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Hartsop Water Meeting, Barn End Bar Sykeside Campsite 17th September 2009

Participants

John Darlington – National Trust
Ian Metcalfe – Sykeside Campsite
Alan Metcalfe – Sykeside Campsite
Colin Jongman – Sykeside Campsite
John Pring – National Trust
Alan Wear – Grove Farm, Hartsop
Colin Bell – Hartsop Society
Mel Kilner – Hartsop Society
Veronica McGloin – Patterdale Parish
Council
Eric Wear – Howe Green, Hartsop

Maggie Robinson – Natural England
Ruth Williams – National Trust
Mike Harrison – Environment Agency
Andrew Herbert – Lake District
National Park Authority
Robin Taylforth – Side Farm and
Beckstones, Patterdale
John Malley – National Trust
Jimmy Hodgson – Hartsop Hall Farm,
Hartsop
Eddie Pool – local resident

John Darlington welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked them for attending and ran through the agenda for the evening.

Agenda

1. Report back from water meeting 3rd September – what did we learn from the meeting
2. Actions since meeting 3rd September – what have we done with that information
3. Outline National Trust and partners' decisions on urgent breakouts – including explanation of decision-making process and timetable for action
4. Discuss next steps for wider valley solutions

1. Report back from water meeting 3rd September – what did we learn from the meeting

John Darlington said that a clear sense of urgency came across in the 3rd September meeting, which led to this second smaller meeting held within 14 days of the first to look at the most urgent sites.

John highlighted that even where solutions are found and decisions made, this is not the end of the process. The agencies and the community need to keep working together as we look to the long term management of water in the valley.

All participants agreed they were happy with the notes from the meeting on 3rd September.

2. Actions since meeting 3rd September – what have we done with that information

Detailed notes from the meeting have been circulated to participants and posted on the Patterdale Today website.

John Darlington confirmed that all the agencies met to discuss in principle what is possible and what is not at each urgent site.

The National Trust has also met with two of its farm tenants who are closely involved in the issue, and had hoped to meet with a third tenant but this has not been possible.



3. Outline National Trust and partners' decisions on urgent breakouts – including explanation of decision-making process and timetable for action

John Darlington highlighted that there is more than one issue in the valley which needs discussing now, so the Trust has been looking at five sites. Three of these are critical and we need to reach a decision now. Two are less urgent and we are presenting our proposals for these sites so we can all discuss where we are heading. The five sites are:

- Kirkstone Beck (decision presented)
- Brotherswater South (decision presented)
- Horseman's Bridge/Goldrill Beck (decision sought)
- Goldrill Bottoms (proposal for the future)
- Beckstones (proposal for the future)

• Kirkstone Beck

Problem – the breach in the eastern bank is now 2m wide. Because water is escaping through the breach, the water downstream is slowing, allowing gravel to build up in channel bed downstream. This is diverting the flow into the field northward where the water is bunded with no outflow. If the bank is not repaired the beck will divert its course in to the field.

Solution – repair the hole in the bank in the same form and profile as it is now.

Why? – if this isn't fixed the water won't go back in to the beck and we are not ready for such a dramatic change. This is a repair to keep the water in the channel.

Timescales – the work would take approximately two days and Jimmy Hodgson offered to arrange the contractor. John Pring and Jimmy Hodgson to discuss.

We want to do this as soon as possible, however there are restrictions on when we can work in the becks.

The Environment Agency is responsible for protecting fisheries and so cannot consent to in-river works after September.

The Environment Agency will get the consents process completed as soon as possible.

• Brotherswater South

Problem – flood water has scoured and removed the stone face of the eastern channel bank 400m south of entry into Brotherswater. Active soil erosion is present from the scoured bank and the adjacent field is being encroached and is no longer stockproof. In recent times (c.20 years ago) a blockstone revetment has been installed which is solid but it is downstream of the revetment where there is an issue.

Solution – consolidate the bank further up to prevent any further loss of agricultural field. Create big banked levee just in the field, with stabilisation in



the bank (e.g. using willow), so it prevents further scouring away. The detail of how we consolidate the bank needs to be worked through by the Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust and Jimmy Hodgson.

Why? – to prevent further loss of the agricultural field.

Timescales – to consolidate the bank we will need to do some in-river work, and so we will need consents from the Environment Agency. At the soonest this would now be next June once the fish protection period has ended. However, the planning and design process will begin this winter.

The levee is not in the river so could be done earlier, however, it needs designing as part of the wider solution and can only be put in place once the bank issue is resolved to prevent it being washed away.

The Environment Agency and the National Trust need to decide timescales as soon as possible.

Jimmy Hodgson described how there is an intentional discrepancy in the bank heights to encourage the water to go to his side rather than toward the campsite.

Any gravel needed would not be taken from the beck as we would need too much and there are strict restrictions on removing gravel from becks. Mike Harrison explained that the Environment Agency can be more flexible about approving the removal of gravel from a dry beck. However, the river downstream of Brotherswater is a SAC and SSSI, so the Environment Agency could only approve work that will not have a negative impact downstream.

- **Horseman's Bridge/Goldrill Beck**

Problem – the October 2008 flooding stripped the stone face revetment from a significant proportion of the southern channel side and caused the specific failure of the bank immediately beyond the bend. This led to the river flooding across the meadow. A significant proportion of the southern channel side is now comprised of soil only and is actively eroding. Gravel has been deposited in the old channel beyond the breach point and is deflecting beck flow through meadow. A natural scour pool has formed in beck bottom which will move upstream.

There was a consensus view among the residents that water is backing up in Brotherswater. This issue sparked significant discussion over what is causing the water to back up.

John Darlington questioned whether the breach is causing the water to back up, or whether it is actually because the water is being constrained by the bridge.

Several people disagreed with this suggestion:

Colin Bell said the water is backing up because there is just one stream coming out now, there is too much gravel in the beck and trees are choking the beck. Eric Wear said there is a 3-4 foot fall so the bridge is not restricting the water, and that the river needs dredging as it has got flatter and lazier and is dropping more gravel. Jimmy Hodgson said that the water has never



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backed up so high and the only thing that has changed is the breach, so it must be causing it.

John Darlington was still concerned that fixing the breach may not actually solve the flooding problem. So Jimmy Hodgson suggested a temporary solution, placing temporary shuttering across the breakout to put the beck back in to the channel, to see if fixing the breakout would solve the flooding.

Colin Bell, Mel Kilner and Alan Wear highlighted the agricultural heritage and nature conservation value and significance of this area.

The **idea of a temporary solution** was widely supported by those from the community as a way of testing whether it would work and giving time to get the consents needed for a more permanent fix should this be needed. However there were some concerns about the cost of doing a temporary repair rather than a permanent fix.

John Darlington said that he is keen on the temporary idea but we don't yet know if it is feasible financially, legally or practically. The idea would allow us to explore what is happening to the water levels. But it would need the input and agreement of the other agencies too.

This site would also benefit from the valley Gravel Management Plan that has been proposed.

Further problem – immediately downstream of Horseman's bridge there is active bank erosion on northern side, which will eventually if not tackled cause river breach into the meadow alongside road.

Solution – reinforce the bank to the north at this point to prevent inundation of field and potential beck course change into this meadow.

The Environment Agency would need to be confident there would be no impact on the SAC to give consent, and would need the Gravel Management Plan to help give the long term view.

Timescales – the levees would be done as soon as possible once they have been designed.

Eric Wear highlighted that concrete was put under Horseman's Bridge to protect the houses, now it can't work because the gravel is on top, therefore the gravel builds up more and floods the houses.

Mike Harrison replied that if the Environment Agency allowed gravel removal it wouldn't be before next spring and it would need Natural England approval too.

This issue could not be resolved at this meeting, and further discussion is need – see next steps at the end of the notes.



- **Goldrill Bottoms**

This site is not at the point of needing urgent action, rather this is a proposal for the future.

Proposal – to allow the beck out through the wet woodlands to protect the meadows downstream to the north.

Eric Wear raised concerns that the drainage system is backed up there, that there's a layer of peat under the soil, and that this won't slow the water down. Mel Kilner stated that this would create further mire and reeds spreading back up towards Hartsop and that this would destroy the valley. Robin Taylforth said that cutting back riverside trees would need to be part of any solution.

- **Beckstones**

Problem – the revetment wall has collapsed due to water scour undermining bank bottom. A large section of the wall has fallen in to channel causing further scour and undermining of the considerable concrete block wall immediately downstream. Should this fail, the main channel could divert across wet meadows to the north causing risk to access to residential property and footpaths.

Proposal – the National Trust will remove the block that's in the beck and put it back up on the bank.

Robin Taylforth raised concerns about the access to Beckstones and safety implications.

John Malley replied that a more detailed proposal needs to be worked up for this site bearing these factors in mind.

4. Discuss next steps for wider valley solutions

John Darlington summarised that the Trust has come back with some decisions, but that water management is a bigger issue than just the National Trust. There are massive implications on funding, so we need to know where the most important places are for different people. But the landscape will always change and is changing. The solutions we had in the past aren't necessarily the solutions for now.

Colin Jongman said how pleased he was that the agencies have worked together on this. He said it seems like there is need for more 1-1s between the Trust and tenants, but good that there has been and will be some action.

John Darlington highlighted that we have begun to deal with the most urgent cases, now we need to look at the long term so that we are being more proactive and don't get to this urgent situation again. One option could be through the National Park Partnership who, through the sub-group chaired by John, are looking at valley planning and this valley could be the pilot. Valley-based solutions could be trialled here, but we would need to think about how it will transfer as it has to work in other valleys. John asked for further suggestions.



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Veronica McGloin said that the Parish Council wanted to stay involved and could help chair any future process, she said that we mustn't lose the momentum of local input. Veronica asked what else is happening in water management, which might have an impact on the valley, things like Windermere Reflections. She asked that we have a further meeting to get to grips with all the other meetings, partnerships and schemes that are happening. She stressed how important it is to get continuity with the agencies, dealing with the same people, knowing who to talk to and not having to keep repeating the same concerns.

Colin Jongman suggested that we need a committee of some sort to move this on, with representatives of the parish and the community.

Andrew Herbet suggested that the National Park Authority and the National Trust put together a proposal about how the valley planning process might work, and present it to the Parish Council in time for their next meeting on 5th October. The Parish Council could then discuss it at the October meeting, and if happy with it, select representatives to be involved with the process at the next meeting in November. The first valley planning meeting could be held towards the end of November.

In this proposal there would also need to be a date for a small group meeting to discuss Horseman's Bridge.

Alan Metcalfe reminded us that Cumbria Tourism should perhaps be involved in valley planning as tourism is such a large part of the economy, and after the meeting Veronica McGloin suggested that United Utilities should be invited to take part in the discussions on Horseman's Bridge.

John Darlington closed the meeting with thanks to all who took part and confirmed that notes would be circulated as soon as possible and posted on Patterdale Today.

Actions

- National Trust to prepare and circulate notes from meeting. ASAP.
- National Park and National Trust to prepare a proposal for the Parish Council to consider on the notion of valley planning. By 5th October.
- Kirkstone – John Pring and Jimmy Hodgson to discuss and undertake repairs. ASAP.
- Brotherswater South – National Trust to lead on designing the solution along the lines agreed at the meeting. ASAP.
- Horseman's Bridge – National Trust to arrange hydro-geomorphological survey, followed by a further meeting with the community to discuss results and ways forward. National Trust to design levee construction. ASAP, with meeting date included in proposal to Parish Council.
- Goldrill Bottoms – monitor the situation and continue to discuss with tenants and wider community.
- Beckstones – National Trust to arrange removal of block and work with Robin Taylforth to look at wider issues of access and safety. ASAP.