



WINDERMERE LAKE USER FORUM

Newsletter for all Lake Users

Winter 2013

If you live in the Windermere area you can make your views about things effecting Windermere, known through your elected members on South Lakeland District Council, Windermere Town Council and the 5 local Parish Councils. However whether you are a resident or not you still have a voice on lake topics.

The Windermere Lake User Forum has no decision making powers, but it was established to ensure that all those who love the lake have a voice and the members are on the Forum to represent the views of all lake users, please share them with us by emailing our Chairman carole.shaw2@btinternet.com who will forward it to the appropriate person or you can contact each one individually if you wish through the web site hosted by the LDNPA at

www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/windemerelakeuserforum

Who are the representatives?

Powered Craft	Carole Shaw	Chair
Powered Craft	Paul Hardman	
Sailing	Howard Knowles	
Sailing	Fred Tattersall	
Paddled Craft	Gareth Field	
Angling	John Wilkinson	
Swimming	Emma Brunning	
Outdoor activity providers	John Burden Bailey	(retiring this year)
Transport Providers	John Woodburn	
Commercial Operators	Jason Dearden	Vice Chair
General Users	Anthony Slater	

What a wonderful summer we have had on Windermere. The sun shone and boaters under sail and power, boarders, swimmers, canoeists, rowers, fishermen and tourists in hired boats and on cruises have all been out on the lake in force. The queen sailed on Windermere this summer aboard the Windermere Lake Cruises steamer TEAL, and we even had some legal speeding activity as exemption was granted for two afternoons of power boat racing at the Windermere Motor Boat Racing clubs historical club house location. The Classic Motor Boat Rally and the Steam Boat Rally were well attended and the Great North Swim has gone from strength to strength. The other four boat clubs round the lake, Royal Windermere Yacht Club, Windermere Cruising Association, South Windermere Sailing Club and the Lake District Boat Club have all reported successful seasons, with interest in new memberships.

We have also seen the two LDNPA Ranger patrol craft equipped with Marine Radar, to help them with their duties. The Radar system was demonstrated to the forum and was also featured on an ITV news article. While its introduction has been controversial with some users, we have been assured it is not surveillance equipment. The Lake District National Park has a duty to inform and educate lake users about the byelaws and they also have to enforce the byelaws which include the speed limits.

So with all this activity on the surface of the lake, what have the members of the Windermere Lake User Forum been involved in on your behalf.

The 11 members of the Forum have met on six formal occasions to discuss and respond to consultations. Some members have also attended meetings with officers from South Lakeland District Council, the Lake District National Park Authority, United Utilities and the Environment Agency over the course of the year. The chairperson also represented the Forum at the full day hearing into the Land Allocation for Bowness Bay and the Glebe.

There have been 6 main consultations that the Forum has been actively engaged with this year.

1. Lake District National Park proposed Land Allocation for Bowness Bay and the Glebe
2. Lake District National Park –The first four applications for exemption from the speed limit
3. Lake District National Park – Policy and Charging Structure for future Exemption Applications
4. United Utilities drought planning
5. United Utilities Water Resource Management
6. South Lakeland District Council – Development of Ferry Nab

In addition to the formal consultations the WLUF has continued to promote the main objectives of the Lake Users linked to;

- Access to the lake –improvements for public jetties and facilities for canoeists and small boat users, more tender storage facilities to enable access to moorings.
- Value for Money – improvement of facilities for lake users and limited increases in charges, investment into the Lake area from the public purse.
- Environmental Protection – promote the actions needed to improve the water quality and protect water levels.
- More integrated management of the Lake. The Forum has promoted the objective raised by many lake users for better management of the lake to enable more diverse activity. No one wants to see the lake back as a “Free for All”, but there is a strong feeling that by using the exemption process, there is an opportunity for more events and activities to take place that will attract the responsible

use of the lake in a way that does not detract from the enjoyment of other lake users. The Forum will continue to gain lake users views to progress towards a managed solution that benefits all lake users.

We hope that this newsletter helps you to understand the issues and opportunities around the lake, and the actions taken by the Forum to help improve the enjoyment of those who use the lake, protect this beautiful environment and assist in improving economic growth. The meetings of the Windermere Lake User Forum are public, and you are always welcome to come along. Lancashire County Council kindly allows us to use Tower Wood Outdoor Activity Centre for our meetings.

Value for Money

Many lake users will be aware that following consultation with SLDC, their elected members supported lake users in 2013/14 by limiting the price increases for services around the lake. Moorings and many other charges were held at 2012/13 prices. Encroachment charges, the fees charged for jetties around the lake, for commercial users did however increase above inflation and the 50% discount for private jetty holders was reduced to 40%. We are hoping that this measured approach to charges for lake users will continue into 2014/15 and until the services that lake users have requested such as more public jetties, better access to and from the lake, and improved toilet and shower facilities are in place. You will see later in this newsletter that there are actions in place to bring these requests nearer to reality during the next two years. You will see that there is a lot of work ahead of us. If anyone would like to get involved you can register your interest to join the Forum when a suitable role is available or by assisting in working groups, or by being part of our communication network, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Lake District National Park (LDNPA) proposed Land Allocation for Bowness Bay and the Glebe

A Land Allocation is not a planning application. It gains government approval to proposals for the use of the land, which in turn gives developers a clear indication about the types of plans that are more likely to meet with approval by the local planning authority. This was the third stage of consultation on the proposals from the LDNPA for the development of Bowness Bay and the Glebe. Lake Users had raised concerns with the Forum that input and views that had been given to the National Park during the previous consultations but did not seem to have been included in the final plans put forward for allocation.

The main concerns raised with the Forum were:-

1. Reduction of free parking spaces on the Glebe,
2. Assumption that parking on Braithwaite Fold would be an acceptable alternative to the Glebe,
3. Extension of the jetties between Aquatics Marina and Belle Isle into the "Narrows",
4. Removal or reduction of the Pitch and Putt,
5. Creation of an Arboretum on the Pitch and Putt along the footpath from Glebe Road to Bowness,
6. Creation of an activity area through a commercial provider on the Pitch and Putt field,
7. Exclusion of Ferry Nab and Braithwaite Fold car park from the land allocation plan.

Following the consultation exercise, which also had a very active input from local traders, the car parking proposals were revised, but all other proposals were approved by the external inspector but with the requirement that safety should be taken into account at the planning stage in the arboretum and in the proposed extension to the jetties, for safe navigation. The LDNPA have committed to working with the local community at the next stage of planning and development of the area. WLUF hope that Lake Users will be actively involved in consultations that will be taking place soon. Aquatics are hosting a consultation which is

taking place at Aquatics on the Glebe between 12 noon and 7pm on Thursday 12 December. Please go along and look at the plans. Watch the web site for further updates.

LDNPA – Consultation on the first four applications for exemption from the speed limit

The Forum met and considered the four applications for exemption. The Forum supported the Windermere Motor Boat Racing Club application to hold power boat racing in a confined area of the lake, on two afternoons in 2013. The Forum provided some additional recommendations to assist the event in relation to interaction with other lake users. The forum also supported the Classic Motor Boat Rally and the water skiing at the Low Wood in principle. However, the wide ranging area of both lake and time scales did not appear manageable, so the Forum provided guidance on how the two applications could potentially be amended to gain wider support and made safe and deliverable. The response was submitted in writing to the LDNPA.

LDNPA – Policy and Charging structure for future exemption applications

The Forum members met on two occasions to consider the proposed policy and charging structure and presented its findings to officers of the Authority at the September WLUF meeting which was a public meeting. Following discussion the response was submitted to the Authority in writing.

The policy has now been published and was presented to the Board Members of the National Park to seek approval at their November meeting. The revised policy reflects some of the recommendations made by the Forum to broaden the criteria for exemption whilst retaining the ability to restrict exemptions to organisations that will take a responsible approach to the use of exemptions to protect the environment and help promote the economy and community wellbeing.

The Forum did not agree to the charging policy proposed. Members felt that the proposed charge for processing an application and a charge for providing a ranger and vessel to monitor the event for a half day of approximately £1000 was too high and could be restrictive, or even prohibitive to small and voluntary organisations wanting to hold small, but significant events. As the criteria requires organisations to demonstrate how their event will contribute to the area's economy and the community, it was thought to be unreasonable for a major partner with responsibility for delivering a sustainable environment, to charge some smaller voluntary organisations. Organisations have to make significant investment of time and money into the organisation of the events, and receive no financial support. On the other hand the LDNPA sponsoring other non-power related, commercial organisations to hold events on Windermere. This did not seem reasonable or consistent. Cumbria Tourism and Windermere Town Council were also opposed to the proposed charges and made alternative recommendations for charges that would have been more reasonable and less restrictive. WLUF presented its views in writing during the consultation, and suggested a modification to board members before the meeting in November, but the full charges were approved and come into force on the 1st December 2013.

United Utilities Drought Planning

United Utilities and the Environment Agency have managed the lake levels very well over the last year and have alleviated many potential flood risks. Likewise there have also been times during the summer when we got very close to drought trigger points and these have been averted.

Windermere is used as a water supply for the Integrated Zone in the North West, supplying water down to Bolton and Manchester. This is one of the reasons that the water quality is monitored and maintained. Windermere is classed as a "Highly Modified" water body and it is important to boaters, swimmers and

fishermen as well as United Utilities, to maintain the quality of the water at all times by being careful about what we put into the lake.

The consultation recognised the importance of Windermere to the economic wellbeing of the area as part of the tourist economy. United Utilities explained what they thought the future demands for water would be against a growing population and projected growth in industry. They are actually forecasting a reduction in overall demand, due to the proposed water reduction measures such as the introduction of water meters, fixing leaks and encouraging more economical use of water. Despite all of the information it is difficult to estimate the impact that the proposed water reduction measures will have on reducing demand on water supplies in the way United Utilities have forecast them. Windermere is used as the backup for Thirlmere Reservoir and Hawes Water. Both these reservoirs serve the integrated zone of United Utilities supply area. When Hawes Water is low, water is pumped from Windermere directly into the pipe line that goes to Bolton/Manchester area to connect to the rest of the integrated zone, to conserve resources in Hawes and Thirlmere. A water bank agreement was agreed in 2012 and is currently in place to protect Windermere from getting too low to protect the flow of water into the River Leven. This ensures that the level does not go below the level that will sustain the fish life in the river. However, if drought conditions did apply this agreement would be over taken by a drought order to enable extraction from the lake.

If a greater demand was to be put on Windermere in the future, The WLUF is pressing the Environment Agency to require UU to use pumping more frequently; when Windermere has a high capacity rather than leaving pumping until Hawes is very low, when Windermere may also be at risk of getting to levels that may restrict navigation for some of the deeper draft vessels. We intend to continue to keep this request on the agenda.

United Utilities Water Resource Management

A consultation on the future plans for water resources has taken place. This identified that the supply of water in West Cumbria would need to be revisited. The licence to extract from Ennerdale will cease in a few years' time and UU consulted on three options to replace the source of supply for West Cumbria. The three options were Kielder Water in the North East, finding new supplies in West Cumbria or the use of Thirlmere. UU have just published their proposals following consultation and they have opted for Thirlmere. The WLUF were the only respondents to the consultation to seek some specific forms of surety to help protect Windermere when extraction from Ennerdale ceases and West Cumbria will be supplied from Thirlmere. No assurance has yet been achieved. WLUF intends to continue to encourage the LDNPA and SLDC to seek a robust method of safeguarding Windermere's water resources in a way that protects navigation, the fish life in the Leven and the economy of the area.

South Lakeland District Council – Development of Ferry Nab

Members from the WLUF have worked closely with officers from SLDC on the development plans for the improvements at Ferry Nab. We were influential in encouraging SLDC to reconsider their plans to replace the public jetties at Ferry Nab out along the Ferry Road by the Ferry slip way. The revised plans provide more public jetties and better shower and toilet facilities within the Ferry Nab development itself. If approved the new marina will provide up to 54 new berths for long term rental, and 31 public jetty spaces for use by all lake users. The scheme will also increase space for winter storage of boats and provide improved opportunities for cyclists and paddled craft users. All of these improvements are part of the objectives which the Forum is continuing to pursue on behalf of Lake Users. UPDATE - The LDNPA rejected the plans at the December planning meeting. Watch the web site for further updates.

Windermere Management Strategy – Joint Strategic Partnership

The cross organisation group that oversees the progress against the objectives in the Windermere Management Strategy recently agreed that the number of objectives in the Strategy is too large. They agreed that they would like to focus on the most important topics, and work together to delivery these successfully.

One of the top objectives for the Forum is the creation of more access to and from the lake for lake users. Recent grant funding has enabled the partnership of the LDNPA, National Trust, SLDC and Windermere Lake Cruises, to create two new public jetties for public transport use. These are to be located at Bank Barn on the Western Shore and at Wray Castle. One side of the jetties will be kept for water bus usage, but the other side will be available for private lake users. Whilst this is very welcome there is still a need to increase and improve access for lake users. Therefore a working group has been agreed and will meet in December to agree its action plan to establish where additional facilities are needed and could be created. The solution will not just be new jetties, but it is hoped that the group can identify where changes to facilities such as public moorings located close to jetties for tenders to tie up to, and facilities for canoes and rowing boats to access the shore and secure to more appropriate landing points. The group aims to agree an action plan for the next two years and will aim to increase access at Ambleside and Bowness as well as other locations around the lake.

Education for Swimmers and Boat Users.

A Code of Conduct has been created by the LDNPA through a joint working group involving swimming groups, sailors, power boat users and commercial operators around the lake. The WLUF has been involved in all of the discussions and the final draft for circulation is almost ready to go to press. With the increase in swimming activity on the lake it is important that all lake users are aware of the dangers on the lake. The attendance at the working groups demonstrated a real growth and interest in all types of open water swimming. The lake is used by families on a day out, open water groups meeting on a weekly basis for enjoyment and training, people training for triathlons and those wanting to achieve a long distance swim. A large emphasis is being placed on the swimmers to make themselves highly visible by using floats and boats where they are away from the shore, and to at least wear bright coloured hats at all times even when they are in the water. Boat users are also asked to be vigilant and to look out for swimmers, and to always wear a kill cord if they are travelling under engine power. The new safe swim code will be circulated by the LDNPA ready for Easter.

Canoe and Kayaks

New routes around the have been published by the LDNPA in conjunction with Canoeists to encourage people to enjoy the lake. There is a growing interest in kayaking and Gareth is working with the LDNPA to explore methods of securing paddles and craft when skippers come ashore to give them better opportunities for enjoying the destinations when they get there. This will be an important part of the working group on Access and Jetties which is due to start in December.

Angling

Earlier this year the Environment Agency kindly organised a visit to the Fish Sluice at Newby Bridge for Forum members and the new Chair of the SLDC Lake Admin Committee. This was a really informative event and helped us to understand how the lake is constantly monitored, and the proactive steps that can be taken to ensure the fish life in the Leven can be protected.

Communication

Every year the authorities publish a User Guide for the lake. This year the Forum encouraged the powers that be to create a more integrated guide with map and information about what is available around the lake. Jason Dearden our Commercial Rep from Windermere Marina Village acted as the Forums rep on this exercise and whilst it's not where we want to get to, this was a great improvement on previous publications and we will continue to progress this so that it will hopefully contain all the information lake users need, in one document, no matter what your means of propulsion is, sail, engine, paddle, arms, legs or wheels around the shore.

The Forum currently meets in public twice a year, and holds three or four separate meetings to consider and respond to the consultations as they arrive. Given the large agenda that the Forum is now asked to engage in, the LDNPA has suggested perhaps meeting more frequently in public. The next meeting is planned to take place at 4pm on 10 March at Tower Wood Outdoor Pursuit Centre. Further dates will be available on the Web Site.

The Forum will be looking for new members over the winter. The Forum is also looking for someone who can assist us with some skills around newsletter production (to make it less boring than this plain text) and website updating and monitoring. If you think you can help, please get in touch.

SLDC and LDNPA issue a questionnaire each year. This year they have included a number of questions from the Forum. We are particularly keen to find out the age groups of those who visit the lake and the distances that people travel. Also to find out how many people enjoy a number of activities, not just one, as we believe that most lake users take an active part in many aspects of lake life and think this is something that we could understand better.

Anyone who is interested in becoming involved with the Forum should contact the Chair, Carole Shaw on carole.shaw2@btinternet.com

We would encourage any boat user who has their engine/boat registered with the LDNPA to ensure that the authority has your email address. This way the LDNPA can send communications to you on behalf of the Forum more frequently and cost effectively. There is a lot going on and we would like to be able to keep lake users updated throughout the year.