



KIRKBY STEPHEN & DISTRICT WALKERS ARE WELCOME Annual Report 2023

2023 has been 'the year of the footpath'. Westmorland and Furness Council took over as Highway Authority with Countryside Access responsibility on 1st April 2023 and we firstly reported all our outstanding footpath issues to ensure they were all listed. There have been some minor improvements to gates and signs including those that are the responsibility of Highways and also Yorkshire Dales National Park. Edensyde footpath has been upgraded and the Kirkby Stephen Grammar School path has been reinstated.



New gate and steps at Edensyde

The year also coincided with Northern Viaducts Trust's amazing fundraising for improvements at Smardale Viaduct, now waterproof again but look out for further works and funding required for stage two.

The Coast to Coast is working towards National Trail status and we have been discussing various improvements along the route from Shap to the Yorkshire border which will take place in the next two years. The town is still short of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, does anyone fancy this great business opportunity?

The guidestone at the top of Christian Head has been uncovered and is awaiting restoration once all the information can be found. The High Street Zebra crossing is still awaiting access improvements, now estimated as Spring 2024 plus signs promised for Croglam Lane to help prevent vehicles using it as a short cut in busy traffic periods. During the building of Mandale Homes, a bench outside Bloody Bones Lane was destroyed during highway improvements, we live in hope of a replacement. Changing Places at the town's public toilets may have come a step

There are ongoing discussions regarding Ewbank Scar, Hartley Quarry, Hartley Lane and Bollom Lane ford. We are also looking at some suggested changes around Kirkby Stephen East area paths which will be subject to legal changes. We are looking at the upgrade of Stenkriith paths. There is a long list of fingerposts requiring replacement and three bridges awaiting funding at Brough, as they say to name but a few.

closer with funding ideas and the EV charging points (although slow) at the car park are currently working.

Our Dawdles weekly walks have again been very popular plus the added summer Legstretcher longer walks. We even experimented with silent walking in line with The Ramblers' gimmick and listened to the sounds of the woodland for a while complete with a red squirrel rather than breaking our very social walk conversation. We organised six walks for Westmorland Dales Festival and two walks for Heritage Open Days. We took part in the Fun Palace and are working with other partners on new projects for 2024.

We were delighted to read the tree survey commissioned by Kirkby Stephen Town Council for Jubilee Park with 389 trees and 19 species. There is an ongoing plan of improvement for this less visited space. Did you know that you can now walk from Stenkriith to Jubilee along a new Permissive Path courtesy of the Pennine View Park caravan site? There is also a very new Permissive Path at John Strutt Nature Reserve which is accessed from Winton Road, Hartley and don't forget the Permissive Path to the Fox Tower in Brough.

We have continued to raise awareness of River Eden pollution and sewage spills. We were horrified to see a Giant Hogweed plant next to the Eden in the summer, did you know that there is very little controls in place for this dangerous and invasive species. Another invasive plant is Himalayan Balsam which gratefully is not present in our area, the closest outcrop being at Warcop. Keep your eyes open.

One of the bus shelters was sadly vandalised and we are awaiting permission to restore our panel. We have been supporting the marketing for the new 563 Saturday bus which is attracting a good following. There have been some alterations to Western Dales timetables and of course, Cumbria Classic Coaches forever have a place in our hearts.



We published a new walk brochure in our series Upper Eden Discovery Walks: 'No.4 A Beech Walk in Kirkby Stephen' with research by Nigel and Lois Harbron.

Our other walk brochures have been reprinted and we have also promoted our other publications and the brilliant all-round walking in Kirkby Stephen and district supporting the Upper Eden Visitor Centre.

Have a look at our new website www.walkeden.org

Additional thanks go to those groups and organisations that have worked with us this year:

Dawdles walk group walkers
Kirkby Stephen Town Council
Brough Parish Council
Nateby Parish Meeting
Hartley Parish Meeting
Eden District Council, Eden Tourism Team
Westmorland & Furness Council and Cumbria County Council
Economic Development, Countryside Access Department & Highways
Councillors Phil Dew, John Murray and Peter Thornton
Westmorland Dales Landscapes Partnership
Kirkby Stephen Community Arts & Kate Lynch
Shelia Gordon, Lady Anne's Way
Pennine Journey Supporters Club & David Pitt
Cumberland & Westmorland Herald
Upper Eden Visitor Centre
Northern Viaduct Trust
Walkers are Welcome CIC
Nateby & Wharton WI
Helbeck Hall
Upper Eden History Society
Yorkshire Dales National Park
North Pennines AONB
Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Walkingworld
Coast to Coast Packhorse
Appleby Tourist Information Centre
Village Verges and Mike Sunderland
The Black Bull, Nateby
The Black Swan Ravenstonedale
The Kings Head, Ravenstonedale
Church Gallery
Access the Dales and Debbie North
Cumbria Tourism
Friends of Settle-Carlisle Railway & John Carey
Settle-Carlisle Development Co
Dr Neil Hudson MP
John Strutt Conservation Foundation

Eden Rivers Trust

And everyone that we have unintentionally forgotten to mention.

Why not let us know if there is anything you believe that we can do for local and visitor walking that we may not have already thought of. Don't forget to let us know your footpath concerns.

Thank you to the Old Forge, Dave, Chris and Charlie for hosting our meetings.

With thanks to this year's group:

Andy Bryan
Neil Cleeveley
Liz Cook
Rachel Griffiths
Chrissie Halsall
Maggie Hough
Kathy Lucas
John Murray
Paul and Angela Sanderson
Ester Sloggett
Dave Stewart
Cathie Tinn
Nick Trentham
Adrian Waite
Debbie Williamson

A big thank you to Debbie Williamson who is resigning as Brough Parish' representative and Gill Garlick who is replacing her.



Ann Sandell – Chairman
December 2023

waw@uppereden.org
<https://www.facebook.com/waw>
<http://www.walkeden.org/>

Smardale Viaduct