

Flood recovery — Iron Bridge

The repair and replacement of footbridges continues apace as part of the flood recovery programme. The “Iron Bridge” as it is known locally, crosses the River Eden at Sockbridge near Penrith, and was severely damaged during the flooding of Nov 2009. Because the bridge piers were in a hazardous condition the bridge deck was removed on safety grounds when it became clear that people were still using it—despite it being closed—and to save the bridge deck before it collapsed into the river. The three bridge decks were removed and placed in storage for use elsewhere before Christmas.



Removal of the bridge decks



Example of replacement bridge

The new bridge will be constructed of timber and steel, and the cut sandstone from the collapsed piers of the old bridge used to rebuild the abutments. The new bridge will be a single-span structure and raised at a higher level so that it will be more resilient to future flooding. Construction will start in June 2011, subject to consent from the Environment Agency and the appointment of a suitable contractor. The new structure will look similar to the one pictured left at Milburn, built by the county council in 2009.

Access Ramp created for Hincaster Trailway

The Hincaster Trailway Project is a community led project involving residents, local schools, young people and volunteers of all ages to develop and manage wildlife habitats and provide a multi-user access route utilising the disused Hincaster Railway line. It will provide a 2.1 km route through a rural area close to the villages of Hincaster, Heversham and Milnithorpe in South Cumbria.

Development of the project is divided into manageable phases to help focus community effort and ensure achievable benefits are gained at each stage. Phase One of the project has provided an entry/exit point at the northern end of the route in Hincaster and opened up the route with bridleway gates, wall repair, fencing and a variety of woodland management tasks. This will provide access for users to the 1km northern section of the route. The intention is to dedicate this section and also upgrade the route for wheelchair use at a subsequent stage.



Access ramp

The Trailway Group worked with the Countryside Access team to secure a successful funding bid from Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust and further funding from the North Lancashire Bridleways Society for this phase of the work. The Dry Stone Walling Association have a working weekend scheduled for April to rebuild the adjacent wall.

User delight on the Cumbria Way

Stretching from Ulverston to Carlisle the Cumbria Way is an exhilarating 70 mile walk through some of the most scenic and inspiring landscapes in Cumbria.

Thanks to the County Council's countryside access team and with additional financial assistance from The Ramblers, work is nearing completion to repair and restore a section of bridleway along the route in the Parson's Park area between Caldbeck and Sebergham.

For many years this section has suffered from poor drainage and impassable muddy sections making the route difficult to use. Under the direction of the County Council, a local contractor has been carrying out the improvement work creating a new drainage system including water-breaks, cross drains and culverts as well as laying a new surface along the route.

Whilst on site our contractors have received many positive comments from local people using the route and walkers undertaking the full 70 mile challenge. The work has also been widely supported by both Caldbeck and Sebergham parish councils.



Digger constructing drains and surface



Final hard wearing surface

Anne Cartmell, Chair of Caldbeck Parish Council said *"A large number of Caldbeck folk walk in Parsons Park. Day visitors from other parts of this county and "Cumbria Wayers" also use this section of the Way. It is greatly improved at the Caldbeck end with better drainage and surfacing and we are grateful to the Countryside Access team for repairing it."*

Dennis Pook, Area Secretary for The Ramblers said, *"As the creators of the Cumbria Way, Lake District Ramblers are pleased to have contributed to the funding of these most welcome improvements to the drainage and surface of the Parsons Park part of the route."*

Chainfoot Bridge, Roweltown

A historic suspension bridge crossing the River Lyne north east of Carlisle has now been fully restored thanks to Cumbria County Council's countryside access team. The footbridge, known as Chainfoot at Roweltown near Hethersgill, provides the only pedestrian crossing of the River Lyne for three miles between road bridges. It is set in a secluded location upstream of an ancient ford crossing and serves as a link to the existing public rights of way network on both sides of the river. Last year one of the two support cables for the bridge snapped, which prompted a full refurbishment of the whole structure, including repairs to the stone masonry abutments. The work, which demanded a bespoke solution, was carried out by a local contractor supervised by the Countryside Access team.

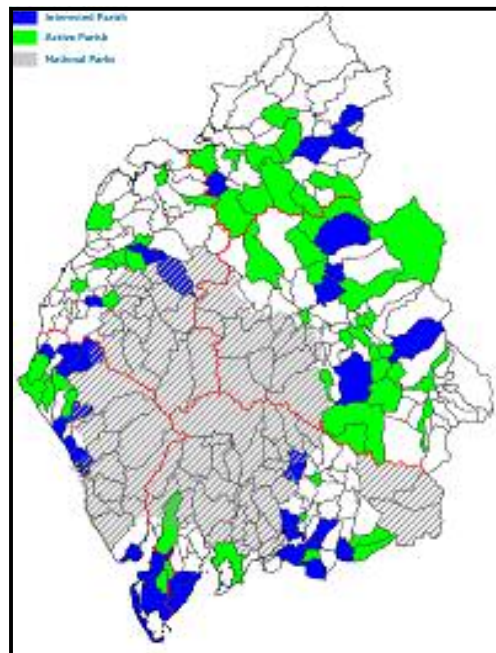


River Lyne pedestrian crossing

Bumper year for PPI

The parish paths initiative (PPI) had another bumper year in 2010/11 supporting and funding path improvement projects across Cumbria. 23 parishes, towns and community groups from across the county were actively involved this year and successfully initiated and completed a number of local projects. These ranged from improving surfacing to replacing stiles with gates and the design of walks leaflets and map boards. About 300 volunteer hours invested by local groups secured an impressive 130% of match funding. Spring will see a number of guided walks and village events organised to celebrate the improved paths in some areas.

Parishes involved in PPI since 2006



Celebration of improved path in Skelton

Several groups also attended a number of workshops we held in several locations as part of our PPI road show. New-comers received information on public rights of way and how to get involved and plan a project through PPI.

Volunteers Gather

Once again we took an opportunity to say a big thank you to all our volunteers and their contributions to the work of the CA team. On Saturday 12 February the weather was kind to us for our annual get together. This time we gathered at the Mill Yard Cafe in Morland to be lead on a short walk by Meg and Phil Hancock. Both have been actively working with our team to have a walks booklet reprinted that had been produced by locals. The booklet features 4 walks from the village and is beautifully illustrated with pencil drawings. After a gentle 3 mile (and rather muddy) stroll with lots of local interest we enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch at the Mill Yard Cafe, prepared by Robert and Sarah Kite.

Bridleway improvements at Morland

Residents and visitors in Morland can now enjoy what was an impassable bridleway, thanks to improved drainage to a 500m section of the route from Little Appleby to Morland Beck.

The project, part of the county council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, compliments recent work done on both replacing the bridge over Morland Beck, and production by the Parish of a booklet promoting circular walks under the county council's Parish Paths Initiative.

Morland Parish Councillor Philip Hancock said, "These bridleways and paths are not just part of our heritage, they are also important for our recreation and wellbeing. These amenities are not just for the villagers, but everyone who visits Morland, and enjoy the many walks that start and finish in the square, by the Mill Yard Cafe and Crown Inn."



Drainage working

Pilot scheme pays dividends in Maryport

A pilot scheme to help tackle both path maintenance and improvement works at the same time has been a resounding success in Maryport Parish (Allerdale), one of four pilot areas around the county. The countryside access team sought the knowledge and input of local people to help inform a programme of projects on the ground.

Maintenance work has been completed within the parish including repairs to stiles and gates and replacement of missing fingerposts. Some notable works have been the levelling out of the footpath at Seabrows and a new kissing gate next to the Ewanrigg electric substation.

Improvement projects have been completed at Flimby Great Wood where drainage works on the path leading into Broughton Moor have been undertaken and three stiles have been replaced with kissing gates. Surfacing work has also taken place on Ellenborough Bridleway which is now much more pleasant for users. Finally work has been completed on Pigeonwell Lonin, which concentrated on an area from the steps onwards towards Camp Road which has seen the clearing back of surface soil and grass to reveal a more durable path surface beneath.

The pilot scheme also included work in Soulby Parish (Eden), Lazonby (Eden) and Pennington (South Lakes).



Flimby Great Wood

Thumbs up for Kirkby Lonsdale riverside



Before improvement

Kirkby Lonsdale Town Council put forward this scheme to improve a very popular pretty route beside the River Lune for both local residents and the many visitors to the town.

The first phase of the project was to improve access at Devil's Bridge for pushchair and wheelchair users by replacing the existing field gate and kissing gate and restoring the historic stone gate pillars.

The Town Council worked with the Countryside Access team to submit a successful funding application to Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust to help with the project costs. Funding was also provided by the Town Council and the Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh Local Area Partnership through South Lakeland District Council.

Subject to negotiation and agreement with landowners, it is hoped that a second phase of work will be undertaken further upstream to realign the route away from its current position where it often becomes inundated with flood water and impassable.



After improvement