

Glenridding Common (Helvellyn) OPERATIONAL PLAN (for lease period 2018 – 2020)

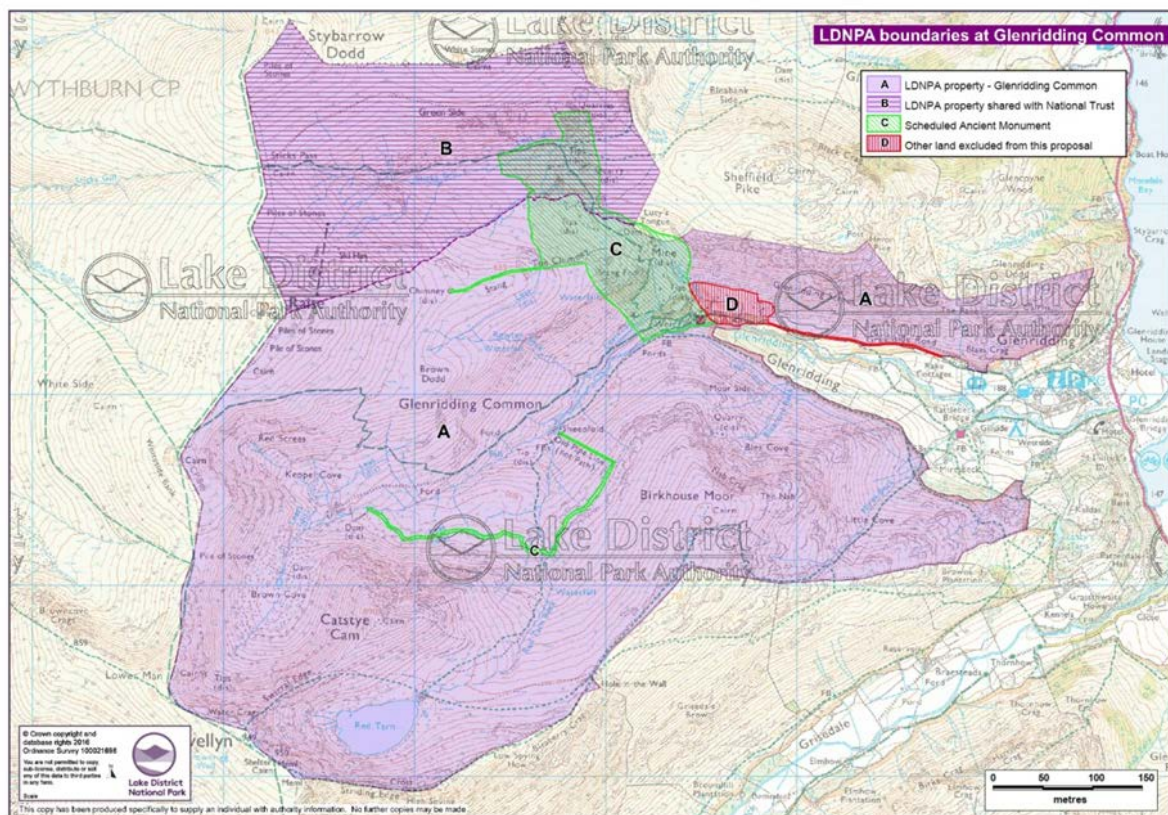
INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of the lease signed on the 31st October 2017 the John Muir Trust is to produce an operational plan for approval by the Landlord (the LDNPA and NT) within six months.

The proposals within this plan have been informed by the inputs to the community and stakeholder consultation process prior to the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) granting an initial lease of three years to the John Muir Trust (JMT). The intention is to maintain the document as a dynamic working tool which can be adapted if required, involving the local community in any proposed changes.

John Muir Trust (JMT) management seeks to recognise the wider strategic context of Glenridding Common within the Lake District National Park Partnership’s vision: as a key area of Common land within the National Park; its contribution to the Special Qualities of the Lake District; its cultural heritage and place within the Lake District Landscape Character Assessment and as a major attribute of the English Lake District World Heritage site.

Lease area Map



LEASE AREA

The land covered by this operational plan is Glenridding Common, a property of around 1,000ha. Its south-western boundary runs along Helvellyn summit, which together with Swirral Edge and Striding Edge (both on the property) comprise one of the best known walking routes in the Lake District. Other landscape features include Catstye Cam and Brown

Cove whilst on land to the north, the Lake District Ski Club uses slopes on the flanks of Raise. It includes 203ha in joint ownership with the National Trust (area B on Map). The area *excludes* Greenside mine and the associated area of mining archaeology within the Scheduled Ancient Monument (areas C and D on Map below) which remains under the ownership and management of the National Park Authority.

The property has high environmental status as part of a Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is registered common land which is managed through traditional methods by local farmers who have rights of communal grazing. A major industrial legacy based on lead mining is reflected in numerous archaeological features across the site, part of which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (although the majority of these features are excluded from the lease area).

RIGHTS HOLDERS

The open common is grazed by two local farmers with commons rights. A third farmer grazes the northern part of the common which is jointly owned with the National Trust. The Lake District Ski club has a lease.

OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY AREAS

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

During the consultations, the local valley community was broadly supportive for the JMT to acquire the lease from the LDNPA. Our aim is to maintain an open dialogue with the community during the lease period utilising the Parish Council and the ‘whole valley email circulation system’.

Following Storm Desmond the valley Flood Action Group (FAG) have been active in instigating a whole valley plan to mitigate future high water events. As invited, we will sit on the group and work towards fulfilling the community flood plan for Glenridding as published by the FAG. Upstream works are a key element to future flood mitigation and we will work closely with the Flood Action Group to achieve their aims for Glenridding Common as described in the community flood plan. If the valley community can agree these works through the Flood Action Group, JMT will facilitate, on behalf of the community, any agreed practical works on Glenridding Common for fencing and tree planting working with the Flood Group, graziers, Natural England (NE) and Environment Agency (EA).

Any works agreed by the FAG would also require extensive wider consultation to ensure support for any proposals for the common.

John Muir Award activity has taken place within a long-standing Cumbria presence since 2003 and in a partnership with the LDNPA since April 2011. The Outward Bound Trust at Ullswater and Patterdale Hall Outdoor Education Centre both make use of the John Muir Award in taking their participants onto the Common. There is one local Primary School at Patterdale with pupils then going to secondary school mainly in Penrith. The Cumbria John Muir Award plan details aims and actions for the Award in Cumbria and in relation to the National Park. At Glenridding Common the John Muir Award will continue to have a role to play through:

- Being used to encourage people to enjoy, connect with and care for Glenridding Common
- Helping to interpret cultural and natural heritage (Resource Guides)

- Providing information and training opportunities for leaders – Patterdale School, Outward Bound Ullswater, Patterdale Hall, secondary schools (Penrith, Keswick, Cumbria wide, beyond),
- Identifying opportunities for Conserve action by groups participating in the Award,
- Creating the resource to enable people to engage in these Conserve actions – targeted, working with the above Award Provider organisations as appropriate; and wider, for visiting groups.
- Encouraging action for wider initiatives on Glenridding Common, and positioning activity on the common in relation to them. For example: youth social action, #iWill, surveys, literacy, outdoor learning, Our Common Cause, World Heritage status.

ACTIONS

- 1.1 *Maintain an **open dialogue** with the local community on operational plan actions including an annual review with local representatives.*
- 1.2 *Participate in the **valley Flood Action Group** as invited and facilitate any agreed practical works.*
- 1.3 *Notify residents of any **volunteering opportunities** on the common e.g. archaeological work, alpine plant propagation etc. through the ‘whole valley email system’.*
- 1.4 *Work with Patterdale School to engage pupils with Glenridding Common, with use of the John Muir Award as appropriate.*
- 1.5 *Continue to work with **John Muir Award providers** to engage participants in Glenridding Common and surrounds.*
- 1.6 *Explore and implement targeted options for **visitor engagement and interpretation** of the management of the common and the work of the JMT (e.g. through social media; leaflets; guided walks etc.).*

2. COMMON LAND MANAGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

JMT recognises that Glenridding Common is managed through an agro-pastoral system of commoning that is one of the outstanding universal values of the Lake District National Park. During the consultation and lease signing the JMT have committed to:

- Support the system of commoning, including the rights of common exercised by legitimate commoners;
- Consent to future agri-environment or other farming schemes that the commoners may apply for which would maintain sheep grazing at the same level as present or at levels acceptable to Natural England or similar body;
- Consult with the local community and all those with legal interests on any planting schemes or other works on the holding which require S. 38 Consent under the Commons Act 2006. Any consultation would also include organisations such as Friends of the Lake District and others with an interest in landscape and open access issues.
- Present an annual programme of other proposed works to the Parish Council and the commoners;
- Ensure unimpeded access for gathering, any works that may have the potential to compromise access routes used for the gathering of sheep will only be undertaken with the express agreement of the commoners;
- If, in the event of the failure of the current HLS Scheme and / or if no further scheme is available to the commoners, not objecting to the commoners exercising their legal rights of common.

JMT recognises that understanding the requirements and working with the two graziers is of paramount importance and seeks an open relationship where all can understand and discuss individual and mutual interests in the property. During the consultation period and subsequently a number of issues have arisen which JMT would hope to help with where possible.

ACTIONS

- 2.1 *Help in addressing and reducing **sheep worrying** by dogs in conjunction with the graziers and the LDNPA.*
- 2.3 *Explore cutting target areas of **bracken encroachment** where identified as a problem for stock management.*
- 2.4 *Help in reducing **litter and anti-social behaviour** in 'hot spots' (e.g. the Red Tarn area where wild camping occurs).*
- 2.5 *Explore options for fixing and maintaining **boundary wall problems** where identified (e.g. above The Rake).*
- 2.6 *Work in conjunction with graziers and NE to explore options to reduce **sheep encroachment from neighbouring commons** where this causes management problems for local graziers and threatens vegetation restoration.*
- 2.7 *Discuss transfer of responsibility and maintenance payments (from LDNPA to JMT) with the commons secretary for the current HLS agreement (with NE) for the **fenced juniper enclosure** at Rowten Beck. If agreed, required maintenance will be undertaken including monitoring tree growth; replacing dead tree; fixing tree tubes and walking fences regularly to check for damage and / or sheep ingress.*
- 2.8 *Develop an **increased awareness of common land** and its significance through the John Muir Trust as a partner in the Foundation for Common Land led HLF 'Common Cause' project, which will use the John Muir Award as a tool to engage schools*

3. NATURAL HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT

Glenridding Common is part of the Lake District High Fells Special Area of Conservation which contains part of the Helvellyn and Fairfield Site of Special Scientific Interest and sits within National Character Area 8: the Cumbrian High Fells. The high altitude crags and coves have provided a refuge for the arctic-alpine flora which is the main feature of biological importance. Additional biological interest occurs in the forms of large stands of juniper scrub woodland, a variety of montane and upland heath, grassland and flush communities, and two high-level nutrient-poor (oligotrophic) tarns. Helvellyn is also important for glacial and periglacial geomorphology. Red Tarn is only one of four sites containing the rare and endemic Schelley fish.

ACTIONS

- 3.1 *Work with NE to continue the **improvement of the SSSI** - from 'unfavourable recovering' to 'favourable' condition.*
- 3.2 *Continue work to **improve populations of Arctic-Alpine flora** across the site including:*
 - *Downy willow propagation;*
 - *Planting programmes for species such as Alpine saxifrage, Mountain avens, Scrubby cinquefoil.*
 - *Explore plans to experimentally cover the population of Dwarf cornel (one of only two in England) to encourage seed production and better growth;*

- *Explore plans to re-introduce species such as Bearberry and Dwarf birch.*
- 3.3 *Monitor the success of recently installed **temperature monitors** aimed at giving winter climbers an aid in determining optimal climbing conditions and reducing the risk of damage to important flora on climbing routes.*
- 3.4 ***Monitor key species and site quality** through instigating monitoring programmes for: upland birds; butterflies and moths; blanket bog; upland heath; lichens; juniper; purple saxifrage etc.*

4. ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The common, edges and summit ridge are one of the most popular areas in the Lake District for access by walkers, climbers, runners and skiers. There are currently no figures for the numbers of people using the fell but the numbers are large and along with high annual rainfall figures contribute to significant erosion across the property. The Fix the Fells partnership programme has a whole Lake District approach to footpath erosion and includes the Helvellyn area as a priority. We aim to work with Fix the Fells to compliment the works already underway and form future priorities.

ACTIONS

- 4.1 ***Monitor access** through installation of people counters.*
- 4.2 ***Survey footpaths** across the property to assess future work requirements and costs, building on path condition information collected by Fix the Fells.*
- 4.3 *Agree a working **arrangement with Fix the Fells** to complement work already ongoing and agreed. The arrangement to include financial contributions and the possibilities for joint fundraising for prioritised work on the site.*
- 4.4 *Deploy **targeted footpath contractor time** to compliment Fix the Fells and volunteer work programmes to ensure ongoing maintenance of the path network across the site.*
- 4.5 *Work with event organisers to mitigate potential impacts of **organised events** on the site. Many events are established; any new events proposed will be looked at carefully to assess timing, location, conflict and with other events.*
- 4.6 *Work locally with **recreational providers** to encourage enjoyment, assess and mitigate potential impacts of activities (e.g. fell walking; gill scrambling and overnight camping).*
- 4.7 *Work with applicants requesting **commercial use of the property** for filming etc. to ensure minimum impact (adopting the existing template and fees structure).*

5. ARCHAEOLOGY

The property has historically been part of an industrial lead mining site and although most of the legacy is at Greenside, off the common (and excluded from the lease area), there are a number of features of historical interest such as the Stang End chimney and the Kepple Cove water leat which fed an, at the time, unique electric generator. The Kepple Cove dam was the upper reservoir for the mine until it burst in 1927. This dam is now in disrepair and requires regular safety monitoring. Two of the features are designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

ACTIONS

- 5.1 *Work with local experts to assess how best to **prioritise and fund future stabilisation and repair, enhancement and interpretation work.***
- 5.2 *Explore **target projects** with Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society (CATMHS) for potential volunteer work parties.*
- 5.3 *Conduct regular **safety checks** on Kepple Cove dam.*