





# Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme

# Legacy Plan 2024-2029

## Introduction

Since it commenced in March 2019, the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme (the Scheme) has sought to deliver the projects, outputs and outcomes set out in its Landscape Conservation Action Plan approved as part of its funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2018. This legacy plan sets out how the outcomes achieved can be managed, maintained, and sustained in the future to provide a lasting impact for the landscape, heritage, and people of the Westmorland Dales and beyond. The Scheme formally came to an end on the grant expiry date of 29th February 2024. Attached to the legacy plan are two appendices: appendix one is a summary of the key aims, outcomes, management, and maintenance arrangements for individual projects; appendix two are the more detailed schedules for those projects where a maintenance allowance has been made. A separate evaluation report, written by Shirley Muir Associates, gives a more detailed account of what's been achieved as part of the Scheme and lessons learnt.

## The Scheme's Vision, Objectives and Outcomes

The Scheme's vision has been to unlock and reveal the hidden heritage of the Westmorland Dales, enabling more people to connect with, enjoy and benefit from this inspirational landscape.

Under this broad vision its four objectives have been to:

- **Reveal** the area's hidden heritage.
- **Conserve** what makes the area special.
- **Engage** people in enjoying and benefitting from this heritage.
- **Sustain** the benefits of the Scheme in the long-term.

The Scheme has also set out to achieve the nine broader outcomes defined by the National Lottery Heritage Fund at the time of the Round 2 application.

Outcomes for Heritage:

- Heritage will be better managed.
- Heritage will be in better condition.
- Heritage will be identified and recorded.

Outcomes for People:

- People will have developed skills.
- People will have learnt about heritage.

David Evans 7 March 2024

- People will have volunteered time.

Outcomes for Communities:

- Negative environmental impacts will be reduced.
- More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage.
- Your local area / community will be a better place to live, work or visit.

## Scheme Delivery

The delivery of the Scheme has been led by Friends of the Lake District (FLD), the lead partner, and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), the accountable body. A Management Group drawn from the two organisations has ensured that support has been provided to the scheme manager in particular. An advisory Board drawn from delivery partners, other partners and key individuals has taken a strategic overview of progress of the Scheme overall. The Westmorland Dales team, employed by Friends of the Lake District, has played a lead role in delivering individual projects and coordinating the Scheme. Cumbria GeoConservation (CGC), Cumbria Wildlife Trust (CWT), Eden Rivers Trust (ERT), Electricity Northwest( ENW), the Farmer Network (FN), Lune Rivers Trust (LRT), the Woodland Trust (WT) and YDNPA have all played an important role as delivery partners too.

The Scheme objectives and outcomes have been delivered through 22 projects broadly grouped into three programmes: 6 natural heritage projects, 10 cultural heritage projects and 6 connecting heritage projects. The Westmorland Dales team, the YDNPA and other partners have taken the lead in delivering individual projects.

## Scheme Legacy

The Scheme's legacy is described in detail in the final evaluation report but is summarised below.

### Revealing

Part of the premise of the Scheme was that this area had been overlooked in the past with a lack of surveys and other activities, and a subsequent under-recording of the area's heritage. This has been the main focus of a number of the projects with:

- 12 new local geological sites designated.
- 73 wildlife sites surveyed.
- 2,274 archaeological and built heritage features surveyed and recorded.
- 50 archaeological trenches excavated.

Our knowledge of the area is much enhanced, particularly in relation to the area's archaeological and built heritage, but also in relation to geology and wildlife. Records are being added to the relevant databases, most notably the Historic Environment Record (HER). The surveys, excavations and studies undertaken will help ensure that valuable heritage can be protected, that it can inform future conservation projects and that the area's rich heritage can be shared with a wide audience.

There has therefore been a big emphasis on sharing and interpreting this newly found knowledge with leaflets and booklets produced, interpretation panels erected, websites updated, and webinars held and recordings made available on line. Many people have been engaged and have gained valuable skills in the process.

- 61 leaflets, booklets and panels produced.

## Conserving

The increased knowledge that has come through the Scheme has been coupled with the aim of conserving what makes the area special in terms of the landscape, its natural and cultural heritage, and enhancing that landscape for the future including:

- 26.3 ha. of meadow restored or created.
- 11.3 ha of woodland created.
- 7.9 km of hedgerow restored or created.
- 2.8 km of river restored.
- 7 historic buildings and monuments conserved.

Key features of the natural and built environment are now in a better condition, such as the river restoration on the Scandal Beck at Bowber Head and the conservation of the lime kilns at Smardale, and people have been engaged and have gained skills, including landowners and farmers.

## Engaging

Engaging partners, organisations and people has been an underlying principle, to a larger or lesser extent, to all the Scheme's projects and volunteers have been integral to the delivery of many of them.

A wide range of events and activities was held across the programme from our annual landscape forum, to walks and webinars including:

- 263 events attended by 5,102 adults and 3,327 children.
- 25 webinars attended or watched by 4,181 people.

Many of these were adapted or initiated because of Covid.

Volunteers played an important role in most of the 22 projects, from designating local geological sites, through surveying archaeological features to recording oral history interviews including:

- 1,750 volunteer days contributed.
- 637 training days delivered.

Schools were a key target audience both directly and because of their links into the wider community including:

- 9 primary and 4 secondary schools engaged.
- 2,566 pupils and teacher engagement sessions held.

Arts was seen as a key way of engaging a wide range of people but was affected by Covid as much as the other activities:

- 1,648 people attended 28 arts events.
- 23 different artists were engaged.

More people, including visitors, have experienced and enjoyed the heritage of the Westmorland Dales; people have increased their knowledge and have a better understanding of the area's natural and cultural heritage, including the role that farming plays in shaping the landscape; a wider range of people, including more young people, is engaged in the heritage of the area. In addition, people have shared their knowledge and have encouraged others to enjoy the area; the profile of the Westmorland Dales has been raised and the contribution of the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been recognised.

### Sustaining

As people have been engaged in projects to reveal and conserve the heritage of the area, the focus has also been on ensuring that they are equipped with the skills, experience and expertise to look after them in the future including:

- 8 apprentices successfully completed their countryside worker standard qualifications.
- 31 management agreements are in place and 94 farmers and landowners have been engaged with the Scheme.

## The Partnership and Partners

### The Partnership

The Partnership has worked well and for some partners there is an aspiration that it should extend beyond the life of the current Scheme. However, this was never the intention. The Scheme was always seen as a vital but temporary boost of funding and resources to engage people in integrating the Westmorland Dales into the wider Yorkshire Dales National Park. As a result the Westmorland Dales name is well established, the area is firmly on the map and is perceived as an integral part of the National Park. However, what is clear is that partnership working between organisations has been strengthened through the Scheme and there are opportunities for this to continue in different ways.

One particular benefit of the broad partnership was that, generally, it allowed partners to raise concerns about each other's proposals if it might have a detrimental impact on, for example, geology or archaeology. The awareness of partners to these concerns has been raised; but in the future it will be dependent on ensuring the right levels of consultation before project proposals are approved.

### The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

The YDNPA, working with partners, has started to develop the next **National Park Management Plan** for the period 2024-29. The Scheme was a specific objective of the last plan; there is an opportunity to ensure its successes are integrated into the next plan. The plan is owned by the partnership and is the responsibility of all partners to ensure it is successfully implemented.

There are also a number of existing forums in the National Park that partners and others can feed into including:

- The annual Dales Archaeology Day and Yorkshire Dales History Environment Group.
- The Biodiversity, and Tree and Woodland Forums.
- The Farming and Land Management Forum
- The Local Access Forum
- The Parish Council Forums

### Friends of the Lake District

FLD too is undertaking a strategic review to set its priorities for the next 3-5 years. The Scheme has been an undoubted success for FLD, raising its profile further outside of the Lake District and demonstrating the range of activities it can deliver. It will be looking to learn from the Scheme and feed this into its review. It will also have a continued presence in the area through its land at Little Asby Common and Mazonwath, its landscape grants scheme and its wider CPRE remit, offering the potential to build on much of the good work delivered.

The core Westmorland Dales team has disbanded but the skills and expertise won't be lost. Hannah Kingsbury has taken on a role developing a similar project with Dartmoor National Park; Nicola Estill

has taken up a similar role with the adjacent Cumbria Connect project; and David Evans is keen to carry on in some way in a volunteer capacity.

### Other Partners

The key delivery partners too will need to consider how they build on the success of the Scheme and the partnership working established. Cumbria GeoConservation, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Eden Rivers Trust, Lune Rivers Trust, The Farmer Network and the Woodland Trust will continue to work in the area, their working enhanced by the partnership working developed during the course of the Scheme.

In addition, there is scope for other partners to get more engaged including Natural England and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust; the Trust have been generous in their financial support but could now be more actively engaged. Other organisations like the Northern Viaduct Trust and Friends of the Dales may come more to the fore.

## Community Engagement

One of the great successes of the Scheme has been the level of engagement, but with the drop in resources, dedicated staff support and specific projects, it is inevitable that this level cannot be sustained.

### Volunteers

Volunteering was integral to the way many of the projects were delivered and as we have seen volunteers have gained hugely in their knowledge of the area, the skills they have gained and their commitment to putting those into action.

Clearly volunteers recruited and engaged by individual partners can continue with them. The key issue relates to those engaged by the Westmorland Dales team, largely engaged on cultural heritage projects but as volunteers under the umbrella of FLD. These volunteers are welcome to remain with FLD and a new volunteer coordinator is exploring the options. But the main opportunities for continued involvement with these types of projects will be with YDNPA's historic environment team and related organisations with a similar focus including Lunesdale Archaeology Society.

With an eye to the future a final volunteer get-together was organised in July to celebrate their successes and to highlight opportunities with a range of partners for future volunteering. These opportunities are signposted on the Scheme's website. In their legacy plans for individual projects individual partners will also be looking to highlight those opportunities.

### Public Events and Activities

Much of the success of the Scheme was in the series of events and activities which the Scheme either supported or organised itself.

The **Westmorland Dales Day** / Weekend will continue as it was initiated before the Scheme commenced, is organised by a group in Kirkby Stephen and has a momentum of its own. A number of partners already attend this event on a regular basis and the Westmorland Dales team has handed over some of its branded resources, including the gazebo and feather flags, to support the event in the future.

The other key event in the year, albeit with a gap because of Covid, was the **annual landscape forum** which brought together partners, volunteers, local residents and others to get an insight into the area's local heritage and what was happening to conserve it. This took place in a different village each year with a series of presentations in the morning, lunch, and walk options in the afternoon.

There has been a call for it to be continued but, to date, no organisation is currently able to take on this role.

One of the successful features of the Scheme has been a programme of **walks** and other activities, with the aim of sharing people's knowledge of the area and their expertise with a wider audience. This cannot be continued on the same scale but there is a willingness on the part of the retiring scheme manager and perhaps other volunteers to put something in place. A simple programme of 6 walks is being developed as part of FLD's engagement programme.

### Schools and Learning Activities

The Westmorland Dales team, and the community engagement officer in particular, took the lead in engaging the main primary and secondary schools in the area in individual projects, such as the geology project, or in artistic activities, such as the land art developed as a response to some of the Covid restrictions. The education officer at YDNPA will be able to pick up some of this involvement as part of activities across the whole of the park but their time will be limited. Some of the resources developed for schools will continue to be available on the Westmorland Dales website. The Eden Rivers Trust and other partners will also continue to work with the schools in the area as part of their remit and projects. Orton C of E Primary School has taken hold of the rock boxes and other geology resources for the network of local schools to borrow.

## Management and Maintenance

The management and maintenance arrangements for all projects is set out in Appendix One. Not all of these have ongoing management implications but those that do include those with management agreements, and those where an allowance has been made in the management and maintenance budget.

### Management Agreements

The great majority of projects undertaken with farmers and landowners will be subject to management agreements with the relevant delivery partners. These will include:

- Meadows and grasslands restored and enhanced with Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Woodlands and other planting undertaken with the Woodland Trust
- River restoration and natural flood management work undertaken with Eden Rivers Trust
- Barns, walls and lime kilns restored with the Westmorland Dales team / YDNPA.

The relevant lead partner will have an ongoing role to help ensure that these management arrangements are met, some of the costs of which are built into the increased management and maintenance budget below. All the partners will play a continuing role in the area in developing and implementing more of these projects, so will have an interest in ensuring these projects are successfully established, maintained, and have a long-term impact.

### Digital Resources

From the outset there was a decision not to develop a new website but to use and develop existing websites to ensuring the sustainability of access. The Scheme's website, part of the Friends of the Lake District website, will be maintained for a minimum period of 5 years from the Scheme's end. It will act as a legacy for the Scheme summarising the Scheme's achievements, its projects and continuing volunteering opportunities, and provide access to many of the resources developed. The YDNPA websites Dales Rocks and Out of Oblivion, focussing on geology and the historic environment respectively, have also been expanded and updated, and will continue for a minimum of 5 years.

Although not updated as part of the Scheme, Cumbia GeoConservation's website will provide access to many of the geology resources.

The other key focus has been on ensuring that as many of the resources developed through the Scheme are downloadable. These include geological factsheets and geotrails; walking, cycling and horse-riding leaflets; and geological education resources. In addition, films and webinar recordings are available on the FLD website; and access to blogs and the Sense of Place toolkit available on the YDNPA website. All these resources will be freely available for people to access, download where appropriate, use, enjoy and share.

### Management and Maintenance Budget

A figure of £90,000 was included in the overall Scheme budget, covering the minimum amount to be allocated amongst partners towards the future management and maintenance costs of individual projects for a five-year period from the Scheme's end date. The detailed budgets for selected projects delivered by the lead partners are included in Appendix Two and include:

- £56,000 for the maintenance of the improved public rights of way network, the Pennine bridleway link and the extended Yorkshire dales Cycleway (YDNPA).
- £4,000 for the distribution, and reprinting of leaflets and replacement of panels where appropriate, of interpretation materials produced (YDNPA).
- £10,000 for the monitoring of the Smardale limekilns, and any related remedial and vegetation clearance work (YDNPA).
- £20,000 for the maintenance of the Westmorland Dales website and the provision of a "light touch" programme of walks and other activities (FLD)

The ongoing management of other projects delivered through the Scheme will have cost implications for other partners, particularly Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Eden Rivers Trust and the Woodland Trust, but they are not included here.

## Other Existing and Developing Projects

Although the Westmorland Dales Scheme itself is coming to an end there are plenty of other existing and developing projects to build on its successes:

### The Coast-to-Coast National Trail

The Coast-to-Coast path was awarded National Trail status in August 2022 and is now subject to a £5m programme to bring it up to the appropriate standard in time for opening in spring 2025 with YDNPA playing a lead role. It will provide new opportunities for walkers and local businesses and is to be well-maintained, well-waymarked and accessible. As it goes through the heart of the Westmorland Dales from Shap to Kirkby Stephen there are opportunities to build on the work achieved during the Scheme, encouraging walkers to appreciate the area as they pass through. For example, the restored barn and walls at Raisbeck offer an opportunity to provide shelter from the elements and interpretation about the landscape.

### Access to Eden

Eden Rivers Trust are developing a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to improve access in the Eden catchment which includes a significant part of the Westmorland Dales. One initiative which is being worked on with YDNPA and CWT is to develop an improved link between Kirkby Stephen and the CWT's reserves at Waitby Greenriggs and Smardale.

## Smardale Gill Viaduct

The Northern Viaduct Trust have just completed work to waterproof the surface of Smardale Gill Viaduct as a first step to more fundamental conservation work on the main structure of the viaduct itself. This is likely to entail a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other funders, and will need to encompass wider objectives. Discussions have already taken place with the historic environment team at YDNPA about potential archaeological projects as a way of engaging a broader group of people.

## Cumbria Connect

Cumbria Connect is a major new landscape recovery project led by RSPB with partners United Utilities, Lowther Estates and Natural England stretching from Haweswater to the westernmost part of the Westmorland Dales including Crosby Ravensworth and Orton. Its focus is primarily on nature recovery so there is a question mark as to the extent it will embrace the broader heritage of the landscape. However, the appointment of Nicola Estill as their people and places officer may help develop its broader potential. Links have already been developed with some of the groups and communities we have worked with.

## Westmorland Dales Limestone Ridge

One proposal that partners have been keen to explore was something that recognised the landscape and ecological value of the limestone scars, pavements and grasslands which stretch through the heart of the area from Crosby Ravensworth Fell in the west to Ashfell in the east. Although the area includes two National Nature Reserves in Great Asby Scar and Smardale Gill, much of the rest of the area is common land, and the area as a whole blends outstanding geological, ecological, archaeological and cultural features. This breadth of interest might complicate designation as an expanded NNR if priority for nature conservation conflicted with traditional commons management, although this has not proved an impediment in other upland areas such as Moor House NNR in upper Teesdale. There are other options to explore but it will require one of the partners to take a lead.