to the challenges and opportunities facing tourism. The distinction between Cumbria and the Lake District is not always clear when considering statistics but CTB use the term Lake District. A presentation will be sent separately following the meeting.

Cumbria receives 47 million visitors/year, the majority of whom are day trippers with 6.6 million staying overnight (for the National Park there are 19.5million visitors/year and 5 million stays overnight). The tourism industry contributes 37,700 Full time equivalent

jobs and £3 billion pounds/year to the economy. Tourism is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest revenue source in Cumbria (after nuclear and manufacturing).

CTB is a destination management organisation and progresses projects on behalf of its members. A small number of projects are conducted with Visit Britain (formerly the NW Development Agency). CTB has a lobbying function and, for instance, was represented in the House of Lords earlier this month.

A relatively small percentage (14%) of visitors to the Lake District are from other countries: Chinese visitors are increasing, Japanese visitors are decreasing, Germans and Dutch are significant European visitors, Indian, Arab and Korean visitor numbers are slowly increasing. The majority of visitors are from the UK (86%) and of these most are from the area North of Birmingham and South of Edinburgh.

Reasons visitors choose Cumbria were outlined:

- Landscape
- Food and drink (interest in the quality and provenance of food and drink is an important factor across the UK)
- Spending time with friends and family
- Events (i.e. Kendal Calling, Xmas lights; this factor is of increasing importance)
- Adventure (variety is of increasing importance)
- Challenges (note that Cumbria competes with the Alps, Scotland, North Wales for ease of access from Manchester)

Challenges for tourism were outlined:

- Connectivity (transport): Cumbria is far behind other areas in terms of a sustainable transport system. Although traffic and parking in central areas can be seen as an impediment to workers and visitors the congestion in the area does not meet government criteria for funding.
- Connectivity (telecommunications, Wifi): Only 24% of travelers are willing to go somewhere without internet access (although they may be content to have limited access to e-mails etc).
- Talent: It is difficult to find good quality staff and contributing factors include the need to drive for 30 minutes or more from population centres into some tourist businesses, decrease in the working age population in Cumbria, and competition for staff with other industries (BAE etc) and other tourist facilities.
- Over tourism such as experienced in Barcelona and Venice disadvantages local people looking for accommodation that can be readily sold on-line to visitors.
- Visible lack of tolerance (signs, social media) to developments such as Thirlmere zip wire is not welcoming to visitors.

Opportunities/benefits were suggested:

- The alignment of outlying areas to the National Park boundary was not considered to be a factor that tourists take into account. CTB always use the term 'Lake District'. Reference to the National Park may help businesses establish and sustain themselves.

- More people are visiting outer areas of the Lake District. Tourism in the area is now year-round rather than being limited to summer as in the past.
- Many current visitors are older and the next tourist generation will have different needs and expectations. For instance, young people in cities may not drive and so access by train and other public transport is desirable.

The influence of conflicts and ‘fake news’ was discussed.

There was discussion of difficulties encountered in inclusion of outlying areas, such as ‘The forgotten Jewel’ in the vicinity of SW Copeland, within Lake District tourism promotion. CTB faces challenges in the fragmentation of the tourism promotion and is seeking for this to be better coordinated.

The opportunity for more hospitality training to provide local employment and resource for the tourism industry was discussed. It was suggested that the training needed to match local industry requirements rather than training for high end restaurants. Examples of difficulties in securing adequate catering resources were given.

There is the opportunity for the West Coast of Cumbria to promote unique features and provide ‘genuine authentic experiences’. There was discussion of smaller tourist facilities offering specialised services catering to visitors not interested in the ‘honey pot’ areas of the National Park. These facilities offer a variety of opportunities for part time working which are attractive to different sectors of the local community.

The impact of visitors along the Cumbria Way was highlighted: in some stretches the path is strewn with litter and is a wide and muddy track. It was suggested that a tourism tax could ameliorate some of this impact and many businesses would be happy to contribute to such a system. However, to be inclusive the tax would have to apply more widely than those staying overnight, e.g. a congestion charge. This technology is available but the capital cost is high and may not be supported.

It was suggested that there is a golden opportunity to learn from the experiences and challenges of tourism in the Lake District National Park in order to promote tourism but without the undesirable impacts. This would take coordinated effort across businesses, communities and agencies to work together on improvements to such areas as sustainable transport. The area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park extension is looking at some of these issues now without compromising its tranquility.

It was emphasised that tourism can be managed to fit the unique selling points of the area and could provide opportunities for employment, skills and training amongst the local communities.

#### **4. Glover review**

A handout on the call for evidence for the Glover review, an independent review of England’s National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, was provided and will be circulated separately. The deadline for submission is 18 December. It was agreed

that information for the review related to the Southern Boundary Partnership will be circulated in order that individuals and the Parish Councils they represent can use this as the basis for their response.

All were urged to respond to the Glover review call for evidence to indicate that the issue of the Park boundary is being considered by local communities following an agreed process. The meeting were reminded that seeking a boundary change from the 'grass roots' level is unique and should be emphasised.

It is not necessary at this time to state any preference on changing the boundary but it is important to emphasise the process that is being followed and to contribute. If there is support for changing the boundary then responses to the call for evidence can only help - and cannot harm - consideration of a boundary change.

It is important to emphasise people's enjoyment as one of the original main purposes of the establishment of the National Parks; the National Parks are not just about landscape.

The meeting agreed that David Savage will use the information available to provide a response to the call for evidence on behalf of the SBP.

#### **5. Meeting conclusion**

There was positive feedback on the single A4 farming fact sheet circulated after the October meeting. A similar format would be used for information from this meeting.

The next several meetings will be held at Grizebeck Community Hall at 18:30 on Wednesday evenings.

- 23 January
- 20 February (post-meeting note, this is a change following the meeting)
- 20 March

The meeting concluded at 20:20.

#### Attendees

Mike	Cumming	Askam Ireleth
Diana	Rutherford	Blawith and Subberthwaite
Gill	Wardle	Blawith and Subberthwaite
Ged	McGrath	Copeland MP Office
Robert	Williamson	Drigg and Carleton
Jay	Sayers	Duddon
Douglas	Chalmers	Friends of the Lake District
John	Campbell	Friends of the Lake District
Michael	Jackson	Kirkby Ireleth
Jill	Byrne	Kirkby Ireleth
William	Todd	Kirkby Ireleth

National Park Boundary Meeting

Southern Boundary Partnership

Jo	Edmundson	Lowick
Jane	Micklethwaite	Millom Town Council
Angela	Dixon	Millom Town Council
Bob	Kelly	Millom Town Council
David	Savage	Millom Without
Ian	Lockwood	Millom Without
Adrienne	Calsy	Millom Without
Mike	Harrington	Muncaster
Howard	Graves	Observer
Dan	Hunt	National Park
Maggie	Cumming	Whicham
Dan	Vissen	Cumbria Tourist Board
Nick	Lancaster	Business Task Force
Jackie	Lancaster	Langdale Leisure

Apologies

Alan	Cook	Aldingham
Steve	Smith	Copeland Council observer
Graham	Pitts	Duddon
Joanna	Greenway	Grange over Sands
Martin	Ingle	Grange over Sands
Denise	Burness	Millom Town Council
Angela	Nugent	Millom Without
Pauline	Murray	Millom Without
Brian	Wright	Millom Without
Gaby	Napoletani	Millom Without

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