

**63. The English Lake District (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
(C 422rev)**

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2017

Criteria (ii)(v)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors identified at the time of inscription of the property:

- Quarrying activities
- Energy transportation
- Viability of the shepherding tradition
- Risk preparedness
- Depopulation

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/>

Current conservation issues

On 16 December 2021, at the request of the World Heritage Centre to address concerns about potential adverse impacts of practices and planned projects and the Committee's recommendations at the time of inscription, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation, to which an update has been provided on 1 March 2023. Both reports are available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/documents> and report the following:

- In December 2021, the revised joint World Heritage Site and National Park Management Plan (2020-2025) was adopted as a statutory management plan. The Plan contains strategies and actions to address concern about the property and the Committee's recommendations;
- Indicators are being developed for monitoring attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), including those related to the traditional farming and shepherding practices;
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) are developing policies to continue to support farming communities and the traditional farming system both in the property and at the national level, within the framework of the Agricultural Transition Plan 2021-2024. The LDNPP's Post-CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) group was established in 2017 and an Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) Test has been completed within the property, whilst other projects concerning Common Land and agri-environment schemes are continuing;
- Interim funding of 3 million GBP (approx. USD 3.75 million) over three years from a Farming in Protected Landscape project is under implementation and has so far delivered 88 projects. Natural England and Historic England are working to enhance the relevance of cultural capital in management and funding from other sources have been deployed for landscape improvement;
- The Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership works to ensure that community knowledge and concerns are used to increase flood resilience. The next Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management

Strategy was to be published in 2021. 200 million GBP (approx. USD 250 million) are allocated for the period 2021-2027 for flood and climate resilience programmes. Trials for Natural Flood Management (NFM) are being carried out, though results so far are modest and a change in scale is needed, also to address drought. NFM measures that can address both recovery of some attributes of OUV and flood prevention are underway, and their potential impacts on the landscape are being assessed through Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) checklists and processes. Following NFM Trials additional 6 million GBP (approx. USD 7.5 million) were allocated to Cumbria County Council;

- The need for affordable housing dedicated to local people is addressed through the Housing Provision Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which establishes that all new housing is either for local occupancy or affordable housing. Participatory processes are applied throughout the planning system and a variety of impacts, including on landscape, are considered. Over the period 2010-2018, new housing construction exceeded the minimum target, and 39 completions were recorded in 2021-2022. The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) controls several actions requiring planning consent but cannot prevent existing permanent dwellings from being turned into holiday homes;
- The preparation of an interpretation strategy is planned to be completed by the end of 2023. A toolkit was prepared providing guidelines for branding assets.

The State Party reports the following updates on planning issues since inscription:

- Local Plan policies do not support a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for radioactive waste located in or under the Lake District National Park and areas within the park have been excluded from initial considerations. In case of a decision for possible future development consents for hazardous material waste infrastructure, any impact reports will be considered by the Secretary of State as per the Planning Act 2008;
- The Honister Zip Wire project was approved after the conditions requested by Natural England were satisfied. The related ICOMOS Technical Review was received after consent was granted. However, planning permission expired on 3 September 2022 unless work started beforehand. No update has been provided in 2023;
- The LDNPA is not actively considering a gondola/cable car at Whinlatter and the Local Plan, adopted in 2021, does not include a policy in this regard. No update has been provided in 2023;
- The conservation of landscape character-defining features is addressed through several means: Local Plans, the Management Plan, the establishment of a Design Code, the extension of the Keswick Conservation Area, the establishment of a new Conservation Area at Windermere recognising the villa movement, and the delivery of funds through the DEFRA's Historic Building Restoration Grant Scheme Pilot to repair 11 buildings.
- Vehicular access to unsealed roads is an issue that continues to be reported by third parties and has been subject to ICOMOS Technical Reviews. The LDNPA's Right of Way Committee established the Tilberthwaite Partnership Management Group to monitor the usage and condition of unsealed roads. In 2021, the LDNPA did not consider that sufficient evidence of harm to OUV had emerged from the use of the Tilberthwaite road to justify a ban on the activity. In 2022, LDNPA's Position Statement on unsealed roads was adopted. It aims at sustainable and responsible use of unsealed roads and provides a context for management and decision-making in this regard. No update has been provided in 2023.

In October 2022 and May 2023, the State Party provided information about the issue of eutrophication of Lake Windemere causing increases in surface algal blooms and the decline of the water quality of the lake. The State Party also acknowledged the role of climate change and its impact on water temperature which can trigger formation of algal blooms. To address the nutrient input to Lake Windemere and thus the frequency and intensity of cyanobacterial blooms, which have the potential to impact on various attributes that underpin the OUV of the property, the State Party launched the 'Love Windemere Partnership', which reports to the LDNPP. A roadmap for environmental protection of the lake is reported, which includes tackling the sources of the lake pollution, namely public and private sewage systems and land management practices.

In February 2023, the State Party informed about a heritage tourism attraction to be inserted within a historic working quarry at Elterwater in the Great Langdale valley. An ICOMOS Technical Review of the documentation provided has been transmitted to the State Party in May 2023.

A new notification and consultation process for project proposals has been set up by the LDNPA and Historic England, according to which the LDNPA prepares a briefing note for any proposal that may need a notification as per Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

While some progress has been made in response to the Committee's recommendations at the time of the property's inscription, crucial issues remain to be fully addressed. Adequate support for traditional farming practices, which are essential to sustain the landscape, is yet to be secured and these practices have become more vulnerable since inscription. Other important issues yet to be resolved include flood resilience, local housing, regulating off-road vehicular traffic, and local interpretation.

At the time of inscription, the Committee recognized the vulnerability of the Lake District's agro-pastoral traditions and recommended that the State Party develop farm-supporting policies and funding schemes to sustain and compensate the farming community for its heritage services in producing and caring for this outstanding cultural landscape. Six years after inscription, only a few steps seem to have been taken, with largely insufficient funding allocated compared to the scale of support received by farmers before the departure of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the EU. A clear strategy, measures or sufficient funding sources for the medium- and long-term are yet to emerge to address this crucial issue affecting the property's key intangible attribute, which underpins the whole landscape and its OUV. Meanwhile, vulnerabilities are increasing. The existing national agricultural and nature conservation policies do not seem tailored to tackle the challenges of traditional farming, which relies on a specific sociocultural system and practices: ad-hoc mechanisms over and above what might be available in other areas need to be sought with the farming community to protect the OUV of the property.

Planning and policies have been set out following the Committee's recommendation to address affordable houses and services for residents to support the farming community. However, the LDNPA has no tool to prevent permanent dwellings from being turned into holiday homes. Therefore, no measures seem to be envisaged to tackle the phenomenon of the conversion of permanent houses into holiday homes. The imbalance between second homes and resident houses can thus only increase as new housing developments are built. Measures to discourage this practice need to be considered urgently, such as those being considered in other parts of the State Party. Equally urgent is the establishment of a functional public transportation network that can serve both residents and visitors, to reduce private vehicular traffic.

It is welcome that the State Party has started to act on the Committee's recommendation to develop an interpretation strategy and programmes to ensure that local residents and tourists alike can become familiar with the attributes of the property that convey its OUV and with related protection and management needs. The strategy will be fundamental in defining how the property is understood and presented, what kind of future should be pursued for it and what would be the preferred uses compatible with sustaining its OUV. Adequate programmes are considered indispensable to redress certain developments and use trends and shape management priorities and mechanisms more in line with the OUV of the property.

Several third-party communications since 2017 have raised the issue of unsealed roads and off-road access by motor vehicles for tourists. ICOMOS' Technical Reviews noted the dramatic increase of this non-traditional activity, the related negative impacts on certain road sections, and the feasibility of using existing and tested measures, such as Traffic Regulation Orders, applied elsewhere in protected areas in the State Party. The recognised capacity of this cultural landscape 'to uplift imagination, creativity, and spirit' can only be sustained if tranquillity and quietness remain a trait of the property. Hence, increasing vehicular traffic for leisure purposes along unsealed roads erodes the sense of place and undermines the inspirational dimension of the cultural landscape, another key attribute of the property. **It is advised that the State Party be strongly encouraged to harness the available instruments to redress this issue and prevent leisure vehicular access from highly sensitive and emblematic valleys and places. Furthermore, systematic monitoring of this activity within the property is urgently needed as a basis for a comprehensive regulatory policy focused on safeguarding the attributes of OUV, rather than the present uneven approach, which does not appear to be based on a clear understanding of OUV-based visitor management.**

Regarding the reported decline in water quality of Lake Windermere, it is recommended that the Committee encourages the State Party to continue its efforts to control nutrient input to the lake through a multi-stakeholder approach including public, private and community partners and to secure its long-term funding.

The proposed project at Elterwater Quarry was assessed at the national level as having no impact on the OUV. However, the ICOMOS Technical Review (May 2023) found that the planned attraction is of a type that would transform the quarry or part of it into a theme park and would trivialise the experience of an important aspect of the Lake District's heritage, and one of its attributes, drawing traffic to the Great Langdale valley and a type of audience that will contribute to the disruption of its tranquil and contemplative character. As explained in the nomination dossier, Great Langdale has preserved a distinctive and almost intact agro-pastoral character and the valley's secluded appearance has inspired artists and writers, as well as benefactors who have purchased land to preserve this landscape. Therefore, the proposed tourism development appears alien to the character of the valley and not compatible with the attributes of OUV. The property is already facing negative consequences of mass tourism and since projects of this type are not a first and will continue to occur, it is advisable that the Committee requests that such proposals for tourist attractions be suspended until an OUV-based interpretation strategy for the property is finalised and becomes a reference also for tourism development initiatives.

Regarding the Committee's recommendation to strengthen flood risk preparedness strategies by incorporating local knowledge, it is noted that some individual NFM trial projects are being implemented on a case-by-case basis without the benefit of an overarching strategy that considers the impacts of flood-defence measures on the attributes of OUV. As the Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, understood to have been approved in 2022, does not mention World Heritage and a change of scale in NFM projects is being envisaged, the Committee may wish to recommend that the State Party set out an overall strategic approach to define how both natural flood management and protection of the attributes of OUV might be achieved.

The information that no GDF for hazardous waste is currently being planned within the property is welcome. It is highly advisable that no such facility is considered in the future within the property. The information that no project for a gondola/cable car at Whinlatter is currently being considered is equally welcome. However, it is noted that policy 09 from LDNPA Local Plan envisages the redevelopment and expansion of the Whinlatter Centre for recreation, leisure, and new visitor accommodation. Any future project for Whinlatter will have to be sent to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. It is regrettable that planning consent has been issued for the Honister Zip Wire contrary to ICOMOS' advice, considering the objections to this project from many organisations. The World Heritage Committee may wish to recommend the State Party to pursue all possible ways to resolve this issue and avoid the construction of the zip wire.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.63

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B,*
2. *Recalling Decision **41 COM 8B.30**, adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017),*
3. *Welcomes the efforts made by the State Party to address the recommendations adopted at the time of the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List but notes that progress in the implementation of those recommendations is very slow;*
4. *Also welcomes the State Party's confirmation that no projects for a gondola/cable car at Whinlatter and a Geological Disposal Facility for hazardous waste within the property are currently being considered, recommends that no such project be considered in the future and requests that timely information and documentation on the possible redevelopment and expansion of the Whinlatter Centre of recreation be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before any decision is taken on the future of this facility;*
5. *Welcomes furthermore the information concerning the approval of the update of the revised joint World Heritage and National Park Management Plan;*

6. *Regrets that the planning consent for Honister Zip Wire was issued, despite objections of several preservation organisations and contrary to the advice contained in ICOMOS' Technical Review and encourages the State Party to pursue all possible ways to resolve this issue and to avoid the construction of this infrastructure;*
7. *Expresses concern at the lack of a clear strategy to address the vulnerability of the property's agro-pastoral traditions and urges the State Party to devise and implement, in consultation with the Lake District's farming communities, appropriate policies and adequately resourced funding schemes to support and compensate them for their heritage services in order to sustain in the medium to long term the key attributes of this landscape that underpin its integrity and authenticity;*
8. *Notes the growing imbalance between houses for residents and holiday homes, despite efforts to provide affordable housing for residents, and further requests the State Party to establish measures that discourage the conversion of residential houses to second or holiday homes to guarantee affordable housing for residents and at the same time reduce urban development pressures on the landscape;*
9. *Recommends to the State Party to address the issue of excessive private vehicular traffic by enhancing the public transportation system within the property and discouraging access to the property by non-resident private vehicles;*
10. *Also notes the concerns raised in the ICOMOS Technical Reviews regarding the use of off-road motorised vehicles on green lanes within the property, urges the State Party to harness the already available instruments to prevent vehicular access to unsealed roads in highly sensitive and emblematic valleys, and also requests the State Party to ensure as a matter of urgency that systematic monitoring is carried out on all unsealed roads open to vehicular access to assess the status of this activity and its impacts on the tangible and intangible attributes of the property, as a basis for a comprehensive regulatory policy focused on safeguarding the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);*
11. *Notes furthermore that the Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, approved in 2022, makes no mention of World Heritage and, as a change of scale in the Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects is envisaged within the property, recommends the State Party to promptly set out an overall place-based strategic approach to demonstrate how both natural flood management and protection of the attributes of the OUV might be achieved;*
12. *Welcomes that an interpretation strategy for the property is under preparation and requests that this strategy be developed around the OUV of the property, finalised as soon as possible, submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and used as a reference to determine, which tourism uses are compatible with sustaining the property's OUV;*
13. *Requests furthermore the State Party to suspend the approval process of the tourist attraction at Elterwater Quarry in Great Langdale, and any other such project proposals, and to reconsider it in light of its potential negative impacts on the attributes of Langdale underpinning the OUV of the property, until an OUV-based interpretation strategy is approved;*
14. *Notes furthermore the declining water quality of Lake Windermere caused by public and private sewage systems and land management practices, as well as by the impacts of climate change, and encourages the State Party to continue its efforts to tackle the*

sources of the lake's pollution through a multi-stakeholder approach including public, private and community partners and to secure its long-term funding;

15. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*