Walkmill
Community
Woodlands

Conservation Management & Maintenance Plan

West Cumbria Rivers Trust
Caring for our Lakes and Rivers

Made possible with
Heritage Fund

Contents

Figures

Tables

Appendices

Executive Summary

The Walkmill Community Woodland is a 36-hectare former coalmine site close to Moresby Parks, near Whitehaven. The coalmine was known as Walkmill Colliery and it was active from 1879-1961. Twenty years after closure, in the 1990's, the site was successfully reclaimed and made in to a community recreational area with woodland, grassland, a pond, beck and footpaths. Cumbria County Council managed and maintained the site up until 2018 when they put the woodland up for sale.

However, the community successfully campaigned to keep the woodland as a public amenity leading to a Community Asset Transfer of the woodland to Moresby Parish Council, who now have a 99-year lease for the site and are responsible for the management and maintenance.

A partnership was formed, blending the skills, experience and resources of Moresby Parish Council, Walkmill Activity Group and West Cumbria Rivers Trust. This partnership is looking to maintain and enhance the significant natural and industrial heritage at Walkmill Community Woodland, improve access and provide activities to improve community health, wellbeing and learning opportunities.

The vision for Walkmill Community Woodland is to raise awareness of the site's heritage, both natural and industrial, and increase people's understanding of its significance, the threats it faces, and what needs to be done to manage it. Long-term sustainability and self-reliance of the site will be built through empowering the local community and training volunteers.

Thorough environmental and archaeological surveys have been conducted on the site and this information has been fed in to this Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan. There have also been numerous community consultations and pilot events, which have provided invaluable views and opinions of the local community and demonstrated the demand that there is in the community for this project.

The A Wilder Walkmill project will see Walkmill Community Woodlands become a haven for People and Wildlife. Management of the woodlands will improve tree health and provide long-term sustainability, along with improving the habitat for associated flora and fauna. Tree and hedge planting will improve species diversity and will provide more food for birds and red squirrels. The concrete channelled beck will once again become a fully functional meandering flow of water that runs through wetlands and ponds on its journey through the site, allowing people to walk alongside and reap the wellbeing benefits of green and blue spaces. The valleys will be restored to wildflower havens encouraging a myriad of insects and improved habitat for the sites adders. The improved footpaths will let people explore all the site has to offer but will keep people from wandering into sensitive areas. Control of invasive species will allow native species to thrive. The removed fences will allow people and wildlife to move freely around the site without causing harm and injury. Installing leaky dams and woody debris in suitable locations to help 'slow the flow' and create wetland habitats and will be designed by secondary school students who will help build and monitor them. A tree and wildflower nursery will be set up to grow local native species and to increase community engagement opportunities. Monitoring groups and citizen science will be established so that improvements for wildlife can be monitored. Apprentices, the local community and social

prescribers will help carry out the work improving health and wellbeing and making new friends along the way.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Walkmill Community Woodland site is a former open cast coalmine which opened in the 1879 and ceased operation in 1961. The land was successfully reclaimed in the 1990's when a woodland and public recreation area were created. Today this 36-hectare site is a popular public open space with a mosaic of natural habitats including a semi-mature woodland, watercourse and areas of open ground. The land is open access and continues to serve the local community whilst providing an important home for nature.

1.1.2 Walkmill Community Woodland is owned by Cumbria County Council (CCC) who put it up for sale in 2018. The local residents and users of the site made significant protests against this sale and were successful in their attempts to prevent the site from being sold. In 2019 CCC agreed to lease the site to Moresby Parish Council (MPC) for 99 years. The site is now designated as a community asset.

1.1.3 In order for MPC to adapt to this new venture and to manage the asset, the Parish Council set up a Steering Group. This group has a variety of experienced members with different backgrounds who will ensure that the needs of the community, wildlife and the site itself are met. The Steering Group comprises Moresby Parish Council (MPC), Walkmill Activity Group (WAG) and West Cumbria Rivers Trust (WCRT). The group meets monthly and reports back to Parish Council meetings.

1.1.4 Cumbria County Council have previously commissioned Site Management Plans for Walkmill Community Woodland, with the latest review having occurred in 2008. However, the last plan was very brief and contained minimal information. This new Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan aims to provide substantially more information, which will fill the gaps found in the previous plans. This document is the first time that the history, condition and vision for the woodland have been brought together in to one document.

1.1.5 The Conservation Management Plan and the Management and Maintenance Plan have been combined in to one document to make it simpler for people to access all of the information about Walkmill Community Woodland and so that people can have an understanding of the site in its entirety.

1.1.6 This Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan (CMMP) has been prepared by West Cumbria Rivers Trust with input from the Walkmill Community Woodlands Steering Group. Specialist surveys were carried out by Archer Ecology, local wildlife groups, Armstrong McCaul Biological Consultants, Dynamic Rivers Ltd, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, West Cumbria Rivers Trust and Durham University Archaeological Services.

1.1.7 This Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan was written during the development phase of the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) funded project 'A Wilder Walkmill' and has been prepared as one of the supporting documents for the NLHF Stage 2 funding bid.

1.1.8 'A Wilder Walkmill' project has been developed through extensive consultation that will continue throughout delivery phase. The consultation process for 'A Wilder Walkmill' has helped to inform the development of the bid and the documents that have been produced to support the application. For specific details about the consultation process during the development phase and the types of consultations that have been carried out see the "Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill".

1.2 Scope of the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan

1.2.1 The purpose of this plan is to:

- Describe the history of Walkmill Community Woodland and explore the significance of the site.
- Provide a detailed analysis of the site looking at the natural heritage, industrial heritage, accessibility and users.
- Explain what is important about the woodland, why it is important and to whom.
- Establish policies to help protect and conserve the significance of Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Identify current and future threats to the site, issues and opportunities.
- Provide information about how Walkmill Community Woodland is currently managed and maintained and how it will be in the future.
- Review the work that will occur during the "A Wilder Walkmill" project and the required management and maintenance for the 10 years following the end of the project.

1.2.2 The Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan will be fully reviewed in May 2027 by a suitably trained ecologist who will also advise on updates for the 10-year plan, which will be handed over to MPC to administer. This will ensure that it has been suitably updated before the end of National Lottery Heritage Fund funded project "A Wilder Walkmill".

1.2.3 Many documents and surveys have been collected throughout the development phase to support the information in this plan. These can be found in the document: "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan" and contain:

- The Archaeological Report (Durham Archaeological Services, Durham University)

- River Restoration (Dynamic Rivers) Modelling and Detailed Design Technical Note (including soil sample surveys)
- Woodland Management Plan and felling licence (WCRT and TM Hedging)
- Preliminary Environmental Assessment Final (Archer Ecology)
- Biodiversity Assessment (Archer Ecology)
- Reptile and Amphibian Data (Cumbria Amphibian and Reptile Group)
- Wildlife Surveys (Armstrong McCaul Biological Consultants)
- Riverfly Survey (West Cumbria Rivers Trust)
- Curly Waterweed management plan (West Cumbria Rivers Trust)
- Data Driven Decisions (The Evaluator)
- CCC Site Management Plan: Walkmill Community Woodland, reviewed 2008 (Capita Symonds)
- Aspects of Land Reclamation: Walkmill Pit to Community Woodland (Ruth McPhee)
- Wildflower Meadow Management Plan (Cumbria Wildlife Trust)

1.2.4 The only limiting factor during the surveys and design work were the local landowners not wanting ponds or wetlands on their land. The river restoration design included some water storage areas and wetlands on two sections of two adjacent landowners land. They were designed on existing wet areas which often become inundated in heavy rain and would help water flow through the site and stop footpaths flooding. The landowners however did not want to have ponds and wetlands on their land and so alternative options within the site boundary were appraised.

1.3 Structure of the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan

This Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan explores the history of Walkmill Community Woodlands before considering the woodlands today. There are 13 different habitat types within the woodland, along with numerous different elements, such as the beck and mining features, and these have all been individually described as they are today. Their significance, the condition they are in, the issues there are and the proposed management work have also been described, along with the current users of the site. Anticipated issues, vulnerabilities and opportunities for the site have also been explored. All this information has been compiled so that a set of policies can be established about how the site should be managed going forward. Analysis of this information has also informed the aims for the site along with the specified management objectives. Finally a works plan for the four year delivery phase has been created, and a long-term maintenance plan to ensure sustainability and longevity once the project has ended. The plan ends with an action plan and a future expenditure table for after the project has been completed. The Chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: The Story of Walkmill Community Woodlands – explores the history and evolution of the Walkmill site.

Chapter 3: Walkmill Community Woodlands Today – Explains the site today, its location, and how it is currently managed and maintained.

Chapter 4: Elements and Significance of Walkmill Community Woodlands– explores the different elements that are present at Walkmill Community Woodlands today, the issues these elements encounter and what management they require. This chapter will also discuss the significance of Walkmill Community Woodlands, to whom it matters and why.

Chapter 5: Issues and Opportunities – explains the issues and vulnerabilities that there are at Walkmill Community Woodlands, as well as exploring the opportunities that are available.

Chapter 6: Managing Walkmill Community Woodlands in the Future – explains the policies, objectives and the vision for Walkmill Community Woodland. It also explores how the site will be managed and maintained in the future to conserve, restore and enhance the woodland and its natural and industrial heritage.

Chapter 7: Action Plan – explains the future management and maintenance that will be required.

2. The Story of Walkmill Community Woodland

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section will explore the history of Walkmill Community Woodland by covering:

- The changing land use and management of the Walkmill Community Woodland site over the past 160 years.
- The development, history and dismantling of Walkmill Colliery.
- The reclamation and recent history of Walkmill Community Woodland.

2.1.2 Sources for this section include, Durham University Archaeological Services Archaeological Assessment, historic Ordnance Survey maps, the Durham Mining Museum website, documents/photos from Cumbria Archives Service in Carlisle, as well as memories and stories from local people and relatives.

2.1.3 The archaeological assessment from Durham University is a very informative document for explaining the history of the Walkmill Community Woodland site and uncovering the remaining features. This assessment recommends that the remaining industrial heritage features should be regularly cleared of vegetation so that they are visible to visitors. It also recommends that interpretation is installed by the features to explain the industrial heritage of the site and that photos stored at the Cumbria Archives Service in Carlisle could be utilised for this. The full archaeological assessment is available in the "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan".

2.2 Before Walkmill Colliery

2.2.1 The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865[1] (see figure 2.1 below) shows the area that will later become Walkmill Colliery (and then Walkmill Community Woodlands) to be mainly unaffected by development at this time. The site is surrounded mainly by open ground divided into large straight-sided plots. To the south there is some woodland and the river Keekle.

[1] "First edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1865" in *Walkmill Woods and Colliery, Moresby, Cumbria – Archaeological Assessment*, Archaeological Services Durham University, 2022, p.41

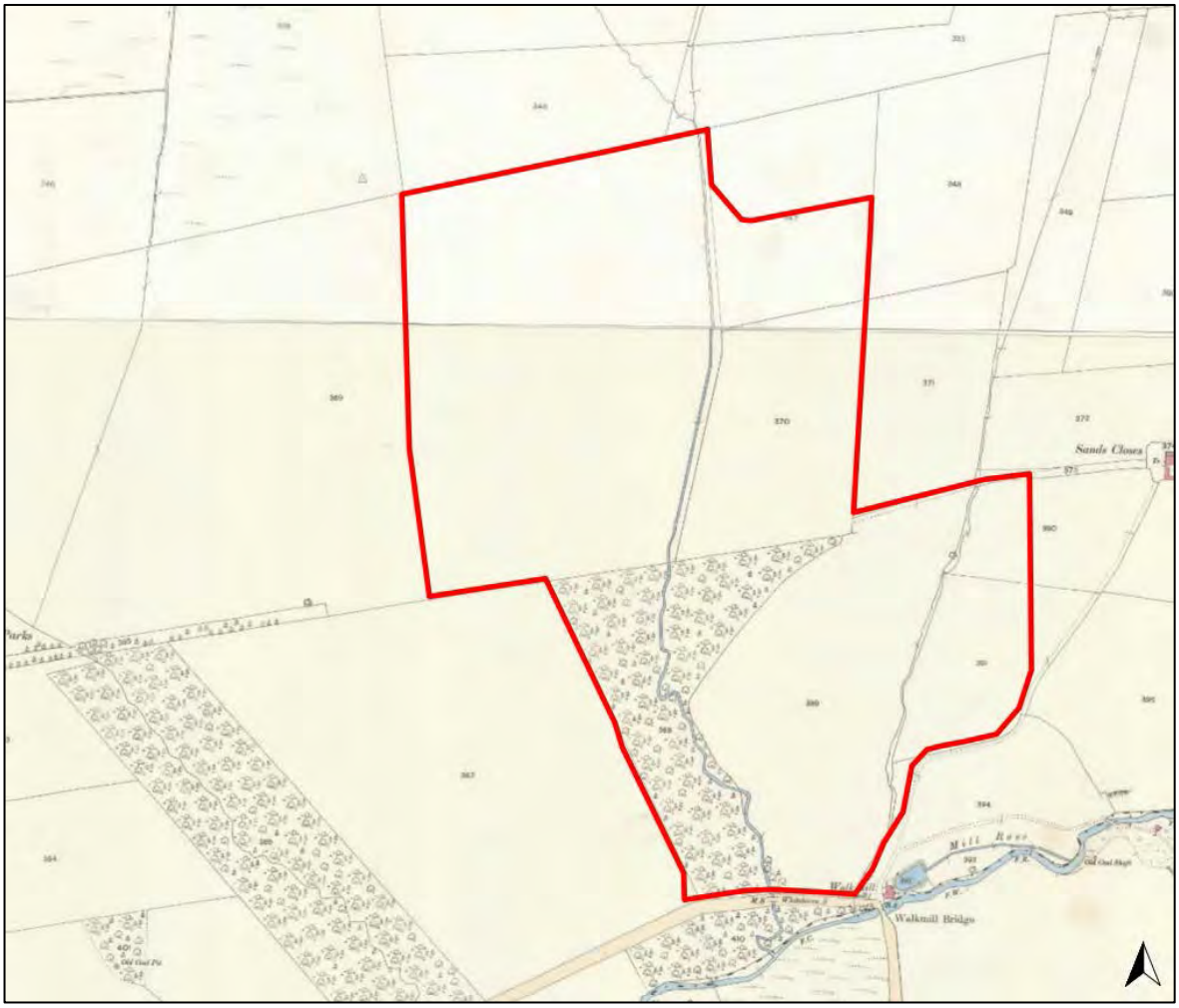


Figure 2.1: Extract from the first edition Ordnance Survey map, 1865

2.2.2 The map also shows evidence of a sawmill and a mill race to the south of the site. The existence of a mill at the site explains the etymology of the name 'Walkmill' that *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia* defines as "A fulling-mill"[2], which was where the fulling of cloth[3] would take place. It is believed that the earliest Walk Mill at the site would have been used for fulling wool for the farm at Sands Close.

2.2.3 The industrial history of the surrounding area is demonstrated by the presence of the mill, old coal shafts and quarries that are shown to the south and east of the site. Industry is an important part of the history of West Cumbria and deep mining for coal began in the Whitehaven area in the mid-17th century. There were many other small and large coalmines in West Cumbria and a hematite ironworks to the south in Cleator Moor.

[2] *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*, Volume 8, William Dwight Whitney, p.6809, online edition http://triggs.djvu.org/century-dictionary.com/

[3] "To increase the density and usually the thickness of (cloth) by shrinking and beating or pressing", *Fulling*, https://www.thefreedictionary.com/fulling

2.2.4 It is also worth noting that originally Moresby Parks just referred to a single farm, so the village of the same name had not yet been built. The farmhouse and some of the buildings still survive but part of its yard has become a residential development called Whinriggs Drive.

2.2.5 The natural heritage of the Walkmill site is also an interesting feature on this map. The northern section of the unnamed beck appears to have already been straightened and follows the edge of a field boundary, probably done in order to gain more useable farming land. However, the map shows that the southern section has a more natural meandering beck that travels across the fields and does not follow a specific field boundary and hence showing the natural course the unnamed beck may have originally taken. The southern section of the site is shown to be quite rocky and interspersed with woodland, which also shows that historically trees were present on the Walkmill site.

2.3 The Beginning of Walkmill Colliery

2.3.1 Walkmill Colliery opened in 1879 and was owned by Moresby Coal Company until the nationalisation of the coal mining industry in 1947, at which time Walkmill Colliery was acquired by The National Coal Board[4].

Figure 2.2: Early 20th century postcard view of Walkmill Colliery

2.3.2 The second edition Ordnance Survey map from 1899[5] (see figure 2.3 below) shows that many changes had happened to the Walkmill site over the previous 30 years. The land that

[4] Durham Mining Museum*, Walkmill Colliery,* "Owners", http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/w047.htm

[5] "Second edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1899" in *Walkmill Woods and Colliery, Moresby, Cumbria – Archaeological Assessment*, Archaeological Services Durham University, 2022, p.42

had previously been farmland and woodland had clearly become a working coalmine. This map shows the large area containing the mine workings, including the coke ovens, and a change in gradient due to the creation of the new slag heaps.

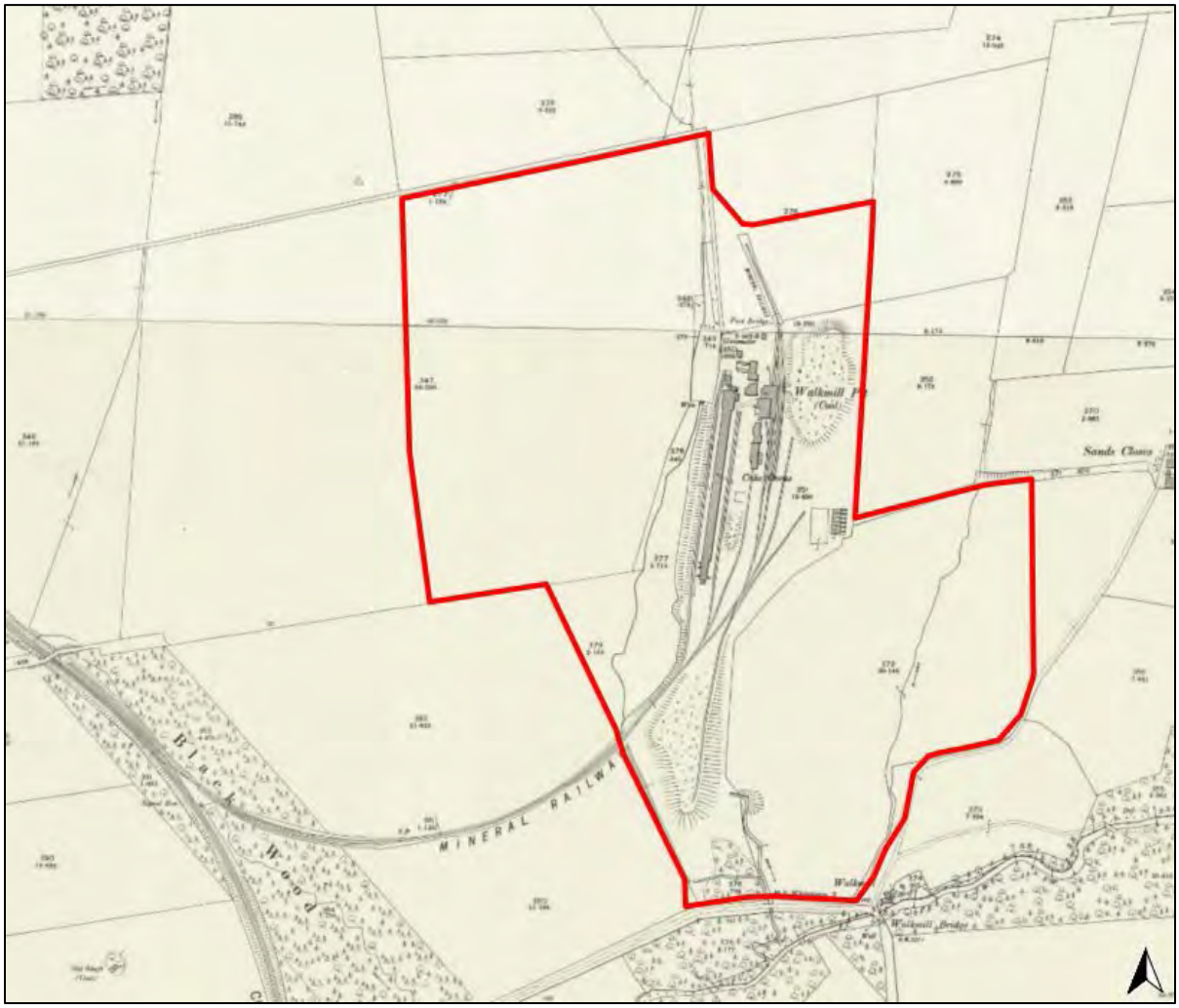


Figure 2.3: Extract from the second edition Ordnance Survey map, 1899

2.3.3 Another significant addition was the new Cleator and Workington Junction Railway that opened in 1879 and included a mineral line that ran to the Walkmill Colliery. This enabled the transportation of coal and coke from the mine[6]. The map also shows a new track at the north of the site, which is still known locally as the 'pit road', which allowed access to the coalmine for vehicles and people.

2.3.4 By 1900 Walkmill Colliery employed approximately 350 people with nearly 250 people working below ground and just over 100 working above ground[7]. With this increase in local jobs and the improvements in accessibility, due to the new railway, the population and economy in the local area started to expand too. The population of Moresby Parish increased

[6] RailScot, *Cleator and Workington Junction Railway,* https://www.railscot.co.uk/companies/C/Cleator_and_Workington_Junction_Railway/, accessed 16/09/2022

[7] Durham Mining Museum*, Walkmill Colliery,* "Employment*",* http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/w047.htm, accessed 16/09/2022

from 371 in 1801 to 1144 in 1891[8]. The second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900[9] (see figure 2. 4 below) shows the beginnings of Moresby Parks village in the area north of Moresby Parks Farm. By 1898 the village had a railway station, a school and a chapel. The map also shows four terraces of houses built by the Moresby Coal Company for the workforce. These terraces are still present in Moresby Parks today.

Figure 2.4: Extract from the second edition Ordnance Survey map, 1900

2.3.5 The construction of the colliery changed the landscape of the area too. Comparing the 1865 map with the 1899 map it is apparent that a significant number of trees were felled to make space for the mine workings. A small section of woodland to the south of the site by the road was left untouched, but the rest of the Walkmill site was barren. The construction of Walkmill Colliery also caused the straightening of the unnamed beck. This beck lost its natural meander and was encouraged to flow in a straight line along the edge of the field boundary, before flowing across the patch of woodland and then under the road. The beck was also modified so that it could be used as part of the mine workings. The colliery's steam engines required a constant supply of water so the beck was dammed to create a pond near the shafts. The water then flowed over the weir and formed a larger pool that stretched as far as the railway line.

[8] Cumbria County History Trust, *Moresby*, "Population", https://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/township/moresby

[9] Second edition Ordnance Survey map, 1900, Cumberland Sheet LXI.SE, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

2.4 The Expansion of Walkmill Colliery

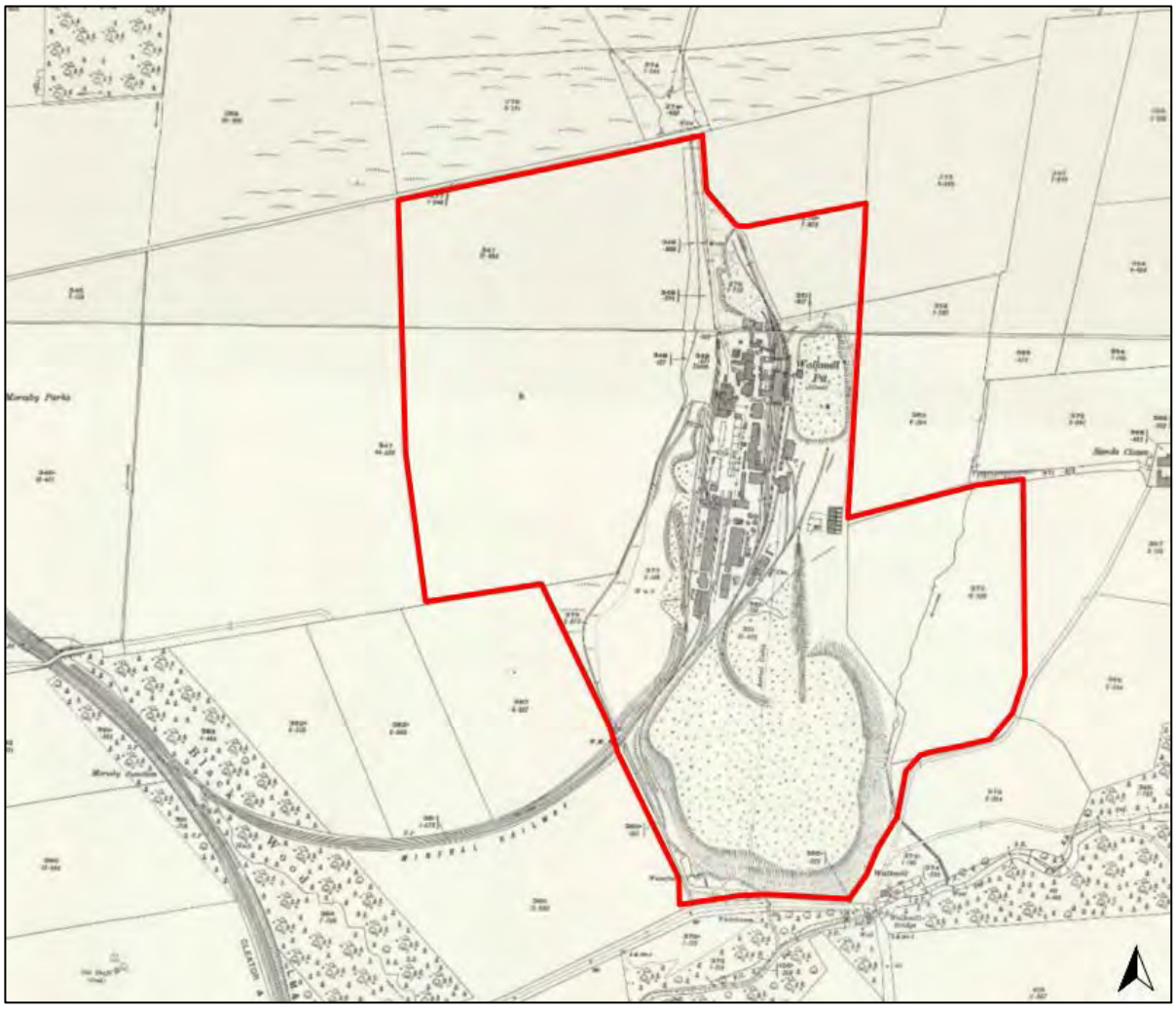


Figure 2.5: Extract from the third edition Ordnance Survey map, 1925

2.4.1 By 1930 Walkmill Colliery had expanded with more buildings, mine workings, a much larger slag heap and the addition of an aerial ropeway which was used to take spoil to the top of the slag heap. The third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1925[10] (see figure 2.5 above) also shows features whose remnants are on the Walkmill Community Woodland site today, such as the weighbridge[11] which was used to weigh wagons loaded with coal or coke as they left the colliery and was installed in 1913. Figure 2.6 below shows the remains of the weighbridge today that was uncovered by volunteers during the development phase.

[10] "Third edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1925" in *Walkmill Woods and Colliery, Moresby, Cumbria – Archaeological Assessment*, Archaeological Services Durham University, 2022, p.43

[11] Marked as W.M. on the map in figure 2.5, which stands for "weighing machine".

Figure 2.6: The remains of the weighbridge at Walkmill Community Woodland

2.4.2 The small section of woodland that had remained in 1899 was felled to make space for the expanding slag heaps, leaving no areas of woodland on the Walkmill Colliery site. Further modifications had also taken place on the beck. The big pool had been drained and is marked on the map simply as 'mud'. The beck had also been engineered to go around the western side of where the pool had been in an artificial concrete channel, which is the same channel the beck travels through today (see section '4.6 Hydrology' for further information about the current state of the beck). There is also the addition of a waterfall at the southern area of the beck. The map also shows that a new weir and dam had been constructed just north of the 'pit road', which created a pool that fed the long pond or dam near the shafts and boiler house. This weir was a brick and stone structure and is still present at Walkmill Community Woodlands today and was also uncovered by volunteers during the development phase of the project – see figure 2.7 below.

Figure 2.7: The remains of the brick and stone weir at Walkmill Community Woodland

2.4.3 There had been a rapid increase in employment at the Colliery too with 669 people employed in 1925, rising to 903 in 1930, 651 of whom worked below ground[12]. Employment figures nearly tripling in 30 years is further evidence of the rapid growth of the Walkmill Colliery.

2.4.4 The growth of the Colliery and increase in employment also had an impact on the nearby village, Moresby Parks. The village expanded further with new private dwellings built to the south of the existing school and chapel. There was also the addition of the Mission Hall (a place of worship), Reading Room and Allotment Gardens. See figure 2.8 below showing an extract of the third edition Ordnance Survey map from 1926[13].

[12] Durham Mining Museum*, Walkmill Colliery,* "Employment*",* http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/w047.htm

[13] Third edition Ordnance Survey map, 1926, Cumberland Sheet LXI.SE, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Figure 2.8: Extract from the third edition Ordnance Survey map, 1926

2.4.5 Activity at Walkmill Colliery appears to have peaked in the late 1920's and production and employment figures started to decrease from the early 1930's. The Great Depression had a huge impact on the economy and the demand for coal production rapidly declined. Employment figures also plummeted and by 1950 Walkmill Colliery was down to 252 employees[14].

2.5 Dismantling, Reclamation and Creation of Walkmill Community Woodland

2.5.1 When Walkmill closed in 1961 it employed just 222 people[15]. It is thought that the coal had been mined from the existing mineshafts at the Walkmill site, and although there were further coal seams in the area, the cost to get the infrastructure in place to be able to access these seams was prohibitive.[16] It was also reported that the colliery had been making a loss due to the difficult working conditions posed by the Cumberland coalfield. The coal seams were very steep and there is reported to have been numerous faults disrupting the seams making it difficult to extract coal at an economical cost.[17]

2.5.2 Despite the decline in the number of people employed by the mine, Moresby Parks village continued to expand and the Ordnance Survey map from 1961[18] (see figure 2.9 below) shows a significant increase in housing. It also shows the addition of a new bowling green, St Michael's Chapel and a Miners Welfare Institute. St Michael's Chapel is still present at Moresby Parks today and the Miner's Welfare Institute has become Moresby Rugby Club.

[14] Durham Mining Museum*, Walkmill Colliery,* "Employment*",* http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/w047.htm

[15] ibid

[16] Conversation with previous National Coal Board employee. See coal seam map in Appendix 1

[17] *Walkmill Woods and Colliery, Moresby, Cumbria – Archaeological Assessment*, Archaeological Services Durham University, 2022, p.7-8

[18] Ordnance Survey map, 1961, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Figure 2.9: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1961

2.5.3 The Ordnance Survey map from 1971[19] (figure 2.10 below) shows that the majority of the colliery had been dismantled by this time. The railway has been dismantled, the coke ovens and the aerial ropeway have been removed and almost all of the colliery buildings have been demolished. The map also shows that the unnamed beck was kept in its modified, straightened channel and the weir and dam also remained in place. The closure of Walkmill Colliery left the area looking quite derelict, bereft of natural life and with huge slag heaps to deal with, as shown in the photos of the site after the colliery had closed in figures 2.11-13 below[20].

[19] Ordnance Survey map, 1971, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.
[20] Photos from a collection of historic environment records at Cumbria Archives, Carlisle

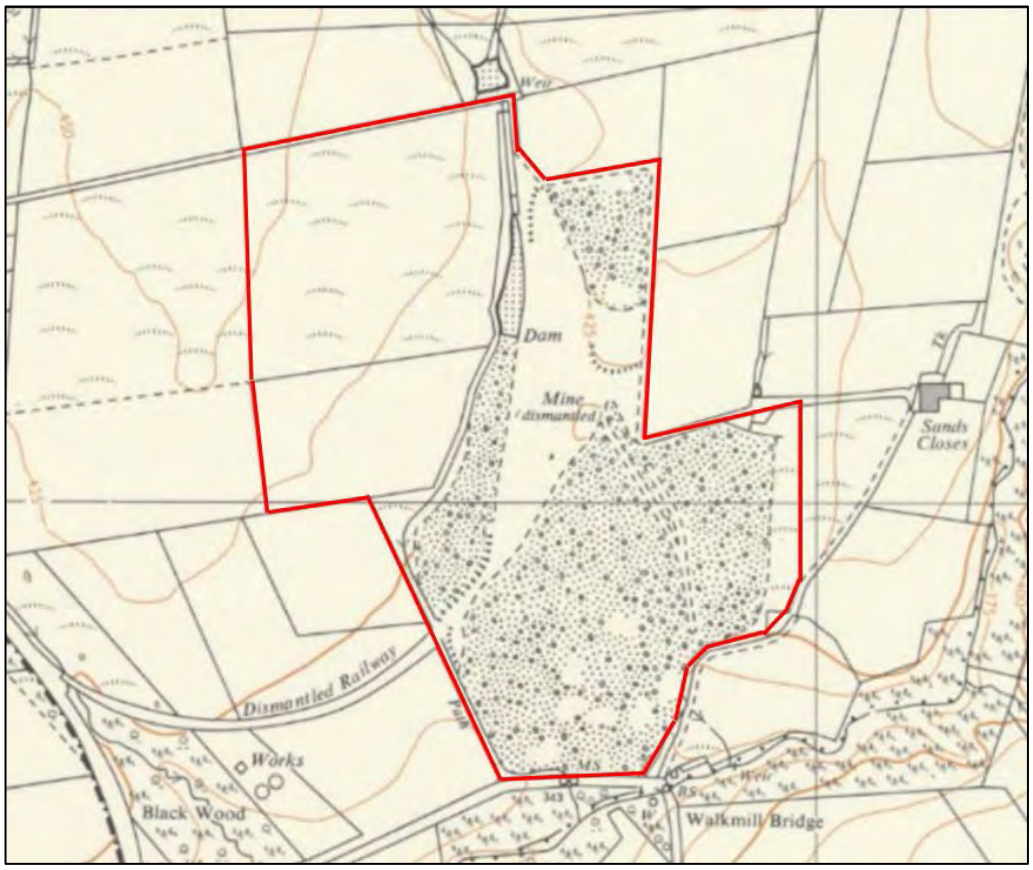


Figure 2.10: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1971

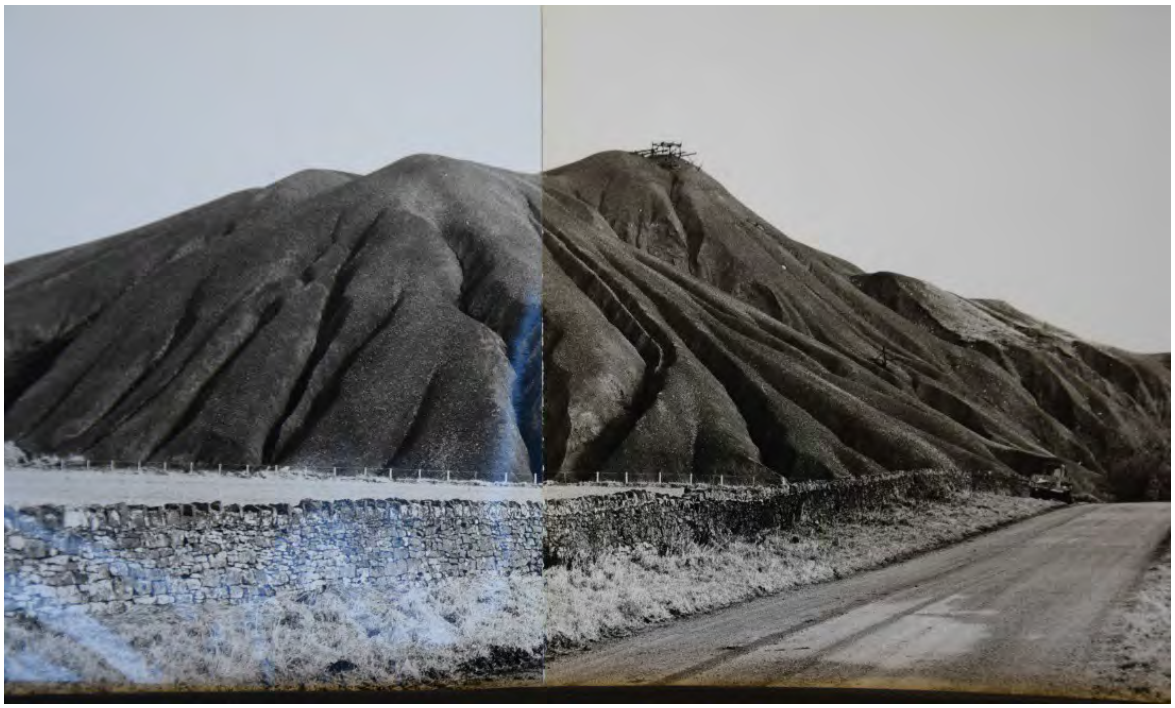


Figure 2.11: Huge black pit heap left at Walkmill after the closure of the colliery

Figure 2.12: A view looking south across the demolished colliery site

Figure 2.13: A selection of the black and white photos

2.5.4 An initial reclamation of the Walkmill site was attempted by Cumbria County Council in the early 1970's when the profile of the site was reduced by moving some of the earth around the site. A layer of potting compost was also added in an attempt to encourage the growth of some grass.[21].

2.5.5 The site was largely left alone for the following 20 years until a second reclamation scheme began in the early 1990's, led by British Coal, to develop the site into a community woodland.

2.5.6 The plan was to remove the excess material at Walkmill allowing the site to be taken back to its original contour lines. An opencast mine had been opened by the River Keekle to the south of Walkmill with the intention that this site would take the excess waste colliery material from Walkmill. A lot of the material was moved to the Keekle site, however the discovery of some contaminated material at Walkmill meant that some had to stay *in situ* and the decision was made to cap this with 3 metres of clay and bury it[22]. This meant it was impossible to return the site to its original contour lines, and therefore a new landscape was created.

2.5.7 It also appears that the initial intention during the 1990's reclamation scheme had been to return the unnamed beck to its original meandering course, but due to all the difficulties the contractors encountered on site this was not possible and the beck remained in its modified, straightened, concrete channel. This also caused a safety issue as the beck had to run through a tunnel with a steep gradient, which meant that a safety barrier was required[23]. The grate that was installed for safety reason causes issues with collecting debris and blocking the beck (see section '4.7 Hydrology' for further information).

2.5.8 The newly landscaped land at Walkmill was then covered with subsoil and grass seed was put down. It was then left for a few years to allow the grasses to develop and the soil to settle. In 1996 tree planting took place on the west side of the Walkmill site, with the east side being planted in 1998[24]. This was the beginning of the old Walkmill Colliery becoming Walkmill Community Woodland. See figures 2.14 and 2.15 for photos of Walkmill site before and after the 1990's reclamation scheme.

[21] R. Mcphee, n.d. *Aspects of Land Reclamation: Walkmill Pit to Community Woodland.* Unpublished typescript, p2-3. Available in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan"
[22] Ibid, p.p4
[23] Ibid, p.4
[24] Capita Symonds, *Site Management Plan: Walkmill Woodland*, Revised 2008, p.6

Figure 2.14: Walkmill in early 1990, before the reclamation scheme

Figure 2.15: Walkmill in 1997, after the reclamation scheme[25]

[25] R. Mcphee, n.d. *Aspects of Land Reclamation: Walkmill Pit to Community Woodland.* Unpublished typescript, p.11

2.6 Walkmill Community Woodland

2.6.1 After the reclamation scheme, the ownership and the responsibility of management and maintenance of Walkmill Community Woodland reverted back to Cumbria County Council (who had leased it to British Coal whilst it undertook the reclamation scheme).

2.6.2 For public access to the woodlands, a circular path following the old mineral railway, then going north through the woodlands and back along the pit road, was designated as a public right of way[26] and a boardwalk was constructed to increase the accessibility of this path.

2.6.3 There are no records of any management or maintenance at Walkmill Community Woodlands in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

2.6.4 In 2008 Capita Symonds were contracted to review an existing management plan so it was relevant for the next 10 years[27]. This document contained a proposed woodland management plan for the site, which mainly involved thinning the woodland in 2017 and 2019. However, there has not been any record or evidence that this work on the woodland occurred. It is evident from the site that after planting and an early beat up, the woodland has not had any further management or maintenance.

2.6.5 The management plan also contained a plan for proposed capital works that were to take place before 2011. However fewer than half of the proposed works were actually implemented. The council improved the public footpath that went through the woodlands by replacing the boardwalk with a more accessible aggregate path and improving the drainage around this path in 2019. They also installed some new picnic benches and removed some of the gates and stiles, which, again, improved accessibility around the site. However, the plans for new ponds, paths and hedgerows were never implemented.

2.6.6 In 2019, at the request of members of the local community when the site was put up for sale, a selection of informal paths running through the woodland became public rights of way. Figure 2.16 shows the paths through Walkmill Community Woodland that have been designated as public rights of way. In 2019 the entire site was also designated "Open Access" under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

[26] A copy of the Definitive Map and Statement can be found in Capita Symonds, *Site Management Plan: Walkmill Woodland*, Revised 2008, p.12

[27] Capita Symonds, *Site Management Plan: Walkmill Woodland*, Revised 2008. Available in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan"

Figure 2.16: Cumbria County Council Map showing public rights of way at Walkmill Community Woodland

2.6.7 Cumbria County Council put Walkmill Community Woodland up for sale[28] in December 2018, as it was a surplus property asset. Local residents and users of the woodlands were outraged by this and formed a group known as Walkmill Action Group to campaign against the sale. The community contacted Moresby Parish Council about the sale and the wheels were set in motion for the Parish Council to get a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) from Cumbria County Council for Walkmill Community Woodland. West Cumbria Rivers Trust helped the Parish Council obtain the CAT and Moresby Parish Council signed a 99-year lease for Walkmill Community Woodlands in 2022[29].

[28] Savills Particulars of Sale for Land at Walkmill. See Appendix 2.
[29] Community Asset Transfer document. See Appendix 3.

3. Walkmill Community Woodlands Today

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section describes current ownership and management of Walkmill Community Woodland. It also outlines the location, wider policy context and physical information about the woodlands today.

3.2 Local Context

3.2.1 Walkmill Community Woodlands is a 36-hectare site situated on the eastern edge of Moresby Parks and 3km to the east of Whitehaven on the west coast of Cumbria, Grid Ref NY 00661 19058. The southern edge of the woodland is skirted by an unnamed road running from Moresby Parks to Frizington and the northern edge has a public footpath along part of the boundary which runs through the wood to the south. Figure 3.1 below shows a map with the location of Walkmill Community Woodland outlined in red.

3.2.2 The woodland sits in a working landscape of farmland and woodland. To the south there is a large area of commercial woodland dominated by conifers, and nearby there are smaller patches of mixed broadleaf and conifer blocks. Walkmill Wood is surrounded by farmland (dominated by pasture) on all other sides.

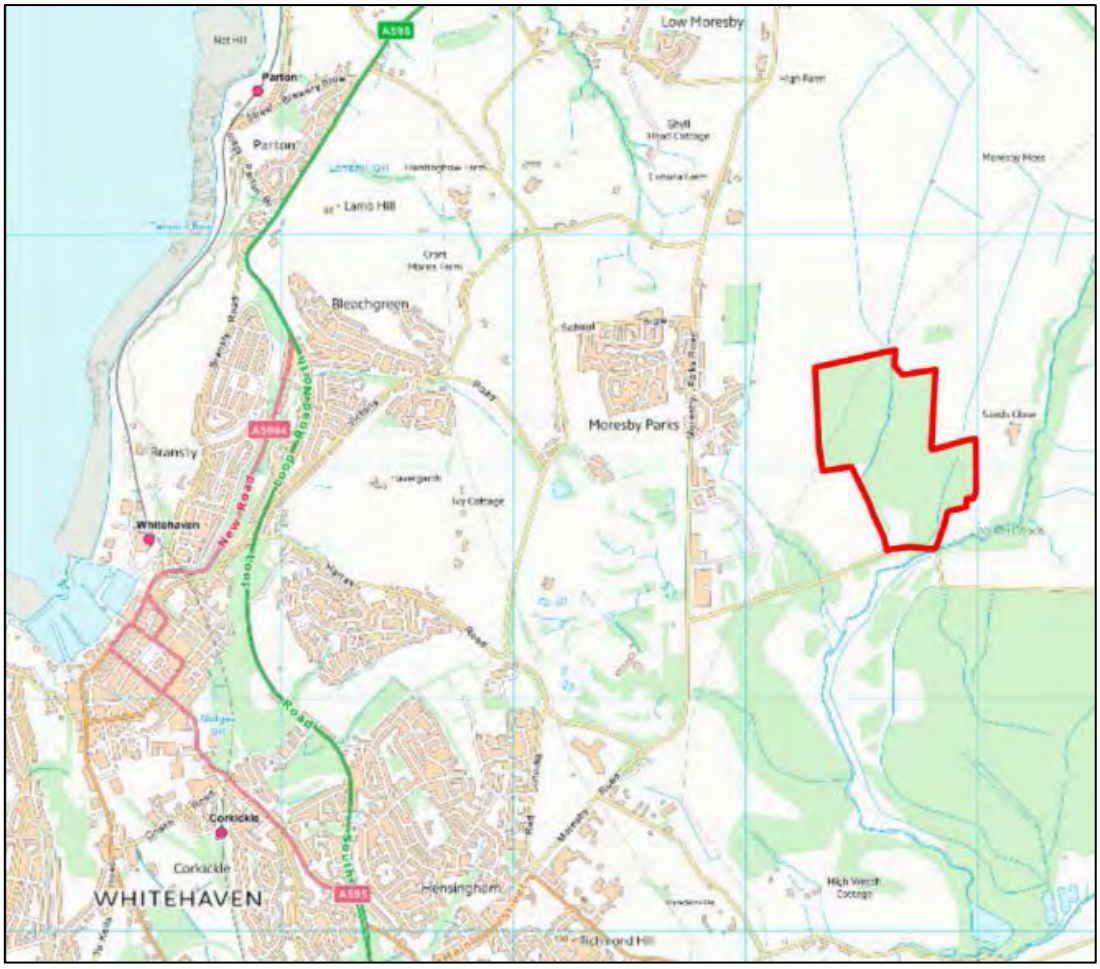


Figure 3.1 Map of Walkmill Community Woodland and surrounding area

3.2.3 According to the Indices of Deprivation from 2019[30] the areas directly adjacent to Walkmill Community Woodland are of the least deprived, however the wider area shows many communities with the most deprivation. This is demonstrated by the results of the visitor survey in 2022, which showed that 31% of visitors to the woodland were from areas with the most deprivation[31]. Figure 3.2 below shows the index of multiple deprivation for the areas near Walkmill Community Woodland. The least deprived areas are marked in white and the most deprived areas are in dark blue.

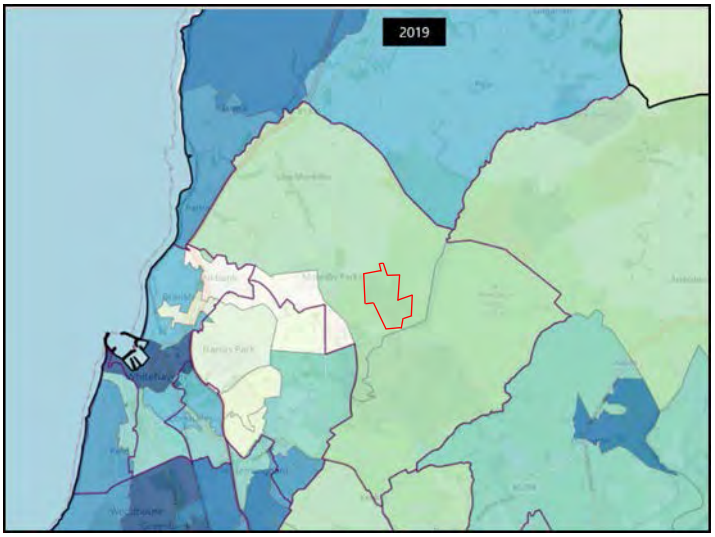


Figure 3.2 Index of Multiple Deprivation

3.2.4 The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain (see figure 3.3 below) shows that Walkmill Community Woodland is located in an area recorded in the bottom 30% of the national indices of deprivation and surrounded by many areas that are in the bottom 10%-50%. This shows that Walkmill is situated in an area with high levels of poor health and disability. The demographic of two areas in Copeland local to Walkmill Community Woodland show that only 35% and 32% of people in those areas would consider themselves to be of good health[32]. This is further demonstrated by the 2022 visitor survey, which found that 16% of people using Walkmill Community Woodland would class themselves as having a disability. As one of only a few large, green spaces in the area, Walkmill Community Woodlands is a valuable asset and plays a vital part in local life as an important amenity for the local residents, residents further afield and workers from nearby businesses, who are able to use the woodland to help with their mental and physical wellbeing.

[30] The Indices of Deprivation 2019 uses 7 domains of deprivation to establish an Index of Multiple Deprivation for every neighbourhood in England. This data is then used to compare and rank neighbourhoods according to their level of deprivation. There is also data for each of the 7 domains of deprivation which can also be used to rank neighbourhoods according to the specific domain. *English indices of deprivation 2019: mapping resources* https://www.gov.uk/guidance/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019-mapping-resources

[31] "Walkmill Data Driven Decisions", The Evaluator, September 2022, p.7. Available in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan".

[32] Ibid, p.3

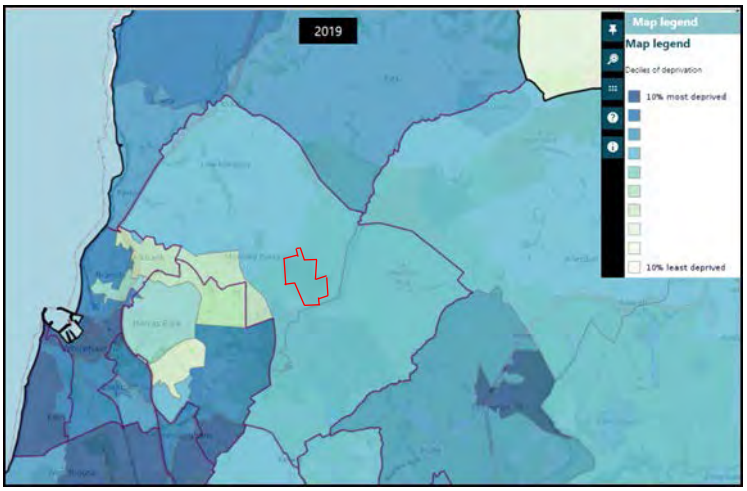


Figure 3.3 Health Deprivation and Disability Domain

3.3 Ownership, Management and Maintenance

3.3.1 The Walkmill Community Woodland site continues to be owned by Cumbria County Council (CCC), which will become Cumberland Council in April 2023. A Community Asset Transfer (CAT) was completed in 2021 and since then the site has been leased to Moresby Parish Council (MPC) for 99 years.

3.3.2 MPC are working in partnership with West Cumbria Rivers Trust (WCRT) and Walkmill Activity Group (WAG, who changed their name from 'Action' to 'Activity' once they had succeeded in acquiring the land) to maintain and develop the natural environment, mining heritage and access to the woods whilst promoting community health and well-being. Part of the Business Case to CCC for the CAT proposed a large grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (or similar grant-giving organisation) would be applied for to maintain and manage the site. In May 2022 a development phase grant was given to WCRT to carry out site inspections and plans for a large four year delivery phase project – A Wilder Walkmill. Figure 3.4 below shows the project management structure, which outlines this structure and partnership working.

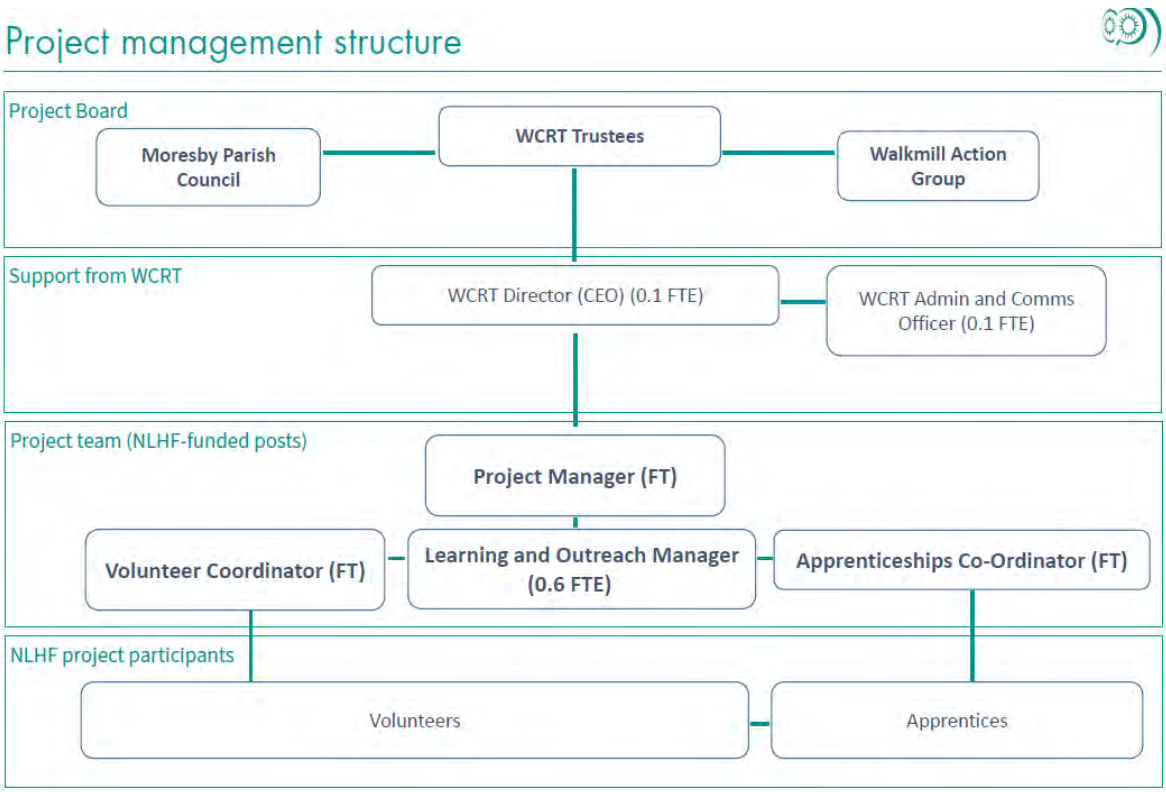


Figure 3.4 Project Management Structure taken from Activity Plan

3.3.3 Prior to MPC receiving the lease for Walkmill Community Woodland, the maintenance was delivered by CCC. Under the conditions of the lease MPC have now taken on responsibility for the management and the cost and delivery of the maintenance of the site.

3.3.4 Prior to the National Lottery Heritage Fund's development phase MPC delivered the maintenance alongside a group of informal volunteers. During the development phase two practical volunteer groups have been established who each carry out monthly practical work and maintenance. The volunteer groups are run by West Cumbria Rivers Trust staff and are advertised on posters, social media and the West Cumbria Rivers Trust website. There are currently no maintenance facilities on the site.

3.3.5 During the development phase inspections, repairs and non-planned maintenance have been carried out by the West Cumbria Rivers Trust full-time Project Assistant, WCRT's Director and volunteers.

3.4 Local Strategies and Wider Initiatives

3.4.1 'A Wilder Walkmill' is not happening in isolation and the project is in line with a number of local, regional and national plans, in particular those plans concerned with improving nature recovery, creating resilience against climate change, and promoting health and wellbeing.

3.4.2 COP 27 - Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan[33]

COP 27 aimed to bring discussions about water away from the margins and in to the centre of climate deliberations. These discussions generated the Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan. This plan:

- *Notes concern about the gap in current levels of climate change adaptation (including water based adaptations).*
- *Specifically recognises the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring water systems and water-related ecosystems, as a means of achieving the 1.5C limit and climate adaptation while delivering co-benefits such as food security and biodiversity.*
- *Is the first COP cover text to encourage Parties to consider nature-based solutions or ecosystem based approaches as part of climate action.*

'A Wilder Walkmill': These discussions show that there is an understanding worldwide of the significance of our waterways and the important part they can play in tackling climate change. The proposals in the 'Wilder Walkmill' project will use nature-based solutions to help Walkmill Community Woodland and the surrounding area to become more resilient against the risk of flooding through the proposed river restoration works. The project will also use nature-based solutions to help lock in carbon through the creation of wetlands and ponds. Using these nature-based solutions will also have the co-benefit of helping nature and increasing biodiversity.

3.4.3 HM Government 25 Year Environment Plan[34]

This government plan is concerned with protecting and improving the environment and provides its proposed aims for how it will do this:

- *Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes: we will achieve a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife. This will be achieved by:*
  - *Creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network, focusing on priority habitats as part of a wider set of land management changes providing extensive benefits.*
  - *Increasing woodland in England in line with our aspiration of 12% cover by 2060.*

- *Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment: we will conserve and enhance the beauty of our natural environment, and make sure it can be enjoyed, used by and cared for by everyone. We will do this by:*
  - *Safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage.*

[33]See Appendix 4 for the "Cop 27 – Key Water Developments" by The Rivers Trust.

[34]*A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment,* HM Government, 2018 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

- *Making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and wellbeing*
- *Focusing on increasing action to improve the environment from all sectors of society*

- *Using and managing land sustainably: we have a once-in-a-generation chance to change our approach to managing our land so that we secure and enhance the benefits of the environment far into the future. This will be done by:*
  - *Focusing on woodland to maximise its benefits, with the ambition to plant 11m trees.*
  - *Take action to reduce the risk of harm from flooding and coastal erosion including greater use of natural flood management solutions. By working with natural processes, we can better protect ourselves from hazards such as flooding. Natural Flood Management involves the use of a variety of measures including tree planting, river bank restoration, building small-scale woody dams, reconnecting rivers with their flood plains and storing water temporarily on open land […] wider benefits include better wildlife habitats, recreation opportunities and water quality.*

'A Wilder Walkmill': The project proposes to restore the 36-hectare site to a wild-life rich habitat which will involve wetland habitat creation as well as woodland and grassland habitat restoration. The proposed woodland work will also ensure that the woodland cover remains for many years to come. The project will ensure the beauty and heritage of Walkmill Community Woodland is safe guarded and enhanced and provide a high quality, accessible green space for the local community. The river restoration proposals will provide many natural flood management techniques such as water storage in ponds and wetlands and slowing the flow by re-mandering the beck and connecting it to its floodplain. This management will help towards flood prevention as well as having a positive impact on wildlife habitats, recreational use of the woodland and the water quality of the beck.

3.4.4 Natural England action plan 2022-2023[35]

This year's strategic approach focusses on prioritising nature recovery, tackling barriers to nature, and helping people and communities to engage with nature to benefit their own health and wellbeing. The aims are:

- *Nature recovery:*
  - *Support responsible authorities in partnership with communities, to develop up to 50 Local Nature Recovery Strategies, enabling coordinated action and investment.*

- *Health and wellbeing:*
  - *Develop and showcase effective nature-based solutions in the cross-government Green Social Prescribing partnership pilots through our area teams.*
  - *Support the development of policy and establishment of health partnerships across the integrated care system.*

[35] *Natural England Action Plan 2022-2023*, Natural England, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-action-plan-2022-to-2023/natural-england-action-plan-2022-to-2023--2#priority-actions-for-2022-to-2023

- *Tackling barriers to nature:*
  - *Deploy effective community engagement in local nature recovery, new partnership building and understanding local barriers to connecting with nature.*

- *Access to the outdoors:*
  - *Demonstrate how trails and access to the outdoors can be adapted to deliver wider social, health and economic benefits, working with planning authorities and communities.*

'A Wilder Walkmill': Cumbria has been part of a pilot scheme for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy[36]. The proposals for 'A Wilder Walkmill' will have a positive impact on the concerns that this strategy has raised, such as the deterioration of hedgerows, canalisation of rivers and loss of wildflower-rich grasslands. The proposals for the project also include making Walkmill Community Woodland accessible to a wider range of people, engaging with the local social prescribing teams and offering a variety of activities and volunteer opportunities to improve and enhance the natural heritage.

3.4.5 Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Strategy[37]

This strategy aims to bring together a variety of organisations from across the sectors to make a positive impact on the environment. The aims and outcomes for the strategy include:

- *Putting people at the heart of environmental policy:*
  - *More people are engaged with the environment and nature through recreation, volunteering, and learning.*
  - *The environment sector contributes more to improving the health and wellbeing of people.*

- *Adopting a more integrated landscape approach to conservation on both land and at sea:*
  - *Cumbria has bigger, better and joined up areas of Priority Habitat.*
  - *Priority species in Cumbria will be in recovery.*

- *Improving knowledge and understanding of the environment:*
  - *Good quality data about the environment will be more widely available in suitable formats.*

'A Wilder Walkmill': This project will provide more recreation, volunteer and learning opportunities in nature. It will help to contribute to the health and wellbeing of people through the links made with local social prescribing teams. The project will ensure the natural heritage at Walkmill Community Woodland is in a much better condition and ensures that

[36] *Statement of Biodiversity Priorities,* Cumbria County Council, 2021, https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/538/18033/44455103252.pdf

[37] *Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Strategy,* Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Board, https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/cumbria-local-nature-partnership-environment-strategy-20-01-2015.pdf

habitat for priority species will be appropriately managed. The ongoing monitoring of the wildlife will also provide important data for the site and the wider area.

3.4.6 Copeland Local Plan 2023-2028[38]
This plan provides the core strategy and development management policies. The following policies are those that are relevant to the 'Wilder Walkmill' project:

Policy ST1 – Strategic Development Principles
Policy ST2 – Spatial Development Strategy
Policy SS5 – Provision and Access to Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure
Policy ENV1 – Flood Risk and Risk Management
Policy ENV3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy ENV5 – Protecting and Enhancing the Borough's Landscapes
Policy DM10 – Achieving Quality of Place
Policy DM25 – Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species
Policy DM26 – Landscaping

'A Wilder Walkmill': The river restoration works (which also form part of the Environment Agency's River Restoration Strategy) and the creation of new ponds and wetlands will enhance the existing blue infrastructure within the site and encourage greater use of the natural facilities on site. These works will also have an impact on flood resilience. The long-term appearance of the landscape at Walkmill Community Woodland will also be enhanced whilst providing substantial benefits to the local wildlife and biodiversity.

3.4.7 Other relevant plans and strategies

- *The West Cumbria Catchment Partnership Catchment and Action Plans*
- *The Lake District National Park Partnership Plan*
- *The 2016 Cumbria Flood Plan*
- *The Cumbria River Restoration Strategy*
- *The North-West River Basin Management Plan*
- *NHS Social Prescribing*
- *Levelling Up Plan*

3.5 Site Access and Transportation Links

3.5.1 Walkmill Community Woodland has three access points:

1. The pit road to the north of the site accessed from Moresby Parks village via Moresby Rugby Club (which has a car park and allows parking for site users)
2. The footpath along the dismantled railway which is accessed from the centre of Moresby Parks village
3. A small car park to the south of the site which is accessed via the unnamed road towards Frizington (the road is known locally as the Check Road)

[38] Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028, Copeland Borough Council, 2013, https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/copeland_local_plan_2013_2028.pdf

3.5.2 Walkmill Community Woodland links with surrounding footpaths and bridleways, which can be used to walk or cycle to the site. See Appendix 5 for specific routes.

3.5.3 Public transport to the village is poor and the local stagecoach service was stopped around 5 years ago from lack of use. There is now a local private minibus service that goes into Whitehaven and back twice a week.

3.6 Topograhy, Geology & Soils

3.6.1 The woodland is on gently undulating land with two small valleys running from north to south in the eastern side. The low point on the southern edge is around 110m above sea level and the high point is 144m above sea level.

3.6.2 The underlying bedrock geology is formed of three different types of bedrock and is shown in figure 3.5 below:

- Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation - Mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. This sedimentary bedrock was formed approximately 318 to 309.5 million years ago in the Carboniferous period. It is found in the top band of the site.
- Whitehaven Sandstone Formation - Sandstone. This sedimentary bedrock was formed approximately 315.2 to 308 million years ago which was also during the Carboniferous period. This bedrock is found in the middle band of the site.
- Brockram - Breccia. This sedimentary bedrock was formed approximately 298.9 to 247.1 million years ago during the Permian and Triassic periods. It is found in the bottom band of the site.

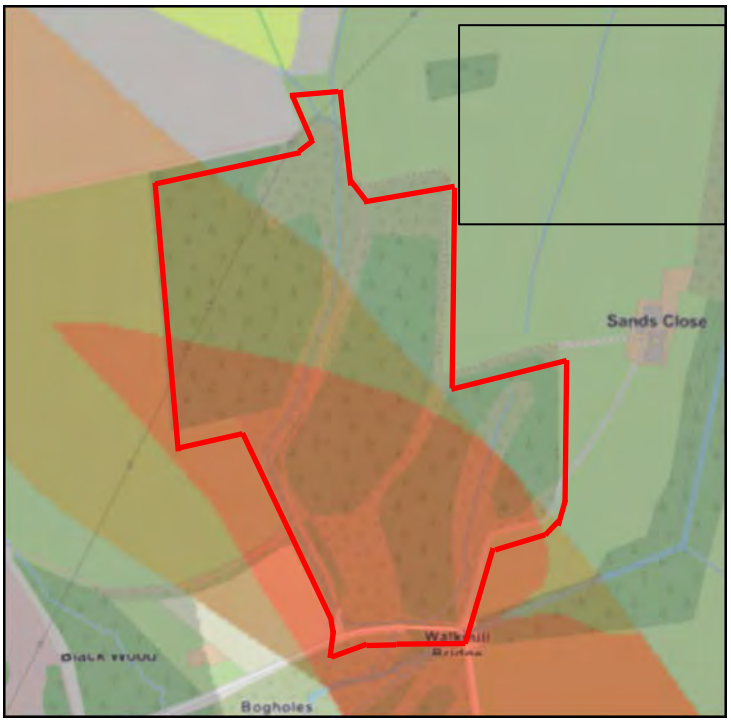


Figure 3.5 Map of bedrock geology at Walkmill Community Woodland

3.6.3 The soils are classed as slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils, on the Soilscapes map[39]. However, as the site was reclaimed from a former colliery and is believed to have a 3m clay cap in areas, this may not be applicable to all areas.

3.7 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA, formerly Phase 1 Habitat Survey)

3.7.1 An ecological assessment was completed in September 2022 to provide a summary of wildlife interest on the site and any potential constraints and opportunities, particularly in line with current wildlife legislation. A desk study was undertaken using data from DEFRA MAGIC Map Application and the biological records from Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre, as well as an on-site habitat survey for which the main habitats were described and mapped.

3.7.2 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) identified designations at Walkmill Community Woodlands and in the surrounding areas. Walkmill Community Woodlands is designated as a Site of Invertebrate Significance (SIS). No citations for this SIS has been provided, and so the associated interest features of this non-statutory designated site is presently unknown although the site is valued for its invertebrate heritage. It also mentioned that the unnamed beck flows in to the River Keekle, which is a tributary of the River Ehen, which is identified as being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Two areas adjoining the woodland boundary are classed as Priority Habitats, as listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act – there is an area of 'good quality semi-improved grassland' 5m beyond the western boundary of the woodland and 'Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture' less than 300m west of the woodland periphery. The survey also revealed that "an area within the southern extent of the study area contained continuous common heather and gorse which was appraised as being of increased habitat value and could contribute to the UK BAP habitat of upland heathland".

3.7.3 This survey has provided important ecological information about the current condition of Walkmill Community Woodland today and the nature conservation value of the different habitats on the site. These habitats will be discussed in further detail below. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is provided in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan"

[39] See Soilscapes Map in Appendix 6

4. Elements and Significance of Walkmill Community Woodland

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section describes the habitats and other features that are currently present at Walkmill Community Woodland, their condition, issues and proposed management. This section also assesses the significance and value of each of these features.

4.1.2 Significance is the understanding of what makes a place special. The assessment of the significance of the different features at Walkmill Community Woodland will be based on the following values:

- Natural Value – the ways in which a place impacts the surrounding wildlife and natural habitats.
- Social Value – the way in which a place impacts the wellbeing of people
- Public Amenity Value – the ways in which people are able to access and use a place.
- Aesthetic Value – "the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place".
- Educational Value – the potential of a place to provide learning and intellectually stimulating opportunities.
- Associative Value – "the ways in which past people, events, and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present".
- Evidential Value – "the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity"[40].

4.1.3 The level of significance will also be established for each feature. The levels that will be used are:

- High Significance – attributed to those features that have a high value and are judged to be essential to the character, understanding and appreciation of a place.
- Medium Significance – attributed to those features that have some importance to the character, understanding and appreciation of a place.
- Low Significance – attributed to the features that are of minor importance to a place.
- Neutral Significance – attributed to features that neither contribute nor detract from the character, understanding or appreciation of a place.
- Intrusive – attributed to features that detract from the overall character, understanding or appreciation of a place.

4.2 Woodland

4.2.1 Approximately 75% of the site consists of woodland, so it is a very significant feature of Walkmill Community Woodlands. The west side of the woodland was planted in 1996 and the east side was planted in 1998, so it is still a relatively young woodland. Many of the trees have established successfully, though there are the occasional failed specimen, which provide

[40] English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, 2008, p.28-32.

some standing deadwood, an important habitat in its own right. Figure 4.1 below shows the coverage of woodland and open ground at Walkmill Community Woodland.

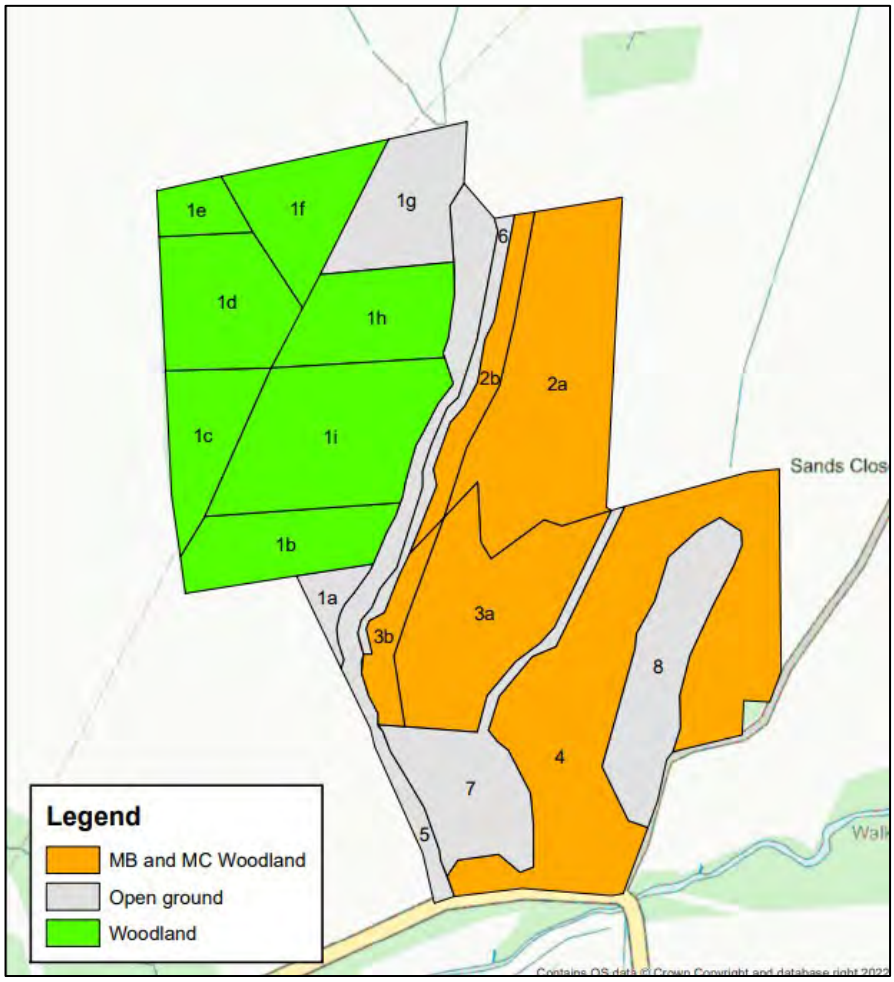


Figure 4.1 Map of areas of woodland and open ground at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.2.2 The western side of the site is dominated by block planting of species. The most dominant are birch, ash, Scot's pine, oak, lime, willow and alder. The less dominant species include rowan, whitebeam, hawthorn, aspen, Norway spruce, and blackthorn. The eastern side of the site is composed of mixed broadleaf and coniferous planting, with dominant species being Japanese larch, Scot's pine, willow, sycamore, alder, oak and birch. Less frequent species include guelder rose, rowan, whitebeam, hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, wild service, Norway spruce, and aspen. This variety of species can be seen in the photographs of the woodland in figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2 The woodlands at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.2.3 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) describes the woodlands as currently offering moderate nature conservation value which would increase to a greater value as this young woodland matures. The woodlands are also highly significant to wildlife, such as bats, birds, mammals, invertebrates and reptiles which use the woodlands for foraging, nesting and as protection when moving around the site.

4.2.4 The lack of management of the woodland, in particular the lack of implementation of the planned thinning of the trees when they reached 21 years old has meant that large areas of the woodland are overcrowded causing the trees to grow straight up and not having the opportunity to sufficiently spread out their canopy. This restriction in canopy growth can cause the woodland to be more at risk of windthrow (trees uprooted by the wind).

4.2.5 The dense canopy means that light is unable to penetrate the canopy and reach the ground meaning that natural regeneration of the trees has been unable to occur. This lack of natural regeneration means that there is currently little diversity in the age of the trees, whereas an uneven aged woodland is a more diverse woodland and provides more ecological niches. The variation in ages will also help with the longevity of the woodland, as when the older trees die new younger trees will be emerging.

4.2.6 The overcrowding of the trees due to the lack of thinning has also meant that there are limited rides and glades through the woodland, which are an essential woodland habitat for wildlife, such as butterflies. Thinning the trees to produce avenues throughout the woodland will help to increase the diversity and amount of ground flora.

4.2.7 This lack of management and consequential dense canopy has also caused the ground vegetation within the woodland to be largely impoverished due to the high density of tree planting and shaded understory.

4.2.8 Significance of the woodland

- Overall, the PEA explains that this habitat offers potentially moderate nature conservation value on a local scale. The woodland is currently reasonably young so its value to nature will increase with time and management.
- The woodland at Walkmill Community Woodland is judged as having a **high significance** for multiple reasons. Firstly, the woodland itself, which contains a good variety of tree species and, due to this, has the potential to support a large range of wildlife, including protected species such as bats and badgers that the cameras and bat walks have shown are already present in the woodland, as well a variety of flora, lichens and fungi. Secondly, the impact it has on people who visit and walk through the woodland itself and describe it as a tranquil and calm place to be. This is well documented as being good for their mental and physical health and wellbeing. Therefore, the woodland is vital not only for its natural value but also social, public amenity and aesthetic values too.

4.2.9 Issues

- No diversity in age of trees.
- Lacking resilience against windthrow, due to lack of age diversity.
- Lack of ground flora.
- Overcrowding of trees and very dense canopy.
- Minimal rides and glades throughout the woodland.

4.2.10 Management Aims and Objectives

- Enhance species and habitat biodiversity.
- Increase diversity in age of trees and maintain overall woodland resilience.
- Manage riparian buffer along the beck.
- Maintain the woodland as an area of tranquillity.
- Provide recreational and educational opportunities.

4.3 Grassland

4.3.1 There are two main areas of grassland at Walkmill Community Woodlands and one section of significant open ground. The two grasslands are at the two valleys to the south of the site. Marked ‘7’ and ‘8’ on figure 4.1 above. The large section of open ground is to the north of the site and marked ‘1g’ on the map (also figure 4.1). Figure 4.3 below shows photographs of the grassland types mentioned in the sections below.

Figure 4.3 Grassland at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.3.2 The dominant species of grass in the grassland areas are perennial rye-grass, false oatgrass and cock's foot but timothy, Yorkshire fog, crested dog's tail, and sweet vernal are also present. The grassland at Walkmill also supports a variety of forbs and ruderal species, including frequent rosebay willowherb, common hogweed, meadowsweet, red campion, herb Robert, birds-foot trefoil, cleavers, bramble, white clover, sorrel, red clover, silver weed, mares tail, vetch and broadleaved dock with occasional ribwort plantain, creeping buttercup and sow thistle. There have also been regular sightings of delicate orchids in these grassland areas.

4.3.3 There are sections of marshy grassland in the area of open ground to the north of the site and within the two valley grassland areas which tend to be dominated mainly by rushes, particularly soft rush.

4.3.4 The area of grassland in the valley nearest to the car park also has a section of continuous common heather and gorse which could contribute to the UK BAP habitat of upland heathland.

4.3.5 The PEA explains that the areas of neutral semi-improved grassland offer potentially moderate nature conservation value on a local scale, with the area of continuous heather and gorse having an increased habitat value. These areas are also invaluable habitats for wildlife such as invertebrates, birds, amphibians and reptiles. The grasslands support species that are currently present on the UK BAP Priority Species List, such as adders and the grasshopper warbler.

4.3.6 The grassland and open ground have not had any management which has meant that young trees and scrub are now encroaching on this habitat. If this was left unmanaged then succession would mean that this scrub would eventually turn in to woodland and the grassland habitat would cease to exist. Grassland is a vital habitat for invertebrates, birds, amphibians and reptiles and their numbers would reduce significantly, with some species disappearing completely should succession continue.

4.3.7 Due to the lack of management this grassland has become rich with nutrients and grasses dominate causing wildflowers to struggle to grow. This dominance of grasses also means that there is less diversity in the species of flora in the grassland.

4.3.8 The grassland areas also do not have clear, well-marked paths meaning that the general public and their dogs wander unwittingly over delicate flora, such as orchids, and do irreparable damage, lowering the number and diversity of floral species present in the grassland.

4.3.9 Significance of Grassland

- The PEA explains that the areas of neutral semi-improved grassland offer potentially moderate nature conservation value on a local scale. The area of continued heather was appraised as being of increased habitat value and could contribute to the UK BAP habitat of upland heathland.

- The grassland at Walkmill Community Woodland is judged as having a **high significance**. There are already some important wildflowers in the grasslands, such as orchids, but with some management there will be a much wider variety, these are significant because they provide an important habitat for a number of different types of wildlife and have particular importance for pollinators. The upland heath section is also a significant habitat in its own right as a UK BAP priority habitat, but also for the site's adder population, which is a protected species, as it provides open areas to bask and areas of heather to hide and hibernate. This grassland is also valued aesthetically by visitors as being a beautiful place to walk around and sit to enjoy the view of the

valley and the colourful wildflowers. Therefore, the grassland has natural value, social value, public amenity value and aesthetic value.

4.3.10 Issues

- Scrub and tree encroachment.
- Lack of floral diversity.
- Dominance of grasses.
- Damage to orchids and other delicate flora due to general public and dogs.

4.3.11 Management Aims and Objectives

- Preserve and enhance nature conservation value.
- Enhance biodiversity.
- Increase the aesthetic appeal.
- Preserve areas of open ground.
- Expand areas of wildflower meadows and increase floral diversity.
- Protect the flora and fauna whilst still maintaining recreational access.
- Expand the area of heather.

4.4 Bracken

4.4.1 To the west of the Walkmill site there is a large and dense parcel of bracken that supports the mono-species of common bracken. It is however the only substantial area of bracken on the site and as such holds value as a habitat, particularly for reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds.

4.4.2 Due to its density and sizeable footprint the PEA judged the area of bracken to be of potentially moderate nature conservation value on a local scale

4.4.3 The area of bracken is an important habitat and should be retained, due to previous lack of management though the scrub and woodland are encouraging on this area and risks outcompeting the bracken.

4.4.4 Significance of bracken

- This Phase 1 Habitat Survey appraised this habitat as having potentially moderate nature conservation value on a site level only.
- The bracken at Walkmill Community Woodland is judged as having a **low significance**. This habitat does have some benefit for wildlife and it is a good size and density. However, it is hidden away in a corner of the site and is not particularly accessible for the general public. Also the bracken itself contains little diversity. Therefore, the bracken has just natural value.

4.4.5 Issues

- Scrub and trees are encroaching on the parcel of bracken.

4.4.6 Management Aims and Objectives

- To maintain a healthy area of bracken

4.5 Scrub & Tall Ruderal

4.5.1 There are areas of scrub scattered throughout Walkmill Community Woodland. Dense patches of scrub have been identified along the verges of some of the footpaths and within some of the woodland. There are also patches of scrub appearing in the grassland and bracken parcel. Tall ruderal vegetation has also established along the footpath and road verges.

4.5.2 The areas of scrub at the site tend to be dominated by bramble and goat willow, with some hawthorn, blackthorn and gorse present too. The tall ruderal along the verges is dominated by great willowherb and rosebay willowherb with occasional scattered bramble, common bent, spear thistle, broadleaved dock, false oat-grass, perennial rye-grass, nettle, meadowsweet and timothy. Photographs of the scrub across the site are shown in figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4 Examples of tall ruderal and scrub present at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.5.3 According to the PEA the scrub offers potentially moderate nature conservation value on a local scale due to its dense nature, despite its low species diversity. The tall ruderal, however, has been assessed as having a low nature conservation value on a site level due to the limited diversity of commonly occurring species of flora. Though these habitats are ideal for nesting birds, small mammals, hibernating mammals and reptiles, as well as areas for foraging and providing nature corridors throughout the site.

4.5.4 The scrub has not been managed so it has begun to encroach on and potentially damage other important habitats on the site, such as the grassland. However, scrub is also lacking in areas that would benefit from this type of habitat, such as the understory in the woodlands. The areas of scrub that are present at Walkmill Community Woodland are also lacking in species diversity.

4.5.5 Significance of scrub and tall ruderal

- In the PEA the tall ruderal was appraised as having low nature conservation value on a site level and the scrub offers potentially moderate nature conservation value on a local scale
- The scrub and tall ruderal at Walkmill Community Woodland is judged as **low significance**. The scrub is an important habitat for wildlife as it provides opportunity for nesting, foraging and cover for wildlife passing through. The tall ruderal has little diversity and provides limited habitat. Areas of scrub and tall ruderal are also not often very accessible and don't provide any social or public amenity value. Therefore, the scrub and tall ruderal just have natural value.

4.5.6 Issues

- Lack of diversity of scrub species.
- Encroachment of scrub in other habitat areas.
- Lack of scrub in suitable habitat areas.

4.5.7 Management Aims and Objectives

- Increase diversity of scrub in suitable areas.
- Manage encroaching scrub and tall ruderal.
- Maintain accessibility for footpaths.

4.6 Hydrology

4.6.1 The majority of channels within Walkmill Community Woodland are artificial and very straight, with remnant features linked to historic mining of the site. All the watercourses are generally acting to drain the surrounding landscape and confluence with the River Keekle to the south of the site.

4.6.2 The main 500m channel running from north to south of the site consists of approximately 250m of straight vertical sided concrete channel with three settling ponds and a further 250m of steep sided stone walled channel directing the water into the nearby River Keekle.

4.6.3 These straightened, concrete channels (see figure 4.5 below) are terrible for biodiversity as they provide no habitat for wildlife. The base of the concrete channel is bare and is unable to maintain any gravels or cobbles, which are essential habitats for in-water wildlife, such as riverfly and fish. The lack of these habitats also make the beck, in its current state, unsuitable for other wildlife too, such as dippers and grey wagtails which need suitable nesting locations along the beck and suitable boulders in the water. The concrete banks also prohibit otters or water voles being able to access the bank as they need the soft soils of a natural beck.

Figure 4.5 Straightened, concrete-lined beck at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.6.4 A fish survey was undertaken by WCRT in Summer 2022 and it was established that currently no fish are present in the beck. There are fish present in the River Keekle and there is suitable fish passage under the road connecting the River Keekle and the beck at Walkmill Community Woodland, however due to the poor condition of the beck with its straightened concrete channel there is currently no habitat to support fish.

4.6.5 The lack of fish, due to the straightened concrete channel, will also have an impact on the potential for other wildlife inhabiting the site. Without a food source such as fish (including eels) there is nothing to adequately attract or sustain otters. Also due to the concrete banks being very uniform and unnatural there are no tree roots or other vegetation to provide habitat, cover and refuge areas for wildlife in and around the water. The concrete banks are also impenetrable so wildlife such as watervoles would be unable to excavate burrows.

4.6.6 Additionally, the channel being completely uniform leaves no room for the microhabitats that the Riverfly need to form, this was clearly shown by the minimal diversity found on site from kick sampling surveys done by WCRT and volunteers[41]. The Riverfly that are currently found on site are broken into two distinct ecosystems, those inhabiting the concrete channel and settling ponds and those inhabiting the stone channel. The former consists of very low scoring, high abundance (based on the WHPT[42] scoring system) invertebrates that inhabit high nutrient stagnant pools such as those found in these channels and settling pools. The latter contains a higher diversity of invertebrates but in low abundance. The higher diversity found here is possibly due to the heterogeneity of the stones found in this section.

4.6.7 The straightened concrete channel also means that there is a distinct lack of bends, multiple channels and connection to the floodplain, which means that water is removed far too quickly and shoots at speed down the channel. This can have numerous negative consequences including flooding downstream of the site. The excessive amount of water and speed after heavy rainfall causes all debris to be carried downstream leading to blockages in the beck (see figure 4.6 below) which in turn is causing flood damage and erosion to the footpaths at Walkmill Community Woodland. The beck has also been moved to the edge of the site and for much of the southern stretch is not accessible to visitors.

[41] Further information about the riverfly surveys can be found in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan"
[42] Walley, Hawkes, Paisley and Trigg index of river invertebrate quality.

Figure 4.6 Build-up of debris blocking the flow of water in the beck at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.6.8 Elsewhere on the site, ditch networks significantly alter the hydrology across the site by efficiently draining the land and conveying the water quickly downstream. This also adds to the volume of water travelling downstream.

4.6.9 There is a well established pond currently at Walkmill Community Wooldand which is approximately 250m^2. It is reasonably healthy and hosts a wide array of Dragonflies, Damselflies, and water beetles. Modification of this is unnecessary and with the plan to add additional ponds on site, the diversity will only increase. The main issue with the pond is the curly waterweed, which is discussed in section 4.7 below.

4.6.10 Creating a meandering, multi-channel system connected to the floodplain would help to slow the flow and create a more natural environment for the benefit of people and wildlife. It would also help to prevent blockages occurring in the channel and the flooding of footpaths. The addition of wetlands, ponds and scrapes would also provide extra water storage after

rainfall helping to alleviate the flooding of footpaths as well as creating a rich mosaic of habitats for wildlife.

4.6.11 Significance of the hydrology

- In its current state the concrete lined drain is currently appraised in the PEA as having low conservation value on a local scale. However, the pond is considered to have moderate conservation value on a local scale.
- The hydrological features at Walkmill Community Woodland are judged as having **high significance**. The existing pond already sustains a wide variety of wildlife and this will increase with the addition of further ponds, wetlands and scrapes. The silted up dam ponds are also evidence of the history of Walkmill Community Woodland. The proposed management of the beck and drainage ditches will help to alleviate the issue of flooding and provide further habitat for wildlife. The existence of waterbodies at the site and the associated wildlife also have a positive impact on people's wellbeing and is valued aesthetically by visitors. The beck, pond and drainage ditches also allow educational opportunities about rivers and natural flood management. Therefore, the hydrological features have natural value, social value, aesthetic value, evidential value and educational value.

4.6.12 Issues

- Lack of biodiversity and suitable habitats for wildlife.
- Poor habitat.
- Flooding of footpaths.
- Flooding downstream.
- Blockages in beck.
- Lack of suitable habitat in channel and surrounding areas.
- Large section of beck currently inaccessible to visitors.
- Impact on people and wildlife being able to access Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Lack of regular monitoring

4.6.13 Management Aims and Objectives

- Improve and enhance habitat and species biodiversity.
- Create habitat suitable to wildlife not currently using the site, for example otters.
- Slow the flow through natural flood management.
- Have the ability to hold more water on the site when necessary.
- Maintain a suitable riparian buffer.
- Alleviate flooding downstream and on footpaths.
- Provide recreation and education opportunities.
- Enhance visitor access to the beck.

4.7 Invasive Non-Native Species

4.7.1 In the large pond situated to the north west of the Walkmill site there is a dense infestation of curly waterweed (see figure 4.7 below) which is an invasive non-native species (INNS) that can grow in dense mats in waterbodies such as the Walkmill Community Woodland pond.

4.7.2 urly waterweed displaces native plant species through outcompeting and out-shading them as well as changing the water quality through altering the PH and silt levels. Curly waterweed is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and under Schedule 14, it is an offense to let these species grow or spread. Additionally, it is listed as an Invasive Alien Species of Union Concern and is rated as having a high impact by the Water Framework Directive. Left unchecked and unmanaged curly waterweed can entirely dominate a pond, so that no other species can survive, including the diverse insect life currently present.

Figure 4.7 Curly Waterweed in the pond

4.7.3 There is also a large stand of Japanese knotweed on nearby farmland (figure 4.8 below), measuring c. 50m^2 immediately north-west of the periphery of Walkmill Community Woodland. It is a perennial plant which grows each year from its extensive underground rhizomes. It spreads rapidly by natural means and as a result of human activity.

4.7.4 Japanese knotweed forms dense stands and outcompetes native vegetation, it can also cause structural damage. This species is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and under Schedule 14, which prohibits the spread of invasive non-native species (INNS) into the wild.

4.7.5 There are also grey squirrels present on the site. These are an invasive, non-native species that can have a devastating impact on the UK's only native squirrel, the red squirrel, which is also present at Walkmill.

4.7.6 Grey squirrels can outcompete the red squirrels for food and carry a virus known as squirrelpox. Grey squirrels exhibit only mild symptoms in response to this virus, however it is usually fatal to red squirrels. Grey squirrels are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and it is illegal to release or allow a grey squirrel to escape in to the wild.

4.7.7 Grey squirrels can also cause severe damage to the woodland by stripping the tree bark from the trunks and branches of trees. Young trees are particularly vulnerable to this form of attack as their bark is easier to remove. In milder cases this damage will cause scarring of the tree, but in more severe cases it can kill the tree.

Figure 4.8 Japanese knotweed on nearby farmland

4.7.8 Significance of Invasive Non-Native Species

- Invasive Non-Native Species are judged to be an **intrusive significance.** They have no natural value or any social value and cause harm to the natural environment at Walkmill Community Woodland.

4.7.9 Issues

- Lack of management of invasive non-native species.
- Risk of curly waterweed spreading to other waterbodies.
- Public access to the pond, particularly dogs entering the pond.
- Risk of Japanese knotweed spreading in to Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Risk of grey squirrels dominating the woodland causing a decline in the numbers and health of the red squirrels, and damaging the trees in the woodland.

4.7.10 Management Aims and Objectives

- Management and, where possible, eradication of invasive non-native species.

4.8 Wildlife

4.8.1 Considering Walkmill Community Woodland is a relatively young woodland there is a wide variety of wildlife that is inhabiting, foraging or just passing through the site. Numerous walkover surveys were undertaken in Summer/Autumn 2022 to establish what species are present on the site.[43] Below is an overview of the wildlife that has been sighted at Walkmill, many of which are protected species, the issues that wildlife is currently facing and how to manage Walkmill Community Woodland for wildlife in the future.

4.8.2 Amphibians have been sighted on the Walkmill site, in particular there have been regular sightings of the common frog, toad and newt, so these species appear to be doing well at Walkmill. Amphibians are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 against being killed and injured and are included as Priority Species under the NERC Act. There is suitable habitat for the amphibians at Walkmill Community Woodland as there are ponds and wet areas, grassland, scrub, bracken, tall ruderal and the woodland understorey, which all provide suitable density for shelter, dispersal and foraging opportunities. Environmental DNA (eDNA) samples were taken from the large pond but the results were returned as 'negative' for trace of the DNA of great crested newts. Moresby Parks village is in an amber zone[44] so may have great crested newts present and has important connecting habitats. So, although they are unlikely to be present at Walkmill Community Woodland currently, great crested newts might colonize there in the future, given the right habitat requirements.

4.8.3 Reptiles are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The common lizard and adder are reptiles that have been recorded as being present at Walkmill Community Woodland. Cumbria Amphibian and Reptile Group currently survey and record the adder population at the site. Reptiles, in particular adders, require a mosaic of habitats comprising of a mixture of vegetation at different heights, open areas for basking, and brash piles which could act as a shelter or hibernation site. Walkmill Community Woodland currently has this

[43] For further information about specific species present, assumed to be present or has potential to be present in the future see 'Wildlife Survey Findings' in "Supporting Documents for A Wilder Walkmill Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan".

[44] For the 'Natural England Great Crested Newt Zones' map see Appendix 8

mosaic of habitats which encourage the reptile population, but the lack of management means that these habitats are encroaching on each other and becoming less distinct with the risk of losing some of these important habitats.

Figure 4.9 A lizard at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.8.4 A wide variety of birds are present at Walkmill Community Woodland, including a variety of raptors. Examples of birds that have been sighted include whitethroat, blackcap, lesser redpoll, long-tailed tit, grasshopper warbler, goldfinch, bullfinch, song thrush, robin, jay, magpie, buzzard and kestrel. This shows evidence of a wide variety of birds and there appears to be a good population of some of them due to a mosaic of habitats which can provide suitable habitat for different birds. For example, scrub for the grasshopper warbler and areas of open ground for the kestrel. The scrub, tall ruderal, open ground and woodland all provide suitable habitat for foraging opportunities and nesting. Fig 4.10 shows a lesser redpoll at Walkmill.

Figure 4.10 A Lesser Redpoll photographed at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.8.5 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to take, kill or injure a bat, damage or destroy a resting place of a bat, or disturb a bat whilst it is occupying a place of shelter. Walkmill Community Woodland contains a varied mosaic of aquatic and terrestrial habitats that provide a diversity of vegetation assemblage, density and structure. The site also retains strong habitat connectivity to the wider landscape. Consequently, this site was appraised in the PEA as offering optimal foraging opportunities for bat species and was considered as having 'high' potential to support foraging and commuting activity. During evening bat walks that have been held at Walkmill Community Woodland foraging bats have been sighted, with common pipistrelle being identified, though there are potentially other types of bats present too. There is no current evidence of bat roosts being present on the site, but this is likely due to the woodland still being relatively young and so not having suitable roosting cavities yet.

4.8.6 Red squirrels are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. There have been sightings of red squirrels at Walkmill Community Woodland (see figure 4.11 taken on the footpath at Walkmill), and also a dead one on the road to the car park, but there do not appear to be large numbers present. There is also currently no evidence of dreys on the site. There are sightings of red squirrels in the surrounding areas too so there is a good wildlife corridor for them. Currently the density of the woodland could be impacting the fruit and seed production of the trees and scrub which could explain the low numbers of red squirrels. There have also been sightings of grey squirrels (an invasive non-native species) at the site, which left unmanaged will be detrimental for the red squirrel population. Grey squirrels have been discussed above in 'Section 4.7 Invasive Non-Native Species'.

Figure 4.11 Red squirrel on the footpath at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.8.7 Badgers and their setts are both protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The PEA considered the gently, sloping embankments along the periphery of Walkmill Community Woodland to be of a suitable profile and substrate for badgers to excavate setts, particularly within woodland and where there are dense scrub understories. The areas of improved grassland also offer good foraging opportunities. Cumbria Badgers undertook a survey at Walkmill Community Woodland in September 2022. No setts were identified and there was no irrefutable evidence of badgers being present on the site. However, wildlife cameras were installed on the site and one of these captured a foraging badger demonstrating that the site does fall within the territory of local clans and badgers are foraging and commuting through the woodland (see figure 4.12 below taken from cameras put out on site). Regular footfall, dogs and the lack of suitable scrub in the woodland could all be factors in why badgers are currently only passing through Walkmill Community Woodland and not building setts there yet.

Figure 4.12: Badger at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.8.8 There are a wide variety of insects present at Walkmill Community Woodland including butterflies, bees, dragonflies and damselflies. The large pond is particularly significant for dragonflies and damselflies where 11 breeding species have been recorded, including the broad-bodied chaser (figure 4.13 below) and golden-ringed dragonfly, which shows a good level of diversity. There is also a variety of butterflies and moths present on the site with sightings of the meadow brown and peacock being recorded. There is potential suitable habitat for the marsh fritillary too but due to the lack of devil's bit scabious in the marshy grassland it is not currently present. The dense woodland and lack of diversity in the grassland will be impacting the number and diversity of insect species currently present at Walkmill Community Woodland.

Figure 4.13: Broadbodied Chaser photographed near the pond at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.8.9 Many of the watercourses at Walkmill Community Woodland have sections that are artificial, such as the concrete lined beck, which prove to be impenetrable for water voles to excavate burrows. Due to this lack of suitable habitat and opportunity for burrows water voles are not currently present on the site.

4.8.10 Otters are present on the River Keekle, which the beck at Walkmill Community Woodland flows in to. If the beck was in a good condition with soil banks and a food source such as fish then otters could travel upstream to Walkmill. However, the unnatural condition of the canalised, concrete-lined beck means that the necessary habitat is not currently available to the otter and so they have not been sighted on the site.

4.8.11 Roe deer are present in all areas of Walkmill Community Woodland having been sighted in the woodland and grassland areas, as well as in the surrounding fields. There have also been confirmed sightings of rabbits but not of brown hares.

4.8.12 gnificance of Wildlife

- The wildlife at Walkmill Community Woodland is judged to be of **high significance.** The site already contains a wide variety of wildlife and has good biodiversity, which will become even greater with management of the site. This variety is important for the ecosystems to be able to thrive. The wildlife is also important to visitors, some of whom visit to watch and photograph the wildlife. Being outside and watching wildlife can help improve a person's mental and physical health and wellbeing. There is also an education aspect because people feel more encouraged to learn about the wildlife that they see at Walkmill. Therefore, the wildlife has natural value, social value, aesthetic value and educational value.

4.8.13 Issues

- Lack of suitable habitat for specific species, such as the water vole and marsh fritillary butterfly
- Existing habitats in poor condition, for example scrub encroachment on grassland
- Lack of regular monitoring of many species
- Disruption to wildlife due to paths being in poor condition or not being clearly waymarked
- Loss of species if habitats continue to be unmanaged
- No suitable nesting/roosting habitats in young woodland
- Low fruit and seed yield due to density of woodland
- Lack of management of invasive non-native species

4.8.14 Management Aims and Objectives

- Preserve and enhance the mosaic of habitats.
- Enhance biodiversity.
- Enhance habitat for existing wildlife and manage habitat to encourage other wildlife.
- Better understanding of the wildlife at the Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Protect the wildlife whilst still maintaining recreational access.
- Community engagement and education about wildlife and citizen science recording projects.

4.9 Mining features

4.9.1 As described in Chapter 2 of this Conservation Management Plan, Walkmill Community Woodland was a coalmine for just over 80 years. Although the site was reclaimed and a woodland has been planted, there are a few mining heritage features which do remain on the site. Figure 4.14 below shows where the features are on a map. The remaining features shown on the map are: 1. The pit road. 2. A dam. 3. The concrete lined beck. 4. A brick weir. 5. A small weir. 6. The old mineral railway. 7. The weighbridge building. 8. A concrete wall that helped to contain the pit heap. 9. The dam ponds.

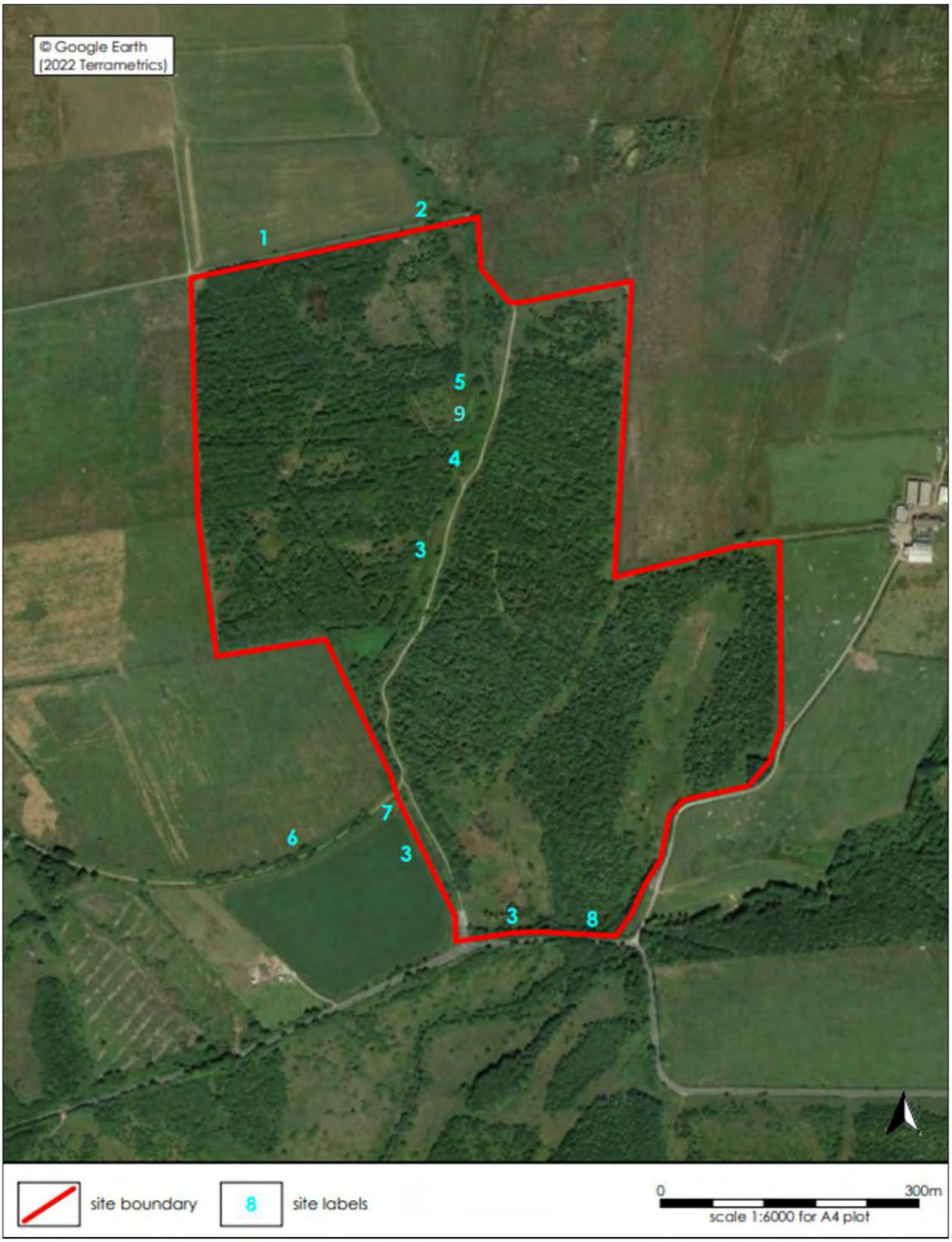


Figure 4.14: Mining heritage features map from the archaeological survey

4.9.2 To the west of the site, a footpath now replaces the dismantled railway where some remnants of an old weighbridge structure can be seen (see figure 4.15 below). This structure was used to weigh wagons loaded with coal or coke as they left the colliery. What remains of this structure is partially on Walkmill Community Woodland land and partially on the

neighbouring landowner's land. The landowner is however amenable to further uncovering of the weighbridge on his land. The remnants of the weighbridge are not in a good condition and have become very overgrown with vegetation. Some work was done to clear back this vegetation and uncover part of the remains of the weighbridge in 2022. There is, however, a risk of losing this artefact from the site's mining heritage due to erosion and dense vegetation growth.

Figure 4.15: The remnants of the old weighbridge

4.9.3 To the north of the dam there are the remains of a large dam/weir (see figure 4.16 below). This is no longer an active dam but the brick structures have been quite well preserved. The structure is still erect and reasonably intact. There has however been some erosion and vegetation growth on and around the remains. Work was undertaken in autumn 2022 to clear some of this vegetation and to uncover the dam brick structures. This area also has an arched culvert constructed with bricks that is in reasonable condition. There are some bricks in the structure that still have the makers mark on them, 'micklam', (see figure 4.17 below) which is from the old local Micklam Brickworks which was located a few miles away in Whitehaven. These structures are however clearly suffering damage from erosion and the growth of vegetation.

Figure 4.16: The dam to the north of Walkmill Community Woodland

Figure 4.17: A Micklam brick in the kerb of the pit road

4.9.4 Dam ponds from the mine are evident in places along the beck. The ponds have since silted up and so are no longer visible, but stay very wet and flood in the autumn and winter. The silt and vegetation have caused these ponds to disappear, but they remain a prime location for ponds or wetlands. Soil samples have shown no evidence of soil contamination in these areas and therefore can be de-silted.

4.9.5 Weirs are also evident along the beck. Where the beck changes from a meandering channel to a straightened concrete channel there is the remnants of a weir with the sides and the bottom still intact. It is situated next to a well-walked footpath but there is no evidence to show passers-by this piece of mining heritage. The bank edges of the other two weirs along the beck are also still present. These features are not in a great condition and, as with the other pieces of structural mining heritage, they are prone to erosion, vegetation growth and accidental damage due to a lack of knowledge about the significance of these heritage features.

4.9.6 The mineshafts are no longer visible and were filled in many years ago by the British Coal Board. There is however a map showing the location of the mineshafts so it has been possible to pinpoint them in an area of woodland. There is nothing physical to mark where the mine shafts were and so the condition is classed as poor.

4.9.7 Significance of the mining features

- The significance of the mining features at Walkmill Community Woodland have been judged to be of **high significance.** These features are the last physical remains of the mining history that took place at Walkmill Colliery and so provide physical evidence of the colliery workings. These features also encourage some visitors to remember back to when it was a working mine, or more often when it had been closed but not yet reclaimed and the local children used to play on it. There is public access to all the features so the general public have free access to any of them. It is also an opportunity to educate people about the Walkmill Colliery but also the coal mining industry in West Cumbria and mining in general. Therefore, the mining features have evidential value, associative value, public amenity value and educational value.

4.9.8 Issues

- Erosion of the artefacts.
- Encroachment of dense vegetation over heritage features.
- Accidental damage by visitors.
- Lack of knowledge about the heritage features.
- Silt.

4.9.9 Management Aims and Objectives

- Protect the remaining mining features.
- Give visitors the opportunity to learn about the mining features and the history.
- Reinstate the dam ponds.

4.10 Footpaths

4.10.1 There are a variety of both public and informal footpaths traversing Walkmill Community Woodlands. These are either grassy, unsurfaced paths or they are surfaced with aggregate or tarmac and the condition of each one varies. Figure 4.18 below shows the footpaths at Walkmill Community Woodland and the proposed surfacing works to make them accessible to all.

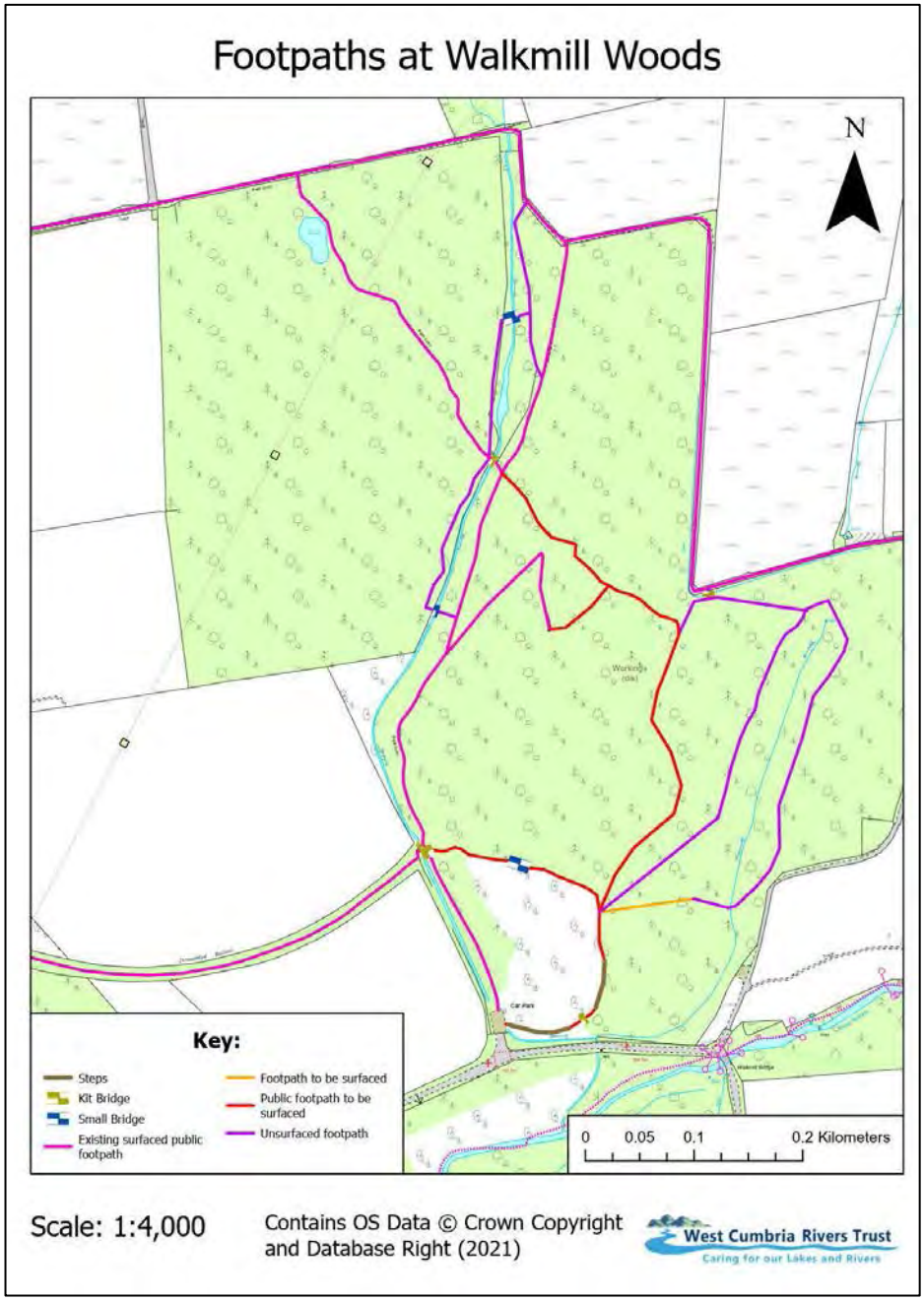


Figure 4.18: Existing footpaths and proposed footpath upgrades at Walkmill Community Woodland

4.10.2 The public footpath to the north of the site that comes from Moresby Rugby Club is often referred to as the 'Pit Road' as it was the track that led to Walkmill Colliery from the

village. This footpath has a tarmac surface with grass and scrub on either side. The path has not been managed and so the tarmac is in some disrepair with some of it being cracked, broken and eroded due to water damage (see figure 4.19 below). This has lessened the accessibility of the path as it is now reported to be uncomfortable and awkward for users with wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs. This path needs replacing to make it accessible for all.

Figure 4.19: The 'Pit Road' footpath to the north of Walkmill Community Woodland

4.10.3 The public footpath in to the site that follows the dismantled railway is an accessible aggregate path. It has grass, scrub and trees along either side and most of this path is currently in a good condition. Near the old weighbridge there is an issue with flooding after heavy rainfall (see figure 4.20 below). The floodwater can be a few feet high and can become impassable to walkers. The path itself is deemed to be in good condition still, but the drainage system for this area is in a poor condition.

Figure 4.20: The footpath by the old weighbridge after heavy rainfall

4.10.4 The main public footpath through the site is an accessible aggregate path, which is currently the most used path (see figure 4.21 below). It is in a good condition with a level, undamaged surface and drainage ditches and pipes alongside it to help prevent flooding and erosion of the path. These drainage ditches are in a reasonable condition but they do require yearly maintenance and the path is currently flooding in one section during the winter months.

Figure 4.21: The main aggregate public footpath through Walkmill Community Woodland

4.10.5 The public footpath that starts at the car park and loops around the first valley is not accessible to many people because it has a very steep decline and incline which is treacherous after wet weather when the ground is wet, muddy and slippery. The path is also indistinct to the north and remains very boggy in sections and currently has a small broken bridge (see figure 4.22) that is in poor condition and unusable. This is a grass path, which has no other surfacing. Overall, it is not in good condition and, particularly in the winter, is only accessible to the more adventurous visitors.

Figure 4.22: The broken bridge to the north east of the car park

4.10.6 The public footpath in the centre of Walkmill Community Woodland is a dogleg that joins another public footpath to the east. The first section of this footpath is a well-surfaced aggregate path with a gradual ascent up a hill. It travels through the woodland and this section of the path is both accessible and in a good condition. However, once the top of the path is reached at the second bend the surfaced path ends and turns in to a grass path. This path is less accessible and also prone to waterlogging making it particularly difficult to traverse in the winter months. This section of the path is in a poor condition and is not as accessible as the previous section of path.

4.10.7 The public footpath that the dogleg path links with has no surfacing and is a grass path that also goes through the woodland. The sunlight struggles to penetrate the ground here and the path stays boggy and waterlogged for most of the year. This path is also in a poor condition and is not a particularly accessible path.

4.10.8 The most eastern public footpath consists of a collection of boardwalks with gaps in between. There is no record or evidence of these boardwalks having been managed and so they are in a very poor condition. There a large holes where the wood has become rotten and they are very slippery when wet. Due to this they are not fit for purpose and people have

begun to walk next to the boardwalks instead. The ground to the side of the boardwalks and in between them gets very wet, boggy and waterlogged - see figure 4.23 below.

Figure 4.23: Damaged boardwalk and wet, boggy footpath

4.10.9 The informal path around the valley that has been referred to as the 'secret valley' is in reasonable condition. It is a grass path with no surfacing and the majority of the path tends to stay reasonably dry. There are however sections that do become waterlogged and boggy due to the encroachment of scrub and rushes. The path is also not always distinct and this can cause the general public to veer off the path and on to the grassland and delicate wildflowers, such as orchids.

4.10.10 The informal path that links the two valleys through the woodland is another grass path with no surfacing. The path stays continually wet and boggy and verges on impassable even in wellies in the winter months (see figure 4.24 below). The woodland it wanders through has not been managed and so has a very dense canopy with scrub encroaching on the path. This path is in a poor condition and is only accessible to some people for the summer months.

Figure 4.24: Wet and boggy path through woodland

4.10.11 The informal path to the north that is on the east side of the beck is a recently created path, created by the removal of the fencing along the beck in 2022. This allowed an informal path to be created along the beck which has proved to be popular, with walkers regularly using it. It is a grass path with no surfacing and has the beck on one side with scrub and grassland on the other. The path itself is in reasonable condition, though, as with many of the other paths on the site, it can be prone to waterlogging. It is also reasonably accessible but users with wheelchairs or pushchairs would struggle to access it due to it its soft muddy surface.

4.10.12 Significance of footpaths

- The footpaths at Walkmill Community Woodland have been judged to be of **high significance** and throughout the consultation in the development phase were the main element the community wanted changing on the site. The footpaths allow people access to the site and allow them to experience the nature and wildlife that there is. Through the physical activities of walking, running and cycling, and the opportunity to engage with nature, people's physical and mental health and wellbeing can be improved. The importance of access on the site through footpaths is shown by the community's campaign to get more of the footpaths designated as public footpaths so that public access would be retained in the future. Some of the footpaths are also evidence of the history of Walkmill, namely the footpath along the dismantled railway and the 'Pit Road'. Therefore, the footpaths have public amenity value, social value, evidential value and associative value.

4.10.13 Issues

- Flooding.
- Erosion.
- Wet, boggy and waterlogged paths.
- Muddy and slippery paths.
- Steep inclines and declines.
- Bridges in disrepair.
- Lack of circular walks.
- Paths inaccessible in winter.
- Perimeter fencing.
- Slippery and broken boardwalks.
- Dense woodland blocking the light from infiltrating.
- Non-distinct paths.
- Lack of way markers.
- Lack of circular walks.
- No map of the site.

4.10.14 Management Aims and Objectives

- Improve the public footpaths and make accessible to all where possible
- Improve the informal paths so they can be used throughout the year.
- Prevent flooding of the paths.
- Encourage visitors to stay to the paths to protect wildlife.

4.11 Furniture

4.11.1 Currently there is post and wire fencing around the perimeter of the Walkmill Community Woodland site with a section of it topped with three strands of barbed wire. As there is no stock on this land and the general public are encouraged to use it this fencing serves no practical purpose. From an ecological perspective it is a poor habitat and provides a negligible value to nature conservation. There has also been sightings of animals getting stuck due to the fencing and it could be interfering with wildlife accessing/traversing the site. The fencing itself is in a good condition but it impacts the accessibility of the site for both people and wildlife as well as impacting the tranquillity. The internal fencing around the unnamed beck was removed in 2022 and many of the users of Walkmill commented on this opening up the woodland and making it feel more calm and tranquil. The fencing also means that the path following half of the perimeter of the site does not lend itself to being used as a circular walk as the fence prevents anyone from gaining access in to the woodland or valley further along the path.

4.11.2 There are currently two wooden bridges at Walkmill Community Woodland. One of these crosses the unnamed beck and is in a reasonable condition. It is accessible and people are able to cross it unhindered, although the width is slightly narrow by DDA standards. The second wooden bridge is to the north of the first valley. This bridge is in a very poor condition and is unusable (as shown in figure 4.22 in section 4.10.5 above). The slats are broken and the

wood is rotten so it is completely inaccessible. Even in good condition this bridge would be too narrow for users with wheelchairs and pushchairs to be able to use it.

4.11.3 There are numerous benches at Walkmill Community Woodland. The accessible picnic bench and park bench at the viewpoint were all put in by Cumbria County Council in the reclamation phase of the site. Two benches were also donated by WCRT in 2020 and are made out of the plastic liner taken out of the River Keekle. The remaining benches are simple park benches constructed by a volunteer in 2022 using fence posts from the fence removal and donated scaffolding boards and all have names relevant to the site (see figure 4.26 below) . All the benches are in a reasonable to good condition and are well used by the general public.

Figure 4.25: Viewpoint bench

Figure 4.26: Park bench constructed by local volunteer

Figure 4.27: Accessible picnic bench

4.11.4 There is one public bin at Walkmill Community Woodland situated in the small car park. It is the responsibility MPC to have it emptied on a regular basis. They have a contract with Copeland Borough Council for the emptying of this bin. It is in a good condition and there have not been any issues with it. There is some littering on the site but this tends to be near the small car park despite there being a bin and there is also occasional fly tipping. Another issue is dog poo on the paths or dog poo bags being abandoned. MPC are also responsible for the bin at the Rugby Club that is used by some responsible dog walkers.

4.11.5 There are very few waymarkers currently present at Walkmill Community Woodland. There is one in the woodland at a crossroads of paths, and a couple on the main accessible path. The ones that are present are in good condition but there are too few of them, which can make it confusing for visitors trying to navigate their way around Walkmill Community Woodland. There is also no map available at the site showing the site and where the paths go.

4.11.6 Significance of furniture

- The furniture at Walkmill Community Woodland is judged to be of **high significance.** They provide important value for accessibility due to the benches allowing people to rest and bridges so that watercourses can be crossed safely. The benches also provide a space for people to be able to socialise. The bin provides some value too as it helps to prevent littering which is good for the environment. The post and wire fence no longer provides any value for the site. Therefore, the furniture has social value, public amenity value and some natural value.

4.11.7 Issues

- Poor habitat.
- Impact on feelings of tranquillity and calm.
- Impact on people and wildlife being able to access Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Width of bridges.
- Broken bridge.
- Littering.

- Dog poo and abandoned dog poo bags.
- No welcome or site entrance sign so people drive past not knowing what is there or if it is publicly accessible.
- People not using the site as don't know where to walk, or not exploring to its full potential.
- Poor way marking.
- Lack of map of site.
- No interpretation features explaining to visitors about the wildlife and history of Walkmill Community Woodland.

4.11.8 Management Aims and Objectives

- Improve the site for wildlife and improve biodiversity.
- Educate and inform visitors about the wildlife and history of Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Encourage recreational use of the site.
- Create a tranquil and calming place for visitors.
- Improve accessibility.
- Decrease in litter and abandoned dog poo/ dog poo bags.
- Improve site furniture and footpath bridges

4.12 Walkmill Community Woodland Users and Community

4.12.1 A user survey was undertaken in July-August 2019 and July-August 2022. The 2022 surveys were provided at the evening and daytime consultations on 13th and 17th July. Posters with a website address and QR code were also placed throughout Walkmill Community Woodland until the end of August. There were 89 responses to the 2022 user survey. Other consultation and pilot events also took place throughout 2022 and details of these can be found in the Activity Plan and Evaluation Plan.

4.12.2 The results of the visitor surveys show most visitors are White British (99%) and aged 19-65+, with a smaller percentage of under 18's. Gender is split 50% between male and female. 16% visitors have some form of disability, with 81% having no recognised disability. 31% of participants came from postcodes with the most deprivation. 69% came from the above-average in terms of being deprived.

4.12.3 The majority of participants (35%) visit Walkmill Community Woodlands a few times a week, with 25% of people visiting a few times a month and 24% of people visiting daily. Some people also visit up to three times a day, with the main reasons for visiting being walking, dog walking and nature watching

4.12.4 rom the 2019 and 2022 surveys footfall is estimated at ~ 30,000 per year. With there being three possible entrances to the site and open access for all it is difficult to calculate the number of visitors. There is a gap in knowledge as to how accurate the estimate is so footfall counters may be used in the delivery phase to acquire more accurate information.

4.12.5 From the surveys and conversations with visitors, people appear to be satisfied with their visits to the site. The main improvements expressed were in areas such as the footpaths

and management for wildlife. Here are a few of quotes from the survey: “Extremely [enjoyable], we love walking here everyday with my family”, “its fantastic for both humans and wildlife”. “As an 88 year old I would like to see more benches and picnic benches, more accessible paths, gates and bridges. Wider paths”, “it would be useful to understand where the circular walking routes are and how long they are when you arrive”.[45]

4.12.6 It is clear that people in the local community would like to see the accessibility of the site improved by work being undertaken to improve the footpaths, maps and signage being installed on the site, regular events being held and habitat improvements to enhance the wildlife. Ideas that have been proposed include providing information about circular walks including the route, timings and distance, family events and conservation volunteering. Visitors to Walkmill Community Woodland aspire to the site being a calm and accessible place where people can connect to the natural heritage and learn more about the industrial heritage.

4.12.7 Further information about the views of the local community, the users of Walkmill Community Woodland and a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 surveys can be found in “Walkmill Data Driven Decisions” and in the “Activity Plan and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill”

4.12.8 Through the consultation and pilot events it has been established that the potential audience for the site can be summarised in five groups:

- Local young people
- Local residents
- Local working people
- Formal workers
- Project partners and stakeholders

4.12.9 Potential barriers for people not using the site or engaging with events have been identified as: having a non-outdoor mindset, limited public transport, poverty and disposable income, lack of awareness of opportunities, lack of clothing and specialised equipment. Other barriers to people not currently using the site or not exploring the entirety of the woodland is the poor condition of some of the paths as shown in Section “4.10 Footpaths” and the lack of signage in and around the site. Through consultations it has been established that one of the main reasons people have not used the site is their lack of knowledge of it even existing.

4.12.10 The potential audience and barriers to using Walkmill Community Woodland are discussed in much further detail in the “Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill”.

4.12.11 Prior to the development phase there was very minimal engagement and volunteering at Walkmill Community Woodland with just an informal group of local volunteers carrying out occasional maintenance. During the development phase a variety of engagement and volunteer activities have been piloted. Events and activities have included Green Gyms, forest schools with the local schoolchildren, a family wildlife day, bat walks with

[45] Survey respondents in “Walkmill Data Driven Decisions”, The Evaluator, September 2022

the local community, an open day and various consultation events, amongst others. Two regular, monthly volunteer groups have also been set up: the Green gyms meeting on a weekday to do practical work, and a practical conservation group meeting on a Saturday so that people who want to get involved but work Monday to Friday can also participate. Events for the local school conservation group and uniformed groups have also taken place, they have been involved in activities such as bat walks and wildflower planting. These pilot events have allowed us to establish that there is both scope and plenty of demand for more community engagement events and volunteering in the future.

4.12.12 The events that have happened in 2022 have been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund through their development fund. They have been well attended with the community bat walk being fully booked and the Saturday volunteer group at capacity. The events are usually run by the staff at West Cumbria Rivers Trust with some help from Moresby Parish Council and the Walkmill Activity Group. Depending on the event they are usually advertised with posters, on social media (the Moresby Parks Facebook group in particular is very useful) and on the West Cumbria River's Trust website.

4.12.13 Currently there is an informal Walkmill Activity Group who are part of the steering group and who provide an input in to the designs and decisions about the future of Walkmill Community Woodland. Going forward the plan is to make this a constituted 'Friends of' group and train the volunteers in the skills that will be required for the maintenance of the woodland.

4.12.14 Further information on the activities and events that have been piloted in 2022 and those proposed for the future can be found in the "Activity Plan and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill".

4.13 Statement of Significance

Table 4.1: Summary table of the features, values and level of significance

Feature	Values	Significance
Woodland	Natural, Social, Public Amenity, Aesthetic	High
Grassland	Natural, Social, Public Amenity, Aesthetic	High
Bracken	Natural	Low
Scrub & tall ruderal	Natural	Low
Hydrology	Natural, Social, Aesthetic, Evidential, Educational	High
INNS	None	Intrusive

Wildlife	Natural, Social, Aesthetic, Educational	High
Mining Features	Educational, Associative, Public Amenity, Educational	High
Footpaths	Public Amenity, Social, Evidential, Associative	High
Furniture	Social, Public Amenity, Natural	High

4.13.1 Walkmill Community Woodland is significant for its public access in a green space, connectedness to nature and links to the mining history of Walkmill Colliery and wider West Cumbria. The features of the Walkmill Community Woodland with the highest significance are those which have multiple values which are the woodland, grassland, hydrology, wildlife, mining features, furniture and footpaths. These features allow visitors to access the site, immerse themselves in nature, improve wellbeing and learn about the history of Walkmill. These features have been judged to be highly significant due to their impact on nature and the people who visit the site.

4.13.2 As shown in Chapter 2 of this Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan, Walkmill Colliery opened in 1879 and it was due to the creation of this colliery that the local village, Moresby Parks, came in to existence, so there is a significant historic link between Walkmill Community Woodland and the surrounding areas.

4.13.4 Walkmill Community Woodland continues to be a well-loved and important community space as its reclaimed identity as a community woodland. Its significance to the community is demonstrated by the local outcry at the prospect of the site being sold by Cumbria County Council and the campaign for Moresby Parish Council to lease the site. It is also demonstrated by the successful campaigns by the local community to upgrade some of the footpaths to public footpath status and to designate the entire site as open access land.

5. Issues and Opportunities

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section will investigate the issues and vulnerabilities that there are at Walkmill Community Woodlands, as well as exploring the opportunities that are available. The specific issues concerning features at the site have already been discussed in "Chapter 4 Elements and Significance of Walkmill Community Woodland". The issues, vulnerabilities and opportunities in this section concern the site as a whole.

5.2 Climate Change

5.2.1 Issues

- Climate change is beginning to have and will continue to have a huge impact on our natural world, so it is an important consideration when exploring the issues Walkmill Community Woodland may encounter[46].
- Temperature changes could cause a reduction in the number of certain species of flora and fauna, or cause the loss of specific species completely.
- Increase in temperature might encourage the spread of invasive non-native species (INNS) having a profound negative impact on the native species and the landscape at Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Hotter, drier conditions could increase the risk of fire.
- Extreme weather may cause an increase in flooding which would cause damage and erosion to footpaths, natural habitats and the mining heritage features.

5.2.2 Management of Issues

- Though some of these risks don't need immediate action they do highlight the importance of monitoring the flora and fauna so that we can be made aware of any significant changes.
- There are suitable firebreaks existing in Walkmill Community Woodland created by the public footpaths, wet valleys, beck and other hydrological features which will help prevent a fire from destroying the entire site.
- It needs to be ensured that there is suitable drainage at Walkmill Community Woodland and water storage areas such as wetlands and ponds to make the site more resilient against potential future flooding and also store water and 'slow the flow' by creating a meandering multi-channel beck and building leaky dams to prevent flooding downstream.
-

5.2.3 Opportunities

- Having knowledge about how climate change could affect Walkmill Community Woodland could provide an education opportunity for people to learn about the impact of climate change in a place that is important and relevant to them.
- There is also the opportunity to encourage the general public and other organisations to get involved with monitoring and explaining the importance of

[46] "What are the effects of climate change on the historic environment", Historic England, https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/threats/heritage-climate-change-environment/what-effects/

this for helping to understand the impact climate change could be having on specific species of flora and fauna.
- Secondary school children will design leaky dams in lessons and come to the site to create and monitor their impact on the site.

5.3 Increased Visitor Numbers/Footfall

5.3.1 Issues

- Improvement works and more engagement and learning opportunities at Walkmill Community Woodland could lead to greater footfall, which would put pressure on the footpaths and has the potential to cause erosion.
- Increased visitor numbers could also have an impact to the wildlife and flora if lots of people stray from the paths and damage or disturb them.

5.3.2 Management of Issues

- Consideration needs to be given to the potential increased footfall when doing any footpath work to ensure the material used is able to endure this increased use.
- The maintenance plan needs to include path maintenance to help manage any potential erosion.
- Paths need to be clearly marked and subtle devices, such as path edging, could be used to encourage people to stay on the paths.

5.3.3 Opportunities

- New and improved footpaths and routes will disperse people throughout the site and reduce hot spots of visitors.
- More people on site to care and nurture the site and want to get involved in its management for the future.
- A greater presence of people to reduce anti – social behaviour.
- Explore options to expand improved footpath all the way to the industrial estate. This a permissive path so this opportunity is being explored further with the landowner.

5.4 Spread of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

5.4.1 Issues

- Three types of INNS have already been identified at Walkmill Community Woodland, namely curly waterweed, Japanese knotweed (although just outside the site boundary) and the grey squirrel.
- These have the potential to spread to other parts of the site dramatically impacting the native flora and fauna. There is also the potential for the INNS to be spread to other sites outside of Walkmill Community Woodland.

5.4.2 Management of Issues

- The existing INNS at Walkmill Community Woodland need to be treated, managed and monitored in an attempt to eradicate them.
- Monitoring will also alert us quickly of any spread of the existing INNS or any new species that have come in to the site.

5.4.3 Opportunities

- The existence of INNS at Walkmill Community Woodland does allow the opportunity to educate the general public about INNS and the importance of biosecurity.
- There is also the opportunity to try some experimental removal of the curly waterweed and monitor the outcome, which would provide some really significant data for other INNS projects and the removal of curly waterweed in other areas.

5.5 Capital Works

5.5.1 Issues

- Any capital works that occur at Walkmill Community Woodland have the potential to impact the wildlife and nature at the site due to machinery entering and the disruption of the works themselves. Any works also have the potential to damage the mining features that remain at the site.

5.5.2 Management of Issues

- Flora and fauna surveys will need to be carried out prior to any capital works taking place and professional advice about mitigation implemented.
- If the works are occurring around any mining features then protection for the features needs to be put in place.
- All contractors need to be informed about the potential risk to the wildlife, nature and mining features before any work commences.

5.5.3 Opportunities

- The capital works are necessary to manage the site for the future and without them many species could be lost. Some short-term disruption will lead to long term conservation and restoration.
- Educating local contractors on wildlife issues.
- Other mining features may be uncovered.

5.6 Wayfinding

5.6.1 Issues

- There is no signage from the village or the unnamed road to inform people how to get to Walkmill Community Woodland. This may make it difficult for visitors to get there and it may cause some people to unwittingly trespass on to nearby farmers land.
- There are very few waymarkers on the footpaths at Walkmill Community Woodlands, which may cause confusion and cause more people to stray from the paths which could cause damage to the surrounding wildlife.

5.6.2 Management of Issues

- Signs need to be erected in the village to direct people to the woodlands.
- ‘Walkmill Community Woodland’ signs at the entrances to the site so visitors know they are in the right place
- Waymarkers need to be erected for the footpaths to make it clear where the paths are.

5.6.3 Opportunities

- The signage and waymarkers will be linked to the interpretation at Walkmill Community Woodlands.
- More visitors to the site who will have the confidence to explore
- See "Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill" for more detailed information.

5.7 Maintenance

5.7.1 Issues

- Walkmill Community Woodland will need continuous maintenance to varying degrees over the years. Various elements of the site are vulnerable to disrepair if there is no one is in charge of the maintenance.

5.7.2 Management of Issues/opportunities

- 'A Friends of' Walkmill Group will be set up and trained so that there is a team of people who can continue to undertake any maintenance.
- Moresby Parish Council will be in charge of maintenance and management of the site in the long-term and will be able to assist with a small maintenance budget.

5.8 Transport Links and Parking

5.8.1 Issues

- There is limited information about how to get to Walkmill Community Woodlands other than by car.
- The parking at the site is limited to a small car park, but there is the option for cars to park along the road to Frizington, at the rugby club and in the village itself.

5.8.2 Management of Issues/opportunities

- Information about public transport options, particularly bus routes, could be provided on a leaflet and the sites website.
- Other forms of getting to Walkmill Community Woodland will also be advertised, such as walking and cycling routes and bike racks may be provided in the long term should the need arise.
- Increased accessibility to the site and increased visitor numbers.

5.9 Education & Engagement

5.9.1 Opportunities

- There is a great opportunity to promote the natural and industrial heritage of the site and to engage with the community. See "Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill" for further details.
- Activities will include forest schools, green gyms, conservation volunteering, guided walks and development of interpretation.

5.9.2 Issues

- Cost of transport for schools to the site.

5.10 Organisational Capacity

5.10.1 Issues

- There are currently not enough staff to run events, learning & engagement sessions and volunteering at Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Training volunteers and engaging the community is vital for the long-term management of the site.
- Lack of young people engaged in conservation.
- Lack of trained local people for conservation jobs.

5.10.2 Management of Issues

- Funding for new paid positions would create enough capacity for these events and activities to go ahead at Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Funding apprenticeships will enable more young people to gain skills and employment in the environmental sector.

6. Managing Walkmill Community Woodland in the Future

6.1 Management Policies and Actions

The table below outlines the policies that have been developed in response to the issues and opportunities that have been explored and with the intention of preserving the significance of Walkmill Community Woodland. These policies have been created to provide guidance on the future maintenance and development of Walkmill Community Woodland, so as the site evolves, the policies will be updated.

Table 6.1: Management policies and actions

Policy	Reason	Action
The Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan		
The policies contained within this Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan will be adopted and be used for any further works.	The Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan should be a working document that guides any future change to the site. All involved should feel that they can happily agree to follow the policies within it.	All involved should agree to adopt and implement the policies.
Review the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan on a regular basis, normally every five years or when major change is planned.	The Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan will need regular reviewing to ensure that the policies stay relevant in the future and that the information contained within it is up to date.	Plan for regular reviews of the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan or recognise events and key changes at the site when a review of the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan will be required. It is recommended that notes or records of changes are kept to enable easy updating of the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan.
Make the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan available to any parties with a legitimate interest in the site, such as local and national statutory bodies and interest groups.	Other parties with an interest in the site should be involved in the on-going development of the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan, as they will have specialist knowledge and experience to contribute.	When the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan is reviewed it should be made available in digital or hard copy format to relevant stakeholders for comment. It will be made available on the Walkmill Community Woodland webpage.

Policy	Reason	Action
Statutory Requirements		
All significant changes to be planned with regard to any relevant statutory requirements and guidance	To ensure that all statutory requirements are followed and the work carried out is to a proper standard	Specialists consultants should be consulted where appropriate
Consultations		
Prior to the planning or design of any major changes or works to Walkmill Community Woodland stakeholder consultation will be carried out.	It is best practice to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of, and if possible can provide input into, any major changes planned. This will help to gain a better understanding of impact as well as building and maintaining good working relationships with those who have an interest in the future of the site.	Regular meetings to take place with stakeholders. Further meetings to be organised if and when required.
Making Changes - Adaption and New Work		
Any new works should seek to enhance, rather than detract from, the significant natural and industrial heritage of Walkmill Community Woodland.	This is to ensure that the important heritage value of the site is not eroded or lost by inappropriate changes, and that opportunities to reveal and improve important heritage values, such as restoring the beck, are taken wherever possible.	This should be the starting point when planning the project and this message will be passed on to any consultants or contractors involved.
All relevant surveys will be identified and untaken before any major work begins.	The natural and industrial heritage needs to be protected so surveys will provide suitable information about what mitigation needs to occur.	Relevant surveys and areas to be surveyed to be identified. Appropriate surveyors to be recruited.
Any features which are intrusive to the heritage value of Walkmill Community Woodland will be removed.	This is to enhance both the natural and industrial heritage of the site.	All involved should make themselves familiar with the assessments of significance contained within the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan and this should inform planned changes.

Policy	Reason	Action
Appropriate professionals and contractors will be employed for any significant works at Walkmill Community Woodland for both the design and construction.	This is to ensure that the work is designed and carried out by people with the appropriate skills and knowledge.	Recruit appropriate consultants and contractors for any major works.
Conservation, Maintenance and Repair		
If there is any conflict between two areas, due to proposed changes or management, then the areas with higher significance will take priority and their requirements prioritised. For areas of the same significance other factors will have to be considered and the decision process should be documented.	There is a great capacity for change and improvement at Walkmill Community Woodland so it is important to establish the hierarchy of the different elements in case there is any conflict between the management of them.	All involved should make themselves familiar with the assessments of significance contained within the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan and this should inform planned changes.
Invest in the development of relevant knowledge and skills amongst staff and volunteers.	There are numerous different activities documented in the activity plan and it will facilitate the smooth running of these if staff and volunteers have up-to-date knowledge and relevant skills to do the variety of tasks required of them. It will also provide volunteers with the skills and ability to continue the maintenance work in the future.	Staff and volunteers will attend relevant courses or be provided with in-house training or guides to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge for their roles.
The Maintenance Plan for the site will be reviewed on an annual basis.	This is to ensure that Maintenance Plan has been updated with any relevant changes. Any updates should be shared with all relevant people.	A yearly review date should be made for updating the Maintenance Plan.
A Maintenance Log will be created to record what changes have taken place.	This is so that a record can be kept of the maintenance work that has been done, in order that those in the future are aware of what has taken place, by whom and when.	A logbook is to be created and to be made available to all relevant people.

Policy	Reason	Action
Improving Access		
Accessibility to Walkmill Community Woodlands should be increased by improving & upgrading the existing footpaths.	There is currently only one accessible path around the site so improving other paths will make the site more accessible for people to be able to visit the natural and industrial heritage.	Prepare designs and plans for the footpath improvements, ensuring that there are circular walk options with the improved paths.
Way markers around the site will be improved and clearly defined paths and routes.	Encouraging people to stay on the paths will help to protect the significant natural and industrial heritage from damage from footfall.	Establish where way markers should go. Deicide on appropriate material for the way markers and footpaths. Plan when they will be constructed.
Alternative access options, such as using digital technology, will be explored.	To allow the greatest access to Walkmill Community Woodland, opportunities with alternative materials, such as digital technology, will be explored so that people who may not be able to visit can learn about the heritage.	To explore possible options and use the Walkmill Community Woodland website.
Climate Change and the Environment		
Monitor the species at Walkmill Community Woodland.	Monitoring different species at the site will give us an indication of 1) the impacts of the works undertaken at the site, and 2) possible climate changes impacting the wildlife.	Set up a monitoring schedule and recruit necessary volunteers.
The site should be made as resilient as possible against flooding and fire.	Climate change may mean more flooding and wildfires so this should be considered during any works being designed at the site.	Plans to be made for drainage along paths and designs made for water storage areas, such as ponds and wetlands, should be constructed.
Purchase battery powered machinery where possible .	Battery powered tools would be more environmentally friendly.	Where appropriate purchase battery powered machinery, such as brushcutters.
Information will be provided about how to get to the site via public transport, walking or cycling.	Providing this information may encourage visitors to use alternative transport to cars.	Research public transport routes and surrounding footpaths/bridleways.
Materials on the site will be re-used, where possible, or recycled.	Re-using would reduce any waste produced at the site.	Plan what waste material there may be and how it could be re-used in the project or maintenance at the site.

Policy	Reason	Action
Pesticides will only be used by trained persons when there is no other option.	It is important to limit pesticide use for when it is absolutely necessary and to be used by trained people only to try to prevent pollution of the environment.	Plan what will require pesticide use and ensure there are trained persons to use it.
Be peat-free.	Peat is a very important habitat and efforts should be made to protect it.	Only use peat-free compost and ensure other materials are peat free too.
Managing Information about the Heritage		
Information gathered will be deposited with relevant organisations, such as Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre.	Submitting data to other organisations means we can feed in to bigger projects and allows the information to be accessible to others.	Check which data other organisations would be interested in and make a record of what data needs to be submitted to whom.
Create a volunteer handbook with relevant information.	A handbook would be a good source of information for volunteers so that they have all the relevant information for the role, such as health and safety.	Start exploring options for a handbook and materials, eg printed or digital.
Build a website or a webpage for Walkmill Community Woodland.	A website or webpage will be a good way to share information with the public about the work happening at Walkmill Community Woodland, events and how the heritage is being cared for.	Research opportunity for a dedicated website or webpage.
Education and Engagement		
Establish an official Walkmill Activity Group/Friends of Walkmill group	Such a group will be integral in the long term management of Walkmill Community Woodland	Recruit locals to join and run regular meetings
New interpretation will be designed and installed to inform and guide visitors	There is no interpretation to explain the mining heritage history or features, or explaining the natural heritage at the site	See the Interpretation Plan
To engage further with the local community	Engaging and getting the support of the local community will be essential for the future maintenance and management of the site	Proposed activities will be delivered. See Activity Plan
Engage further with schools and uniformed groups through activities such as forest schools, practical volunteering and surveys	To encourage the younger generation to engage with Walkmill Community Woodland and learn about its history and significant heritage	Proposed activities will be delivered. See Activity Plan

6.2 The Vision of Walkmill Community Woodlands

The vision for Walkmill Community Woodland is to raise awareness of the site's heritage, both natural and industrial, and increase people's understanding of its significance, the threats it faces, and what needs to be done to manage it. The aim is also to maintain and enhance the heritage and provide greater access on the site. A wide range of learning opportunities will also be provided alongside encouraging the importance of wellbeing and nature. Long-term sustainability and self-reliance of the site will be built through empowering the local community and training volunteers to sustain the site in the long-term. The overall vision is to shape, share and sustain the heritage and features with the community at Walkmill Community Woodland.

6.3 Management Objectives

6.3.1 The Management objectives are as follows:

1. Encourage understanding of the natural and industrial heritage and its significance and threats
2. Maintain and enhance the natural and industrial heritage
3. Combine heritage enhancement and management with education, recreation, wellbeing opportunities and access improvements
4. Provide training and volunteer opportunities
5. Monitor the effect of management on the wildlife on the site

6.4 A Wilder Walkmill Project

6.4.1 Over the past three years WCRT, MPC and WAG have been developing a proposal to provide a range of improvements to Walkmill Community Woodland to benefit both people and wildlife. The project aims to fulfil the management objectives described above (see section 6.4 Management Objectives).

6.4.2 In 2022 an award of £121.423 was approved by the National Lottery Heritage Fund as Development Phase (Stage 1) funding, to develop plans for an extensive scheme to increase biodiversity and access at Walkmill Community Woodland. This scheme will be the subject of a Delivery Phase (Stage 2) National Lottery Heritage Fund bid of ~£2.6 million in February 2023. The project will span the upcoming four years (2023-2027) with support from the NLHF and other funders, and subject to this funding we will make the following improvements to Walkmill Community Woodland:

I. Access Improvements
- Upgrading the existing path network to provide a variety of more accessible paths through the woodland.
- Creation of new informal paths to improve accessibility throughout the site.
- Addition of bridges at appropriate locations along the watercourse.
- Construction of steps on areas with a steep gradient.
- Addition of new benches along path network.
- Creation of new signage, way markers and interpretation interventions

II. Environmental and Ecological Improvements
- River restoration work to remove the concrete lining, create a meandering beck and to divert the beck in to the valley.
- Creation of new ponds, wetlands and scrapes to increase biodiversity and to help reduce flooding.
- Installing leaky dams and woody debris in suitable locations to help 'slow the flow' and create wetland habitats.
- Removal of old fence from around the perimeter of the site.
- Planting of a new hedgerow around the perimeter creating a wildlife corridor around the site.
- Woodland management including thinning, coppicing and planting to create a healthier and more resilient woodland.
- Meadow restoration to improve wildflower quantity and diversity, which will help to increase biodiversity.
- Establishing a tree and wildflower nursery to grow local native species and to increase community engagement opportunities.
- Establishing monitoring groups and citizen science so that improvements can be monitored.

III. Management of Mining Heritage
- Community consultations and co-creation to establish designs and to install a mining memorial dedicated to those who worked at Walkmill Colliery.

- Management of mining features to maintain their current condition.
- Interpretation interventions to explain the mining features at the site and explore the mining history at the site.
-

IV. Community Engagement

- Installation of dipping platform, which will provide learning and engagement opportunities.
- Interpretation interventions at the site with children's play elements so that people can learn about the natural and industrial heritage at the woodland.
- Installation of a willow bird hide to help visitors to engage with the natural heritage.
- Co-creation to design and install a nature trail in the Secret Valley.
- Sustaining the forest school area to provide a space in nature for learning and wellbeing.
- Construction of a dog agility area in the secret valley for dog walkers to use when visiting the site.
- These improvements will go hand in hand with the learning, volunteering and other community engagement opportunities proposed in the Activity plan. See "Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill" for further information about the proposed activities for the project.

Figure 6.1 below shows the proposed capital works and management at Walkmill Community Woodland for the 'Wilder Walkmill' project which are described in further detail below:

Figure 6.1: A map of the proposed works at Walkmill Community Woodland

6.4.3 Proposed Access Improvements and Management:

V. Footpaths and bridges. See figure 6.2 below for the locations of the proposed footpath works, steps and bridges.

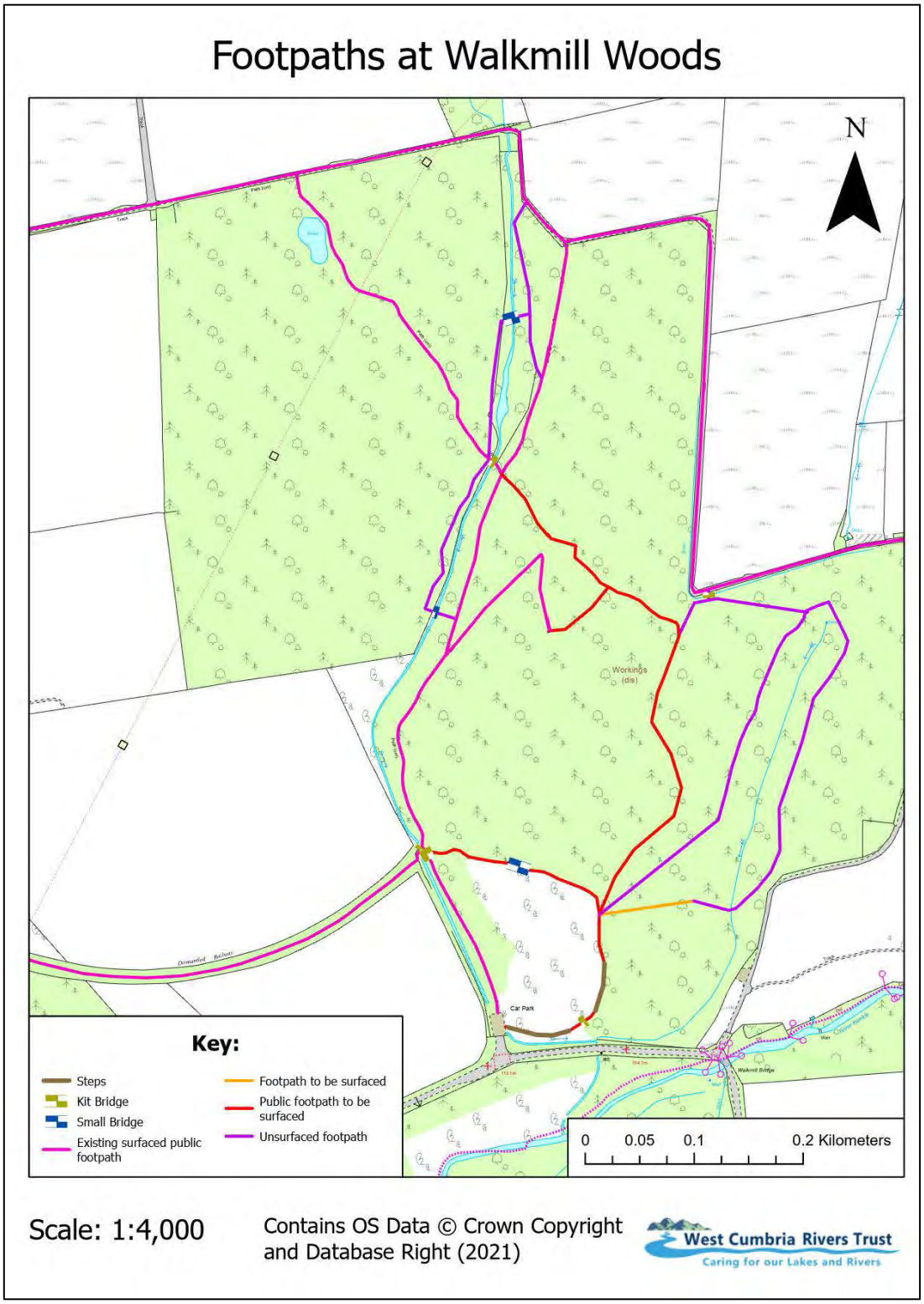


Figure 6.2: Proposed footpaths and bridges at Walkmill Community Woodland

Footpaths:

- The existing gravelled surfaced paths are in a good condition so they will not require any improvement works, just regular clearance of the drainage channels to prevent flooding.
- The unsurfaced footpaths will be grassy paths that will need to be strimmed and have scrub removed regularly. The will also need drainage channels to be dug to prevent flooding of the paths and edging put along them to encourage people to remain on the paths.
- The paths to be surfaced will be upgraded from grassy, muddy paths to more accessible aggregate paths to allow for a wider variety of accessible paths through the site. The surfaced paths will be 1.2m wide and be dug to a depth of 150mm with the paths being constructed of geotextile lining, a base layer of 100mm crusher run, a sub base of 50mm type 1 aggregate and a top layer that will be type 1 aggregate down to dust. See figure 6.3 below which shows a cross section of the proposed surfaced paths.
- The crusher run will be re-used concrete from the lining of the beck so that material is being reused where possible on the site.
- The pit road will also be resurfaced. The current eroding tarmac will be removed and crushed up to form the base layer and it will have the same specification as the other aggregate paths.

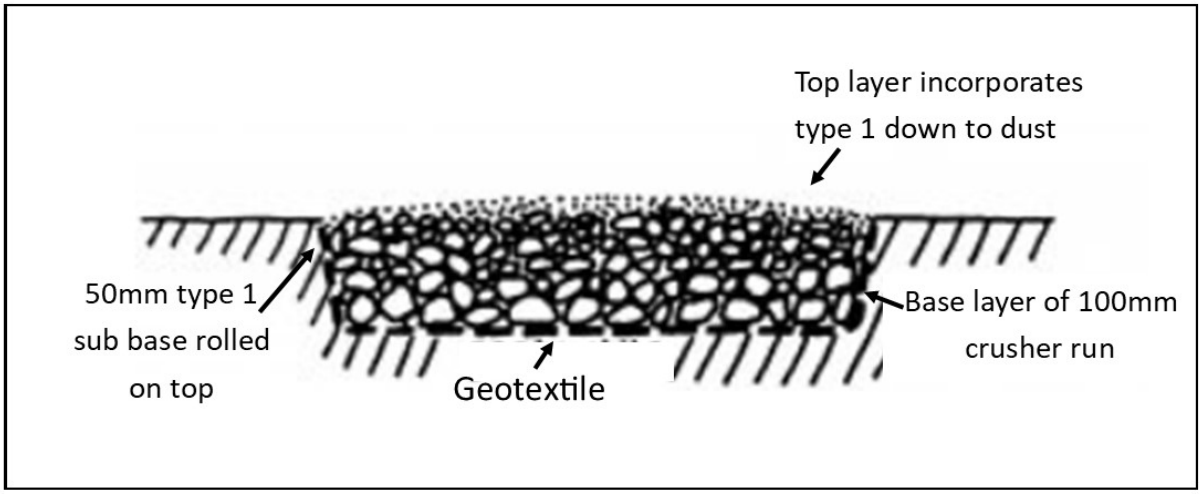


Figure 6.3: Cross-section of structure of proposed new surfaced paths

- Drainage channels will also need to be constructed alongside these paths to protect them against flooding and erosion from water.
- The aggregate surfacing of the paths will be undertaken by a contractor under the management of the Project Manager. It is hoped the concrete material from the beck and the tarmac will be crushed on site and used for the base layer of the footpaths.
- The drainage channels and path edging will be constructed by a variety of volunteer and community groups and the apprentices.

- Steps will be constructed on the footpath near the car park to make the steep gradient more accessible. These steps will have a wooden riser at the front secured in place by two wooden stobs and the steps will be back-filled with soil. To prevent erosion the edges will either be banked with soil or have side stones secured in to place. See figure 6.4 below.

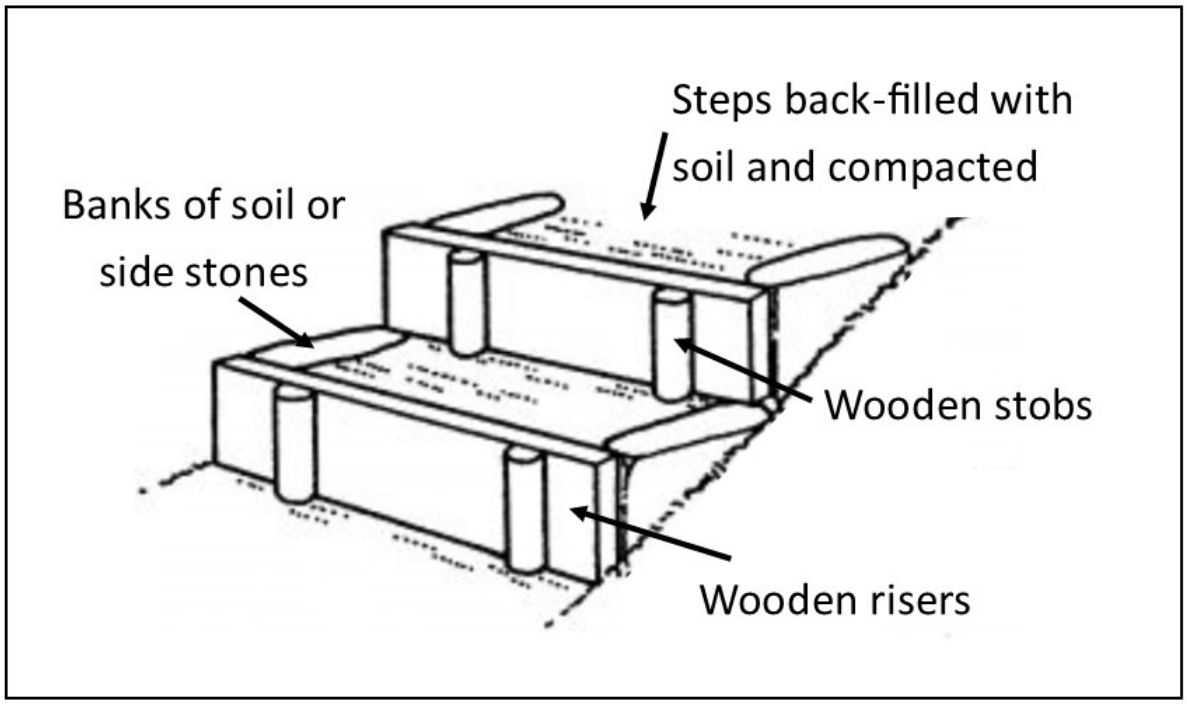


Figure 6.4: Proposed new steps design

Bridges:

- Construct 4 larger footbridges with handrails which will traverse the wider sections of the beck. See figure 6.5 below for the large bridge specifications.
- Construct 3 small wooden bridges without handrails to cross the narrow sections of the beck and small ditches. See figure 6.6 below for the small bridge design.
- The larger footbridges will be constructed by a contractor and also be used as an interpretative feature.
- The small bridges will be constructed by a variety of volunteer and community groups and the apprentices.

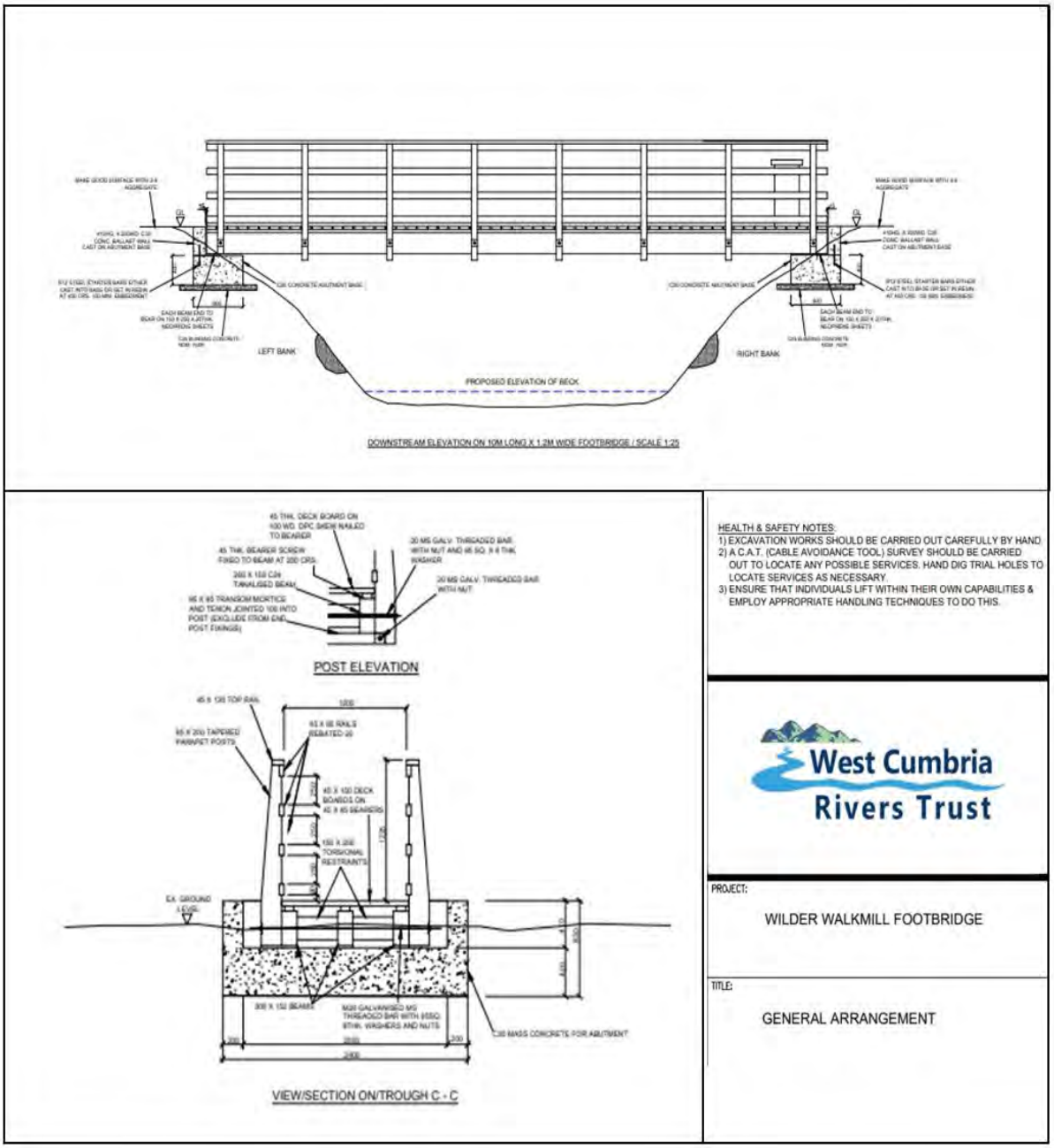


Figure 6.5: Proposed design for new footbridges

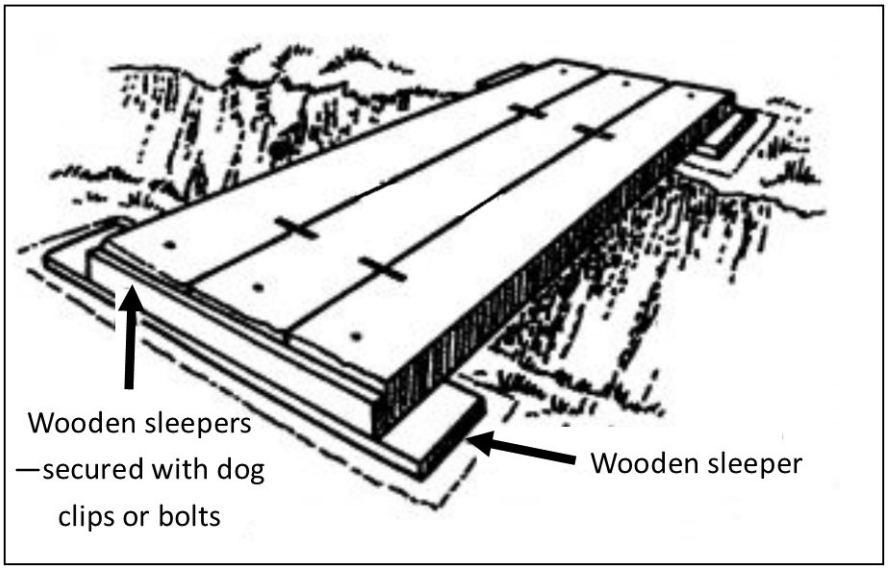


Figure 6.6: Design for proposed new small bridges

Signage and way markers:

- Install a variety of way markers, signage, benches and interpretation interventions for greater accessibility through the site and to engage visitors. For the designs and details for these features see the "Activity and Interpretation Plan – Wilder Walkmill".
- Construct two noticeboards on the north and south entrances to the site so that visitors can have information about the site and know about upcoming events and activities.
- Create circular walks with information about the times, distances and difficulty to provide detailed information about the variety of paths through the woodland and their accessibility. This should be undertaken after the footpath upgrades have been completed.
- Volunteers and apprentices will be trained in doing yearly footpath and furniture surveys to check their condition.

6.4.4 Proposed Environmental and Ecological Improvements and Management:

VI. Woodland

- Thin throughout the woodland to increase light levels, increase spacing and promote growth. Thin around all footpaths. Woodland edges to be sympathetically thinned to reduce chances of windthrow.
- Create rides and glades throughout the woodland. Cut scallops to benefit a range of wildlife such as butterflies and small mammals.
- Fell blocks of ash which have been significantly affected by ash dieback.
- Coppice appropriate areas to create small blocks of multi-age structure.
- Dead wood to be retained as standing deadwood, logs and brash piles.
- Maintain areas of open ground by removing scrub.

- Remove scrub that is encroaching on the bracken parcel.
- Remove the fence that it around the perimeter of the site where it is not acting as a field boundary with neighbouring land.
- Maintain existing hedgerows by cutting or laying to prevent succession.
- Plant new hedgerows around the perimeter to create a wildlife corridor around the site.
- Once an area has been thinned/felled allow the canopy to spread and the opportunity for natural regeneration to occur before planting a diverse range of native tree species in appropriate areas.
- Plant woodland wildflower species in appropriate areas of the woodland.
- Set up a tree and wildflower nursery in order to provide local native trees and wildflowers for the woodland. This will also provide further opportunity for community engagement. The nursery will require a polytunnel, shed, work benches, and planting paraphernalia such as pots and compost. The cost of establishing a tree and wildflower nursery is more economical than buying in wildflowers and trees. The nursery will be half the cost of buying in wildflowers and trees over the 4-year project.
- Use tree and shrub cover to maintain appropriate levels of light and shade along the beck.
- Remove any footpath obstructions, such as low hanging branches or intrusive scrub.
- The woodland management work will be undertaken by the apprentices, apprentice co-ordinator and volunteer groups.
- For further information about the woodland management proposals see the comprehensive Woodland Management Plan that was submitted to the Forestry Commission as part of the felling application in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodland Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan".

VII. Grassland

- Remove scrub from areas of open ground to prevent succession and to provide the appropriate conditions for the wildflowers.
- Plant a variety of native wildflowers in suitable areas around the site.
- Increase areas of wildflower meadow in the Secret Valley through preparing the ground by strimming and raking and introducing native seed.
- Regularly harvest native wildflower seeds to grow in the nursery and plant in the wildflower meadows once they are established.
- Manage 'Secret Valley' grassland as a hay meadow. This will entail cutting the grass at specified times, allowing the seed to drop and removing the arisings. See specific wildflower meadow management plan provided by Cumbria Wildlife Trust in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan". Figure 6.7 below shows how regularly the wildflower meadow should be cut.

- Establish devil's bit scabious in the marshy grassland areas for the marsh fritillary butterfly.
- Consider extending the area of heather by collecting seeds from the existing heather, growing in the nursery and planting in the valley by the car park when the plants are of a suitable size. This will enhance the habitat for the adders and lizards present on the site. Also explore the possibility of introducing juniper.

	Jan Feb Mar Apr	May Jun Jul	Aug	Sep Oct Nov Dec
Years 1-3	Cut and remove arisings, at least once in this period	Leave uncut	Cut, ted and remove arisings	Cut and remove arisings, at least once in this period

	May Jun Jul Aug	Sep Oct	Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr
Years 4+	Leave uncut	Cut, ted and remove arisings	Cut and remove arisings, at least once in this period, ideally late March/early April.

Figure 6.7: Timings for cutting wildflower meadows

VIII. Scrub

- Plant diverse native scrub species in suitable areas in the woodland and along woodland edges.
- Remove scrub from areas of open ground and grassland.
- Maintain and manage scrub along woodland edges.
- Maintain and manage scrub that is providing a wildlife corridor through the site.
- Remove and manage scrub and tall ruderal that are obstructing footpaths and are inhibiting accessibility.

IX. Hydrology

- Figure 6.8 below shows all of the proposed river restoration works at Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Undertake river restoration works including creating bifurcating channels, blocking ditches, removing the concrete lining, re-profiling the banks and creating a meandering channel. All of the design specifications and modelling for this work are available in the "Walkmill Restoration Design, Report and Drawings" by Dynamic Rivers in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan".

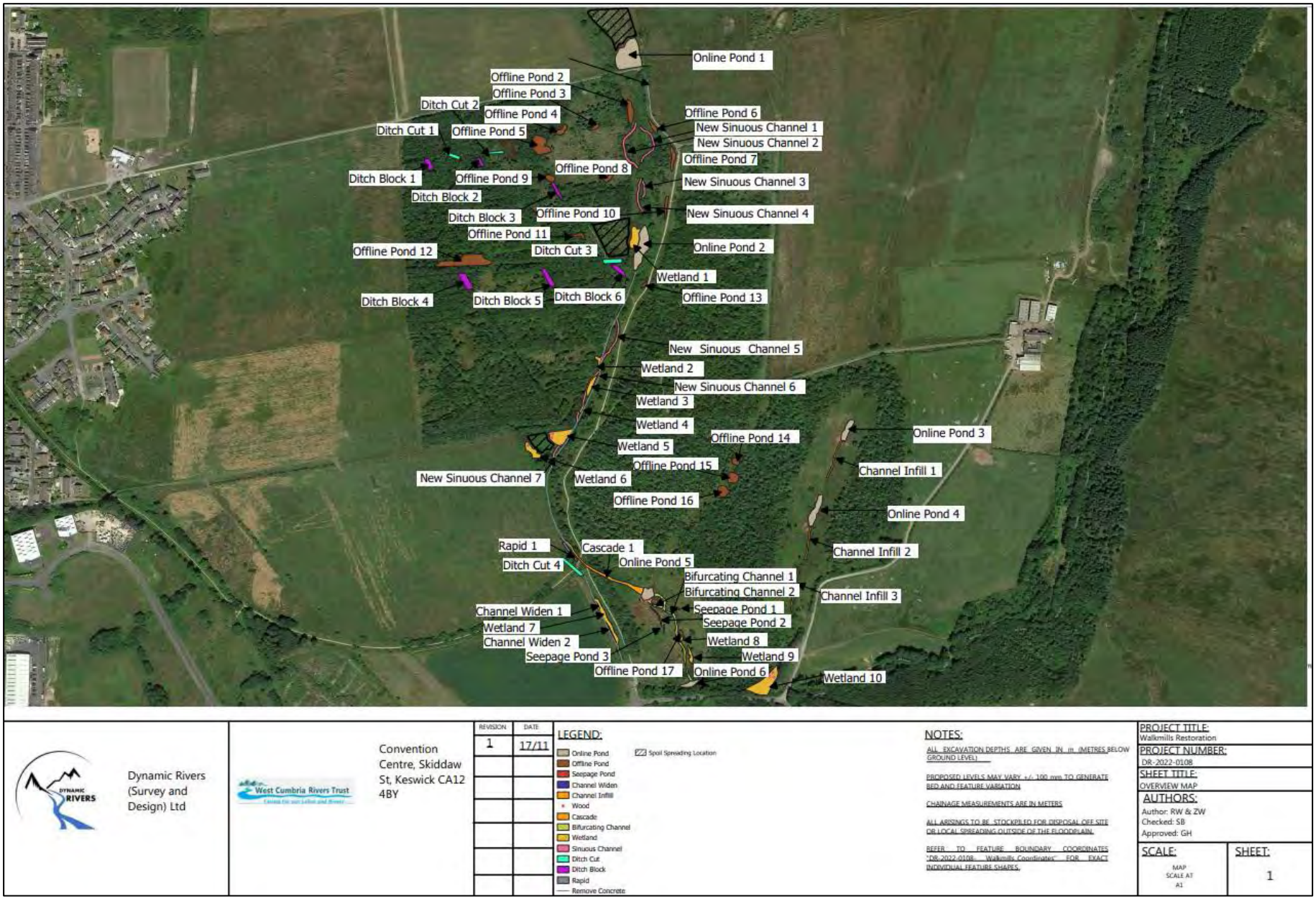


Figure 6.8: Proposed river restoration works at Walkmill Community Woodland

- Create a variety of ponds, scrapes and wetland to help increase biodiversity and to help reduce the risk of flooding. These designs are also in "Walkmill Restoration Design, Report and Drawings".
- Gravels, cobbles and small boulders to be added in to the main channel to improve the habitat in the beck.
- The river restoration works will be completed by a contractor with the assistance of a specialist geomorphologist under the management of the Project Manager.
- Add woody debris and leaky dams to the channels and ditches around the site. These can help to create wetland habitats and are a natural flood management measure which can help to 'slow the flow'. The construction of leaky dams can be done by secondary school children, volunteers and community groups and wood will be used from felled trees on site. Figure 6.9 below shows a cross-section of a leaky dam structure.
- Set up fixed point photography posts to record changes over time.

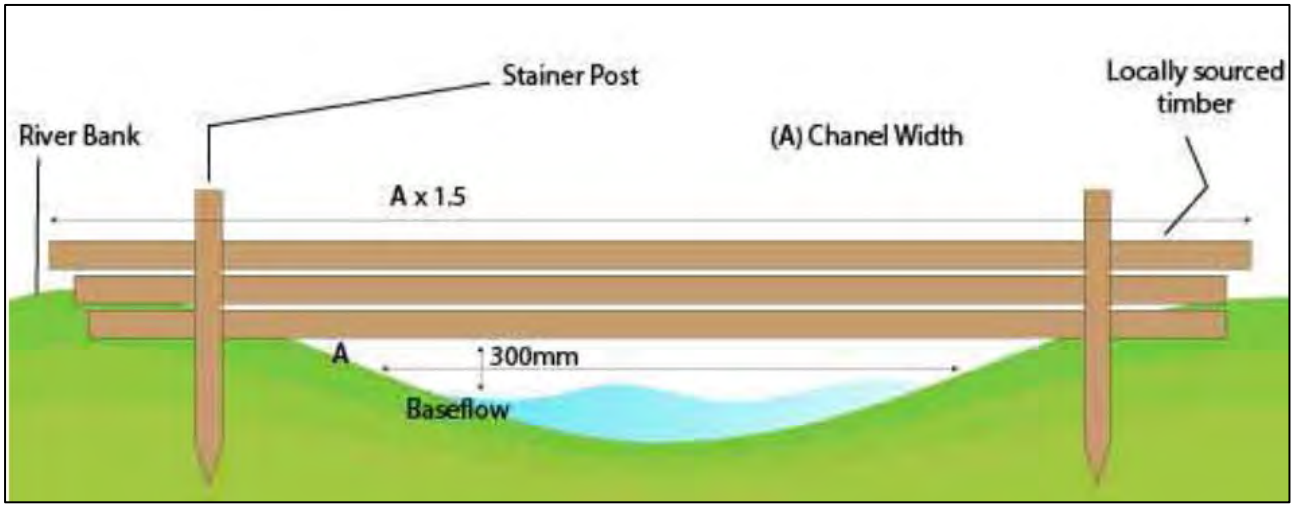


Figure 6.9: Leaky dam diagram

X. Invasive non-native species

- Install a natural looking wooden fence around the main pond to prevent the spread of the curly waterweed to other waterbodies. FSC posts will be purchased and the coppiced hazel will be used to make a 4' high hazel fence to prevent dogs or people from spreading the curly waterweed.
- Install jute matting along the bottom of the pond to eradicate curly waterweed. See Curly Waterweed Management Plan in "Supporting Documents for Walkmill Community Woodlands Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan" for further information about the installation of the jute matting.
- A trained person (apprentices once certificated) to treat the Japanese knotweed with herbicide.
- Work with the local Copeland Red Squirrel group to manage grey squirrels at the site.

- Monitor invasive non-native species.

XI. Wildlife

- Manage the mosaic of habitats in the appropriate, wildlife sensitive ways already specified in the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan.
- Build and install bird and bat boxes to encourage nesting and roosting whilst the woodland is still young. Build mini-habitats for insects and reptiles, such as hibernaculums.
- Consider creating additional habitats for other wildlife too, such as artificial holts to encourage otters and nesting sites for dippers
- Establish monitoring groups and citizen science to do surveys and monitor the wildlife that is present at the site. A Walkmill Community Woodland project has been set up on i-naturalist so that visitors can record their wildlife sightings. The monitoring data can also feed in to national monitoring schemes, such as the big butterfly count.

6.4.5 Proposed Mining Heritage Management:

- Clear excessive vegetation growth from the dam and weighbridge remains.
- Monitor the features for any signs of further damage or erosion.
- Run community consultations and co-creation events to generate ideas establish designs and install a mining memorial in memory of those who worked at Walkmill Colliery. See “Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill” for further information about this proposal.
- Use co-creation to design and install interpretation interventions around the site to inform visitors about the mining heritage at the site. See “Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill” for further information about this proposal and potential designs.

6.4.6 Proposed Community Engagement:

- Install a dipping platform on one of the new ponds close to a footpath for easy accessibility. This dipping platform will provide great opportunities for learning and engagement.
- Construct a living willow hide to allow people to engage with the natural heritage at Walkmill Community Woodland.
- Install interpretation around Walkmill Community Woodland so visitors can learn and understand more about the natural and industrial heritage. These interpretation interventions will also contain children’s play elements too to engage the younger generation.
- Organise co-creation sessions to design and install a nature trail in the Secret Valley. For further detailed information about all of the proposed interpretation features see “Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill”.

- Maintain the forest school area in a good condition so that there is a dedicated space in nature for learning and wellbeing.
- Construction of the dog agility area. This will be an informal area designed and installed by the apprentices using logs generated from the tree thinning at the site.
- For detailed information about all of the proposed learning, volunteering and community engagement activities see the "Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill".

6.5 The Future Management of Walkmill Community Woodlands

6.5.1 Future management of Walkmill Woodlands is divided in to two timeframes: during the project and after the project.

6.5.2 During the project the management will be shared between West Cumbria Rivers Trust, Moresby Parish Council and Walkmill Activity Group, but with West Cumbria Rivers Trust taking the lead on most of the activities and initial work. West Cumbria Rivers Trust will be responsible for responding to any issues with the assistance of Moresby Parish Council and Walkmill Activity Group. The project management structure (see figure 3.4 above) shows the proposed management organisation.

6.5.3 After the project the management of the site will be shared between Moresby Parish Council and Walkmill Activity Group. This group of willing volunteers will have become a constituted group and will have spent the years of the A Wilder Walkmill project training and learning about the required management and maintenance of Walkmill Community Woodland. If funding is secured there is the possibility of a part-time warden to also be employed at the site, which could hopefully employ one of the apprentices. Future issues such as litter, graffiti and unexpected repairs and maintenance will be responded to by Moresby Parish Council (and the part-time warden) who will have the assistance of Walkmill Activity Group (or 'Friends of' group) to help rectify the issues in a timely manner.

6.6 Environmental Management Aims

The Environmental Policies can be found in the table above in section '6.1 Management Policies and Actions' under "Climate Change and the Environment". They include using peat-free materials, reusing and recycling waste materials from the site, only trained persons to use pesticides in necessary situations and to find alternatives if possible, and to reduce pollution by purchasing battery-powered machinery where possible. These policies should be adopted for all management and maintenance works at Walkmill Community Woodland. They will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

6.7 Future Risks After Completion

6.7.1 Risk: continued maintenance and management

The main risk to the natural and industrial heritage at Walkmill Community woodland after the completion of the A Wilder Walkmill project is the lack of continued maintenance and management of the site and all of its features. If the site is not maintained appropriately then the natural and industrial heritage features will fall in to disrepair. For example, without

proper management the wildflower meadow will become overgrown with scrub and the remaining dam wall will succumb to erosion from vegetation growth.

6.7.2 Management of Risk

To manage this risk an important element of the A Wilder Walkmill project is to establish a constituted 'Friend of' group and to train these volunteers in project management and the maintenance works that are required on the site. Strong relationships will also be forged between the 'Friend of' group and Moresby Parish Council so that the volunteers feel supported in their work. WCRT will also work with MPC and the 'Friends of' group on the long-term maintenance plan and logbook so the group knows what will need doing, when it needs doing and they will have a record of when it had last been done. Potential funding for a part-time warden position at Walkmill Community Woodland will also be explored and applied for during the project. Other future funding streams for the site will also be explored.

6.7.3 Risk: Invasive Non-native species management

The lack of invasive non-native species management is another potential risk to the heritage after completion. If left unmanaged the invasive non-native species can dominate areas of the site, such as curly waterweed in the waterbodies and grey squirrels through the woodland.

6.7.4 Management of Risk

The aim during the project is to eradicate the curly waterweed that is currently present in the pond. The Japanese knotweed will be treated during the project and the landowner will be trained in how to manage it in the future. An important relationship will be formed with Copeland Red Squirrel group and they will continue with the management of the grey squirrels on the site. A long-term invasive non-native species plan will also be established during the project with MPC and the 'Friends of' group being actively involved in its formation and management training required.

6.7.5 Risk: erosion of footpaths

Erosion of footpaths is another potential risk to the heritage. Continued erosion of paths will cause the paths to eventually become impassable and mean the site is inaccessible. It can also mean that people will walk around the paths and damage the surrounding flora and flora.

6.7.6 Management of Risk

The paths will be upgraded to a high standard and drainage works will take place to prevent flooding and erosion due to water on the paths. The maintenance of the surfaced public footpaths will be the responsibility of Cumberland County Council. Relationships will be formed with the new Cumberland Council and MPC and the 'Friends of' group will know who to contact should these paths come in to disrepair.

6.7.7 Risk: plant or animal illnesses

The discovery of or mutation of a plant health disease that requires immediate action or the spread of an animal disease that prevents/restricts access to the country side e.g. Foot & Mouth, Bird Flu.

6.7.8 Management of Risk

All good practice relating to management of infected timber and plants will be followed and all volunteers, contractors and MPC will be trained in biosecurity measures. All governmental guidance will be followed to reduce/mitigate the spread of any plant or animal disease.

6.7.9 Risk: loss of volunteers after project ends

Volunteer numbers may reduce once the funding and project come to an end or the retained volunteers may lapse in their certified training refreshers.

6.7.10 Management of Risk

Continued development of the WAG into a sustainable volunteering group and 'Friends of' group. The links with the "Green Gyms" and local health care prescribers should be continued by MPC and WAG as this is a route to recruiting new volunteers. Also retain link with other volunteer recruitment opportunities, such as uniformed groups. MPC and WAG can encourage volunteer enthusiasm by organising celebratory and fun events to give back to the volunteers and make them feel appreciated. Relevant training courses and refresher training should be provided to volunteers in the future. Training will in volunteer management will be given to MPC and WAG during the project.

7. Action Plan

7.1 Training Requirements Identified

7.1.1 The Volunteers, MPC and WAG will need training in all aspects of the management and maintenance of the site. Most of this will be done in-house with WCRT as part of the project, this will include practical conservation tasks as well as health and safety, volunteer management and applying for future funding.

7.1.2 Some certified training will be required too for specified members of WAG and MPC, this will consist of chainsaw, brushcutter and tree safety surveys.

7.1.3 The apprentice training requirements can be found in the "Activity and Interpretation Plan – A Wilder Walkmill".

7.2 Proposed management and maintenance

Table 7.1: Proposed management and maintenance for the 4-year project (2023-2027)

Works Required - 4 Year Plan	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	By Who	Months											
Woodland (see woodland maps)							J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Thinning of woodland around the Secret Valley. Create rides where suitable	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Fell pockets of trees in woodland around the Secret Valley (0.5ha per year)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Thin trees and create scallops along footpaths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Fell pockets of trees in compartment 3 (0.25ha per year)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Fell pockets of trees in compartment 2 (0.25ha per year)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Coppice hazel in compartment 1f	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓

Works Required - 4 Year Plan	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	By Who	Months											
Coppice lime and hazel in compartment 1i	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Thin birch in compartment 1b and 1c. Create rides where suitable	✓	✓				Contractor	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Fell ash with ash dieback in compartments 1c, 1d and 1f	✓	✓				Contractor	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Thin trees in compartments 1d and 1e. Create rides where suitable		✓	✓			Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Thin trees in compartment 3. Create rides where suitable		✓	✓			Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Scrub removal in area of bracken (compartment 1a)			✓			Volunteers	✓	✓										
Thin compartment 1f. Create rides where suitable			✓	✓		Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Thin trees and create scallops in compartment 2			✓	✓		Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Remove scrub in compartment 1g				✓		Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Thin trees in compartment 1h. Create rides where suitable				✓	✓	Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Thin trees in compartment 1i. Create rides where suitable				✓	✓	Apprentices	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
Hedge laying	✓	✓				Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓										
Plant 2km of hedge plants around the boundary	✓	✓				Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓
Hedge maintenance			✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Tree and scrub planting in suitable areas of woodland			✓	✓	✓	Volunteers	✓	✓									✓	✓
Wildflower plug planting in suitable areas of woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Tree safety surveys - once yearly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Moresby Parish Council									✓			
Grassland																		
Establish tree and wildflower nursery	✓					Volunteers									✓	✓		
Construct compost bins		✓				Volunteers			✓									
Watering and wildflower and tree nursery maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wildflower and tree seed harvesting from site	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteer, Apprentices						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Sowing wildflower and tree seed in trays	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteer, Apprentices			✓	✓					✓	✓		

Works Required - 4 Year Plan	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	By Who	Months											
Planting wildflower plug plants in Secret Valley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteer, Apprentices			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Sowing wildflower seed in Secret Valley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteer, Apprentices								✓	✓	✓		
Secret Valley wildflower meadow maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteer, Apprentices			✓					✓		✓		
Scrub removal from grassland in Secret Valley		✓				Volunteers	✓	✓										
Scrub removal in grassland valley by car park				✓		Volunteers	✓	✓										
Hydrology (see river restoration maps)																		
All river restorations works		✓				Contractor, Apprentices				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Construction of small ponds		✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers												✓
Invasive Non-Native Species																		
Erect fencing around pond	✓					Volunteers, Apprentices								✓	✓			
Put down jute matting in pond	✓					Staff, Apprentices, Volunteers									✓			
Monitor and record non-native invasive species	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers								✓	✓			
Treat Japanese knotweed with pesticides	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WCRT INNS Officer									✓			
Wildlife																		
Build nest boxes and hibernaculums	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Make bird feeders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build willow hide			✓			Volunteers, Apprentices		✓	✓									
Monitor wildlife at site	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Mining Features																		
Clear vegetation from weighbridge and dam wall		✓		✓		Volunteers	✓											
Interpretation installation (see Interpretation Plan)			✓	✓		Volunteers, Apprentices, Contractor	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓
Footpaths (see footpaths map)																		
Path drainage maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers										✓	✓	

Works Required - 4 Year Plan	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	By Who	Months											
Secret Valley path maintenance - strimming and scrub clearance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices					✓	✓						
River walk path maintenance - strimming and scrub clearance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices					✓	✓						
Dismantle boardwalks	✓					Volunteers										✓		
Aggregate path construction for specified paths		✓				Contractor, Apprentices				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Construct steps in valley by car park		✓				Volunteers, Apprentices								✓	✓			
Construct path edging along secret valley paths			✓			Volunteers, Apprentices					✓	✓	✓					
Put in drainage along secret valley paths			✓			Volunteers, Apprentices					✓	✓	✓					
Put aggregate surfacing down along river walk path			✓			Volunteers				✓			✓					
Construct path edging along river walk path			✓			Volunteers, Apprentices									✓	✓		
Put in drainage along river walk path			✓			Volunteers, Apprentices									✓	✓		
Furniture																		
Remove fencing from around the periphery of the site	✓					Volunteers									✓	✓	✓	
Construction of two noticeboards (at north and south of site)	✓					Volunteers									✓			
Put up fixed point photography posts for monitoring purposes	✓					Volunteers										✓		
Fixed point photography	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteers, Apprentices				✓				✓				✓
Construct large kit bridges		✓				Contractor				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Construct small bridges		✓	✓			Volunteers, Apprentices								✓	✓	✓		
Construct dog agility area		✓				Apprentices										✓	✓	✓
Installation of interpretation signage & interpretation features (see Interpretation Plan)			✓	✓		Volunteers, Apprentices, Contractor	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓
Installation of waymarkers (see Interpretation Plan)				✓		Volunteers, Apprentices	✓	✓	✓									

Table 7.2: Proposed management and maintenance for 10 years following completion of project (2027-2037)

Maintenance Activity	Year											Who	Months											
	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	WAG/MPC	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Woodland																								
Tree safety survey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	MPC									✓			
Tree safety audit										✓			✓											
General woodland maintenance (chainsaw work)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Trained WAG member	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓
Coppicing - one hazel compartment a year	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG		✓										
Scrub Removal in Bracken area			✓				✓				✓	WAG	✓											
Scrub clearance in compartment 1g				✓				✓				WAG	✓											
Hedge maintenance (Trimmimg along pit road)		✓		✓		✓		✓				WAG		✓										
Grassland																								
Meadow management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG			✓							✓		
Scrub clearance secret valley		✓				✓				✓		WAG	✓											

Maintenance Activity	Year											Who	Months											
	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	WAG/MPC	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Scrub clearance other valley	✓				✓				✓			WAG	✓											
Compost Maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG			✓						✓			
Tree & wildlfower nursery maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG					✓							
Seed harvesting, sowing, planting & watering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hydrology																								
Clearing debris from ponds					✓					✓		WAG									✓			
Invasive Non-Native Species																								
Monitoring of INNS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG								✓				
Management of grey squirrels (as required)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Copeland Red Squirrel Group		✓										
Maintenance of fencing around pond (if required)				✓				✓				WAG				✓								
Wildlife																								
Wildlife monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Willow hide maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG											✓	
Mining Features																								
Removing vegetation off mining features		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		WAG				✓								
Condition Survey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG			✓									
Footpaths																								
Secret valley path strimming	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG						✓						

Maintenance Activity	Year											Who	Months											
	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	WAG/MPC	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Drainage maintenance along footpaths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG										✓		
Condition survey and scrub clearance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG			✓									
Furniture																								
Cleaning of interpretation signs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG			✓									
Condition surveys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG			✓									
Other																								
Training Refreshers (as required)	✓			✓			✓			✓		WAG	✓											
Updating risk assessments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	WAG	✓											

8. References

Documents:

Archaeological Services Durham University, *Walkmill Woods and Colliery, Moresby, Cumbria – Archaeological Assessment*, 2022

Historic Environment, papers, reports, photographs. Whitehaven Museum photographic Collection Dec 1978 x2; Cumbria County Council Slide Collection. Includes 5 large black and white photos of Walkmill Colliery before reclamation work. 1948-1982.

McPhee, R, n.d. *Aspects of Land Reclamation: Walkmill Pit to Community Woodland.* Unpublished typescript

Capita Symonds, *Site Management Plan: Walkmill Woodland*, revised 2008

The Evaluator, *Walkmill Data Driven Decisions*, September 2022

The Rivers Trust, *Cop 27 – Key Water Developments*, 2022

HM Government, *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment,* 2018 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

Natural England, *Natural England Action Plan 2022-2023*, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-action-plan-2022-to-2023/natural-england-action-plan-2022-to-2023--2#priority-actions-for-2022-to-2023

Cumbria County Council, *Statement of Biodiversity Priorities,* 2021, https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/538/18033/44455103252.pdf

Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Board, *Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Strategy,* https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/cumbria-local-nature-partnership-environment-strategy-20-01-2015.pdf

Copeland Borough Council, Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028, 2013, https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/copeland_local_plan_2013_2028.pdf

English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, 2008, p.28-32

Archer Ecology, *Preliminary Ecological Assessment,* 2022

The Conservation Volunteers, *The Handbooks,* 2022

Websites:

The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia, Volume 8, William Dwight Whitney, online edition http://triggs.djvu.org/century-dictionary.com/

The Free Dictionary, *Fulling*, https://www.thefreedictionary.com/fulling

Durham Mining Museum*, Walkmill Colliery*, http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/w047.htm

RailScot, *Cleator and Workington Junction Railway,* https://www.railscot.co.uk/companies/C/Cleator_and_Workington_Junction_Railway/

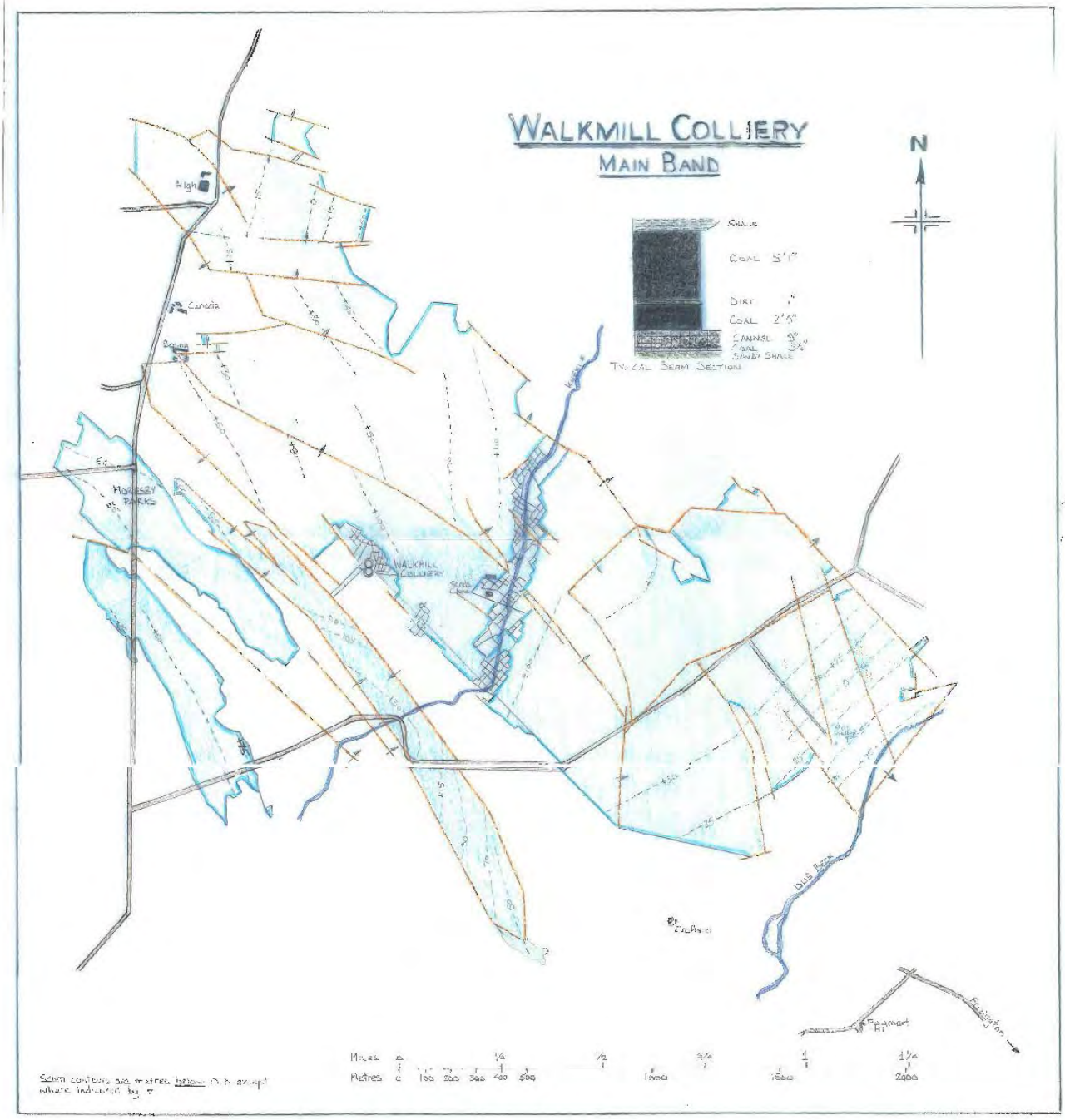
National Library of Scotland, Ordnance Survey Maps, https://maps.nls.uk

Cumbria County History Trust, *Moresby*, https://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/township/moresby

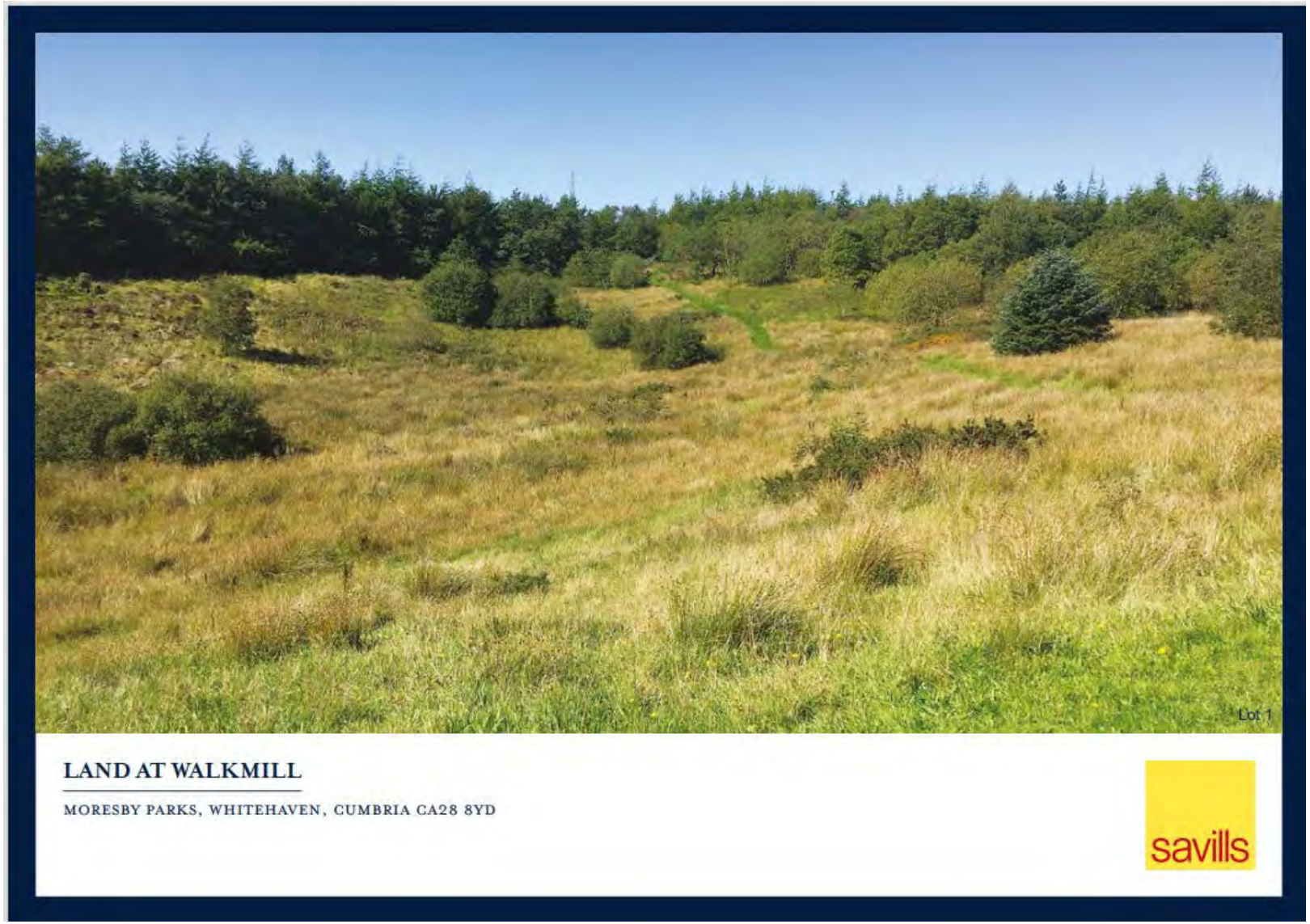
English indices of deprivation 2019: mapping resources https://www.gov.uk/guidance/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019-mapping-resources

"What are the effects of climate change on the historic environment", Historic England, https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/threats/heritage-climate-change-environment/what-effects/

Appendix 1: Walkmill Colliery Main Band Coal Seam Map



Appendix 2: Savills Particulars of Sale for Land at Walkmill



LAND AT WALKMILL

MORESBY PARKS, WHITEHAVEN, CUMBRIA CA28 8YD

38.76 hectares (95.78 acres) of restored land including mixed woodland, ponds and amenity areas, situated on the outskirts of Moresby Parks. Available in two lots or as a whole by Private Treaty.

Whitehaven 3 miles ◆ Workington 8 miles ◆ Cockermouth 13 miles
Carlisle 38 miles (All mileages are approximate)

Location and Situation
Walkmill Woodland provides an opportunity to purchase a substantial area of land with the potential for other uses including tree planting.

It was a former coal mining site which closed in the mid- 1960's, now redeveloped for recreation and amenity.

Walkmill is situated adjacent to the village of Moresby Parks and the Whitehaven Commercial Park, with an access and car park just off Walkmill Bridge and an access via an unadopted road, off Moresby Parks Road.

Land Description
The land is available in two lots or as a whole and extends to about 38.76 hectares (95.78 acres) in total or thereabouts. The terrain is undulating and bounded by mixed woodland and open areas of agricultural land. The majority of the land in Lot 1 is described as Disadvantaged and Lot 2 is Severely Disadvantaged in a Less Favoured Area. The former Colliery is undulating, ranging in height from 130 to 144 metres above sea level. The majority of the boundaries are post and wire fences.

The woodland areas comprise of planted Sitka Spruce and Scots Pine and mixed broadleaf species including Sycamore, Willow, Birch, Alder, Mountain Ash and Oak.

Lot 1 extends to 23.74 hectares (58.66 acres) or thereabouts and is shown shaded blue on the sale plan. The land includes mixed naturally regenerated woodland, rough grazing, pathway areas and a car park. The car park has a tarmac surface and has car parking for up to 8 vehicles.

Lot 2 extends to 15.02 hectares (37.11 acres) or thereabouts and is shown shaded green on the sale plan. The land comprises of mixed woodland, rough grazing, pond area, hard core pathways, a board walk and a separate access from Lot 1.

Rights of Way, Easements & Wayleaves
Lot 2 has an electricity pylon & overhead lines crossing the property.

The property is sold subject to and with the benefit of all existing wayleaves, easements and rights of way, public and private, whether specifically mentioned or not.

Prior to completion of sale Cumbria County Council will dedicate the property as 'Access Land' under S16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Services
There are no services.

Local Authority
Copeland Borough Council, The Market Hall, Market Place, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7JG Tel: 01946 598300

Subsidies & Grants
There are no Basic Payment Scheme Entitlements or agricultural environmental schemes included with the sale.

Sporting Rights
The sporting rights are included in the sale in so far as they are owned by the vendors.

Minerals
The mineral rights are excluded from the sale.

Tenure
Freehold with vacant possession.

Solicitors
Legal Services Department, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1RD. Tel: 07968 793677.
e: Jane.Stark@cumbria.gov.uk

Method of sale
The land is offered for sale by formal tender as a whole. Tender packs are available and can be obtained by contacting vendors' solicitor Jane Stark. The closing date for receipt of tenders is 12.00 noon on Thursday 14 March 2019. These are to be submitted using the official tender form and marked for the attention of the Jane Stark, at the address above. The Vendor reserves the right to withdraw or exclude any part of the property, to amalgamate or subdivide the lots, or to sell the property at any time prior to the closing date. The contract and conditions of sale are included in the tender pack.

The successful tender shall comprise two elements:

1. the price; and
2. a 20% revenue contribution

For example:
Successful bid £300,000.00
Revenue contribution £60,000.00
Price £240,000.00

The price and the revenue contribution will be invoiced separately. The transfer document will recite the amount of the successful bid as the consideration.

A guide to buying at formal tender. A prudent buyer will have;
- Inspected the property
- Confirmed the accuracy of the brochure
- Read the general and specific conditions of the sale and sale memorandum
- Checked the tender pack
- Checked any addendum
- Finance available for the purchase price
- Taken professional advice
- Taken account of Stamp Duty Land Tax

If your tender is successful there is a binding contract and 10% of the purchase price is taken as a deposit upon acceptance of the offer. This may be way of a bankers draft or cheque. The remainder of the purchase price must be paid on the completion date.

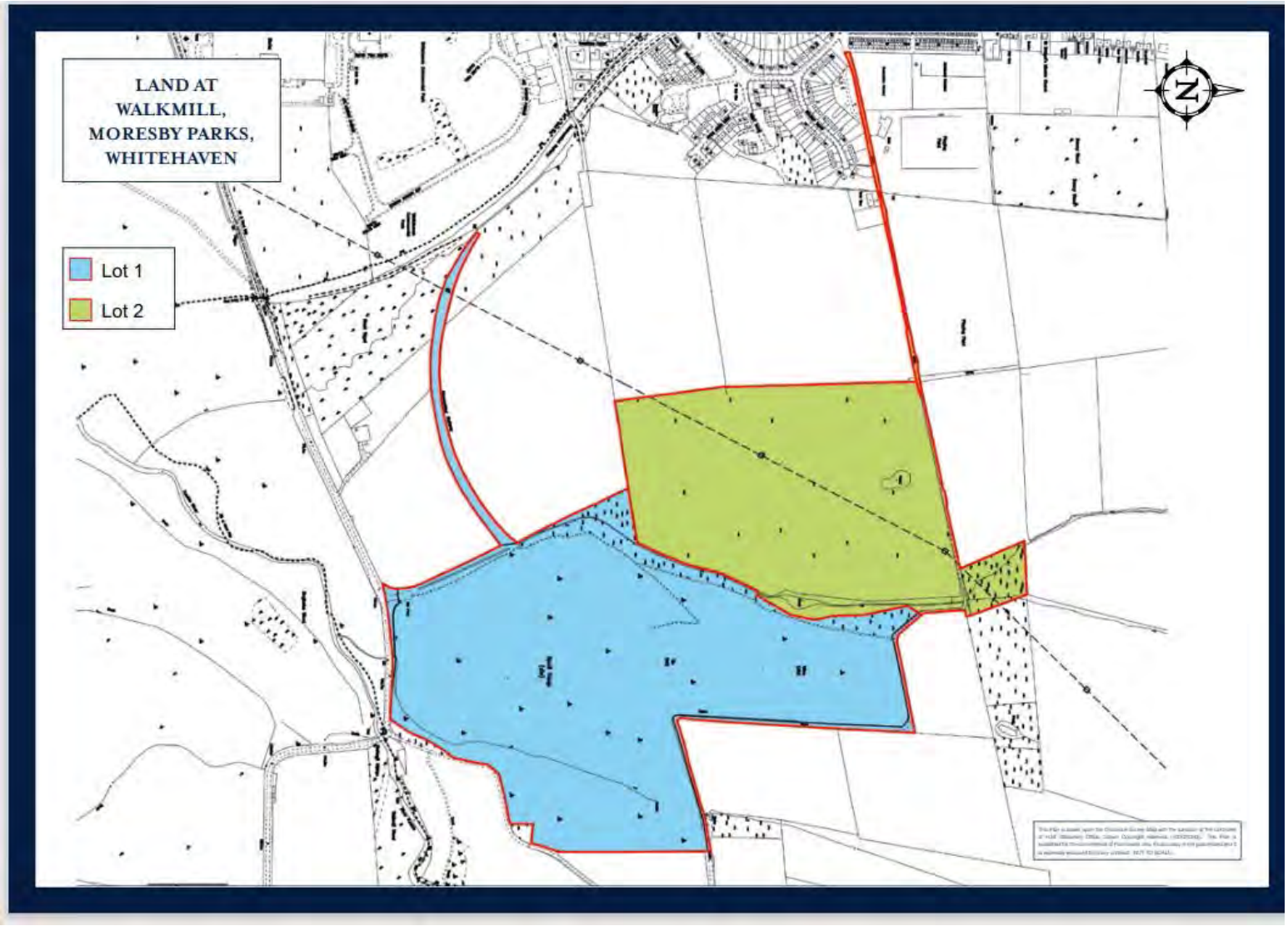
Directions (Nearest postcode CA28 8YD)
To access the land, if travelling on the A595 southbound, at the Lillyhall roundabout, take the second exit onto the B5306 south towards Distington and follow this road for 1.1 miles, then take a left turn sign posted Pica and follow this road for 1.3 miles until you reach Moresby Parks. To access Lot 2, take a left turn onto the road towards Moresby Rugby Union Club and follow this hard core road until you reach the land, which is to the south of the track.

Please be aware sole use of this postcode will not give accurate guidance to each lot, please use the sale plan included in the brochure to navigate.

Lot 1 can be accessed via driving along Moresby Parks Road and taking a left turning onto a minor road, signposted Frizington. Follow this road for 0.6 miles until you reach Walkmill Bridge and turn left into the car park. All of the land can be accessed on foot from this car park.

Viewing
The land may be inspected at all reasonable times. Persons inspecting the land should carry a copy of the sales particulars and care should be taken at all times.

Plans
All plans and road maps will appear in a frame with the OS copyright number and NOT TO SCALE unless alternative instructions are given in the plans section at the front of this document. Promap and other frames will be removed.


LAND AT
WALKMILL,
MORESBY PARKS,
WHITEHAVEN
Lot 1
Lot 2
N

Savills Carlisle
64 Warwick Road
Carlisle CA1 1DR
carlisle@savills.com
01228 527586

savills.co.uk

Appendix 3: Community Asset Transfer of Walkmill Community Woodland

9. Committee: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 17 December 2020

Title of Report: Community Asset Transfer of Walkmill Community **Woodland – Grant of a Long Term Lease**

Report by: **Angela Jones, Executive Director – Economy & Infrastructure**

Cabinet Member: **Cllr David E Southward MBE, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Property**

Cllr Deborah Earl, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Services

What is the Report About? (Executive Summary)

1. This report proposes a Community Asset Transfer as detailed below:

The grant of a long-term lease (99 years) on a full repairing and insuring basis (FRI) of the Walkmill Community Woodland to Moresby Parish Council (transfer at undervalue) for nil rent.

Recommendation of the Executive Director

2. Cabinet agree the grant of a long-term lease (99 years) on a FRI basis of Walkmill Community Woodland to Moresby Parish Council (Community Asset Transfer/Transfer at Undervalue) for nil rent.

Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder,

to finalise the detailed terms of and complete the long lease.

Community Asset Transfer Policy

3. Community Asset Transfer (CAT) means the management and/or ownership of public assets is transferred to community groups. For Cumbria County Council, this is one of the options available to support thriving communities who can benefit from assets owned by the authority that are now surplus to requirements. It can give local people and communities the opportunity to take greater control of assets in their local area.

4. Asset transfers will generally be by means of a long-term lease (between 25 and 99 years) or a freehold transfer, the terms of which will be agreed at the time of each individual transfer.

    a. In some cases the Council will consider a short term lease (five years) to an organisation with a view to moving to a position where a long term lease would be sustainable or a freehold transfer where community benefit organisations can demonstrate enhanced community benefits.

5. When considering short tenancies, this is an Executive Director decision to be taken in accordance with section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the power delegated in the Constitution.

6. The organisation taking ownership (leasehold or freehold) will be responsible for all issues associated with the use and operation of the property. For example:

    - Upkeep, repair and maintenance of the asset;
    - All running costs, including insurance;
    - Compliance with statutory and legislative requirements, including inspections and health and safety requirements and the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

7. In all cases involving transfer of ownership/occupation, appropriate mechanisms will be put in place to protect the financial and legal position of the Council, such as restrictions on use, clawback provisions and break clauses. For example, in the case of a long term lease we will write into such leases an appropriate provision (e.g. forfeiture or break clause) under which the asset would revert back to the Council, such as:

    - In the case of bankruptcy/insolvency;
    - In the case of corruption;
    - In case of non-payment of rent (if applicable);
    - In the case of non-performance of other terms such as breach of

repairing obligations and unauthorised change of use (if applicable);
- If the transfer agreement is breached;
- If the organisation wishes to develop and move into bigger premises.

8. With freehold transfer of ownership the Council may also consider (in addition to the restrictions on use and clawback provisions referred to above), imposing a covenant on the asset limiting whether, when, how and to whom the asset may be sold on.

9. Alternatively in appropriate circumstances, the Council may agree to a business plan that sets out that the community group will sell the asset at some point and reinvest the proceeds in a more suitable asset. The position of the Council on such a disposal would be ensuring the benefits of the CAT would be improved by the proposed sale or transfer.

10. Qualifying Organisation/Group

A key consideration will be the sustainability of the organisation and its capacity to manage and develop the asset. The organisation shall:

- Be an appropriately constituted voluntary or community sector organisation which is a legal entity, or a legally constituted through a consortia agreement; (e.g. a registered charity, community interest company or charitable incorporated organisation, a not for profit company);
- Have a stable financial position and track record with a demonstrable financial plan. (The Council will wish to review copies of audited accounts and forward projections where appropriate);
- Exist for community/social/environmental/economic benefit;
- Be non-profit distributing – i.e. it must reinvest any surpluses to further its social aims/community benefits;
- Have stated community benefit objectives;
- Demonstrate strong governance by operating through open and accountable co-operative processes, with strong monitoring evaluation, performance and financial management systems; or where this is a newly constituted organisation demonstrating a robust governance framework;
- Demonstrate it has the skills and capacity within, or available to, its managing body to effectively deliver services and manage the asset;

- Have a specific plan on health and safety issues and compliance with legislation and any statutory requirements arising from transfer of the asset;

- Have a clear purpose and understanding of the activities it wishes to deliver and demonstrate how the asset transfer will enable and support these activities.

Background to the Proposals

Walkmill Community Woodland, Moresby. (see Appendix 1)

11. The Walkmill Community Woodland is a popular recreational area created by Cumbria County Council on a 36ha former colliery site close to Moresby Parks.

12. The woodlands are not used operationally by the County Council and were identified as a surplus property asset in 2019. Moresby residents and visitors appreciate the paths and open spaces and are keen for the site to remain accessible.

13. In conjunction with the West Cumbria Rivers Trust and the Walkmill Community Woodland Activity Group, Moresby Parish Council requested a Community Asset Transfer from the County Council. The Parish Council will hold the lease on Full Repairing and Insuring terms.

14. The Parish Council working with a number of interested groups is looking to maintain and develop the natural environment and access to the woods whilst promoting community health and wellbeing. Activities such as green gyms and volunteering will support both of these objectives whilst minimising the costs of improvements to the area. Community singing, nature walks and improvements to access for people with limited mobility will diversify participation.

15.

16. The Parish Council and interested groups will audit the existing wildlife and look for opportunities to encourage more diversity. They will also look for opportunities to develop natural flood management measures to minimise downstream flooding and offer improved wetland environments for wildlife.

17. The Parish Council and interested groups are looking for sustainability by encouraging participation and volunteering from as broad a section of the community as possible. Funding for materials for routine maintenance will come from the Parish Council. Funding for improvements and additional projects will come from grant applications.

18. Having a long leasehold of this site will enable the Parish Council to satisfy the

requirements of funding partners such as the National Lottery and show that expenditure will be secure and sustainable.

19. Prior to transfer, the County Council has dedicated the site as Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and undertaken some work to improve the existing path network.

20. In accordance with the Council's Disposal Policy (incorporating Community Asset Transfers) the Local Committee for Copeland confirmed their support for the proposed transfer.

Options Considered and Risks Identified Option (a)

- Cabinet to agree the leasehold disposal as proposed for nil consideration.

Option (b)

- Cabinet does not agree the proposed CAT resulting in the following:

Walkmill Community Woodland would be retained with ongoing revenue and capital liabilities or sold as surplus property. The opportunity to provide a local partnership with the ability to run and manage their own community facility on their doorstep will be lost.

Risks – Option (a)

No risk identified and all maintenance liabilities transferred to the acquiring organisation/group.

Option (b)

Retention of this asset will result in ongoing revenue and capital (backlog maintenance) liabilities associated with operating and maintaining the land.

Reasons for the recommendation/Key benefits

21. This proposal has demonstrated how enthusiastic local groups can work with an established lower tier of local government to support community and voluntary activities in an area. All partners have a common aim to promote further use of this well-loved local asset.

22. The transfer will ensure that the existing extensive community use of this asset will continue whilst giving opportunity to expand the range of community uses that the site can offer.

23. The continued good health and wellbeing of the local population will be a key feature of Council policies well into the future. This asset will provide a secure space for good health and wellbeing to be promoted by the partners to this asset

Financial – What Resources will be needed and how will it be funded?

24. Walkmill Community Woodlands are currently owned by the Council with a potential asset value of £0.090m. Should Cabinet agree to the proposed long-term lease (99 years) rather than disposal on the open market, then the potential capital receipt of £0.090m would be foregone by the Council.

25. Should Cabinet agree to the transfer, as a result of the Full Repairing and Insuring lease at £nil consideration, the Council would not receive any lease income but could save approximately £0.005m per annum gross in revenue running costs. From time to time, additional costs associated with owning land such as fencing and drainage improvements would also be avoided.

26. Should Cabinet agree to the recommendations contained within this report, it is anticipated that this will be undertaken using existing resources and revenue budgets.

Legal Aspects – What needs to be considered?

27. Where the Council disposes of its assets, it is under a statutory duty pursuant to section 123 Local Government Act 1972 to do so at the best consideration (i.e. price) reasonably obtainable, unless a consent to a disposal at an undervalue has been obtained from the Secretary of State.

28. The Secretary of State has issued a general consent allowing local authorities to dispose of land at an undervalue where they consider that to do so will help to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the area, provided the difference between the value of the land interest to be disposed of and the consideration being accepted by the authority (ie the undervalue) is £2,000,000 (two million pounds) or less and that the valuation process set out in the general consent has been complied with.

29. Cabinet may, therefore, rely on this general consent in relation to the disposal of its land if it considers that the wellbeing benefits outlined in the report justify the proposed disposal of the property. The Council's Disposal Policy states that any disposal at undervalue must be approved by Cabinet.

Health and Safety Aspects – What needs to be considered?

30. The County Council has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, adequate health and safety management arrangements are in place for all County Council related services or assets.

31. This report includes consideration of health and safety responsibilities relating to a proposed community asset transfer. Paragraphs 5 and 9 of the report includes reference that Moresby Parish Council will be responsible (via a long term lease arrangement) for compliance with statutory and legislative requirements, including inspections and health and safety requirements and responsibilities.

Council Plan Priority – How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's stated objectives?

32. To be a Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources.

What is the Impact of the Decision on Health Inequalities and Equality and Diversity Issues?

None identified.

Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix 1 – Site Plans: Walkmill Community Woodlands.

Key Facts

Electoral Division(s): Howgate

Executive Decision	Key Decision Included in Forward Plan	Exempt from call-in	Exemption agreed by scrutiny chair	Considered by scrutiny, if so detail below	Environmental or sustainability assessment undertaken?	Equality impact assessment undertaken?
Y	**Y**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**

Approved by Cabinet Member/s on 03 December 2020

Previous relevant Council or Executive decisions

N/A

Consideration by Overview & Scrutiny

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

Report Author

Allan Harty MRICS - Acting Assistant Director (Economy and Environment) allan.harty@cumbria.gov.uk / Mob: 077 9582 7042

Appendix 4: Cop27 Key Water Development by The Rivers Trust

10. COP27 – Key Water

Developments Context:

COP27 aimed to bring water discussions in from the margins to the centre of climate deliberations. COP27 put water firmly at the heart of its programme through an official Water Day on 14th November 2022, running the first high-level roundtable on water security at a COP, and hosting a bustling Water Pavilion. The Water Pavilion hosted multiple days of discussion around varied themes including biodiversity, nature-based solutions, agriculture and financing, with recordings made available online. This increased focus culminated in multiple water-related provisions written into COP27's cover text, the Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan. With continued pressure and work by leaders, civil society and communities, water will be further integrated into climate discussions, particularly looking ahead to UN 2023 Water Conference.

11. Key developments from COP27:

- Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan highlights the importance of ensuring ecosystem integrity in climate action and is the first COP cover text that mentions and encourages Parties to consider nature-based solutions.
- Water Pavilion discussions stressed the critical importance that water be better integrated into climate action, as water is both a victim and vector of climate change's adverse impacts, while also offering innumerable tools to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda identifies "Water & Nature" as one of five impact systems around which climate adaptation goals can be planned and implemented; Agenda proposes first global targets on water systems leakage and wastewater treatment efficiency.
- All plans, agendas and discussions highlighted the need for coordinated, inclusive, and cross- sectoral action, including knowledge-sharing; this is particularly pertinent to water as all sectors, communities & ecosystems rely on water.

12. In the Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan:

- Notes concern about the gap in current levels of climate change adaptation (including water- based adaptations); this concern is actioned in the Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda.
- Specifically recognises the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring water systems and water-related ecosystems, as a means of achieving the 1.5C limit and climate adaptation while delivering co-benefits such as food security and biodiversity.
- Is first COP cover text to encourage Parties to consider nature-based

solutions or ecosystem- based approaches as part of climate action.

- Reiterates call for universal early warning systems to address climate change impacts such as increased extreme weather events and calls for Parties to support Early Warnings for All initiative.

13. In other launched initiatives/calls-to-action:

- Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda
  - Sets out 30 Adaptation Outcomes that would improve resiliency for 4 billion people in the most climate-vulnerable areas.
  - Outcomes fall under 5 impact systems including Food & Agriculture, Water & Nature, Coastal & Oceans, Human Settlements, and Infrastructure.
  - Identifies major climate threats that reflect the critical role of water in the climate crisis, namely ocean warming & acidification, coastal flooding, river flooding, extreme weather, droughts, extreme heats and soil erosion.
  - Outcomes for Water & Nature Systems include protecting large amounts of land and inland waters thereby unlocking nature-based solutions for communities, driving financial sector to act on deforestation and invest in nature-based solutions, reducing leakage in water systems and making wastewater systems more sustainable and circular.
  - Water-related outcomes across other impact systems include sustainable irrigation and nature-based solutions for urban areas.
- Action on Water Adaptation and Resilience
  - Launched by Egypt's COP27 Presidency and World Meteorological Organisation.
  - Aims to decrease water loss and improve supply, support policies for cooperative water-related adaptation, and promote links between water and climate action.
  - Highlights measures including protecting freshwater ecosystems, cooperative river basic scale adaptation, sustainable wastewater management and water-wise energy.
- Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture publication
  - Recognises the particular vulnerabilities of food production to climate change but also the key role farmers can play as land stewards and agents of change.
  - Notes the importance of sustainable land and water management in agriculture to deliver multiple benefits including climate action, water quality, biodiversity and food security.
  - Highlights the importance of collaborative action and sets up an online portal to enable stakeholders to share information and case studies.
  - *Criticism of these results that focus entirely on food production rather than food systems as a whole including production, distribution, waste, etc.*
- Report: "The essential drop to reach Net-Zero: Unpacking Freshwater's Role in Climate Change Mitigation"

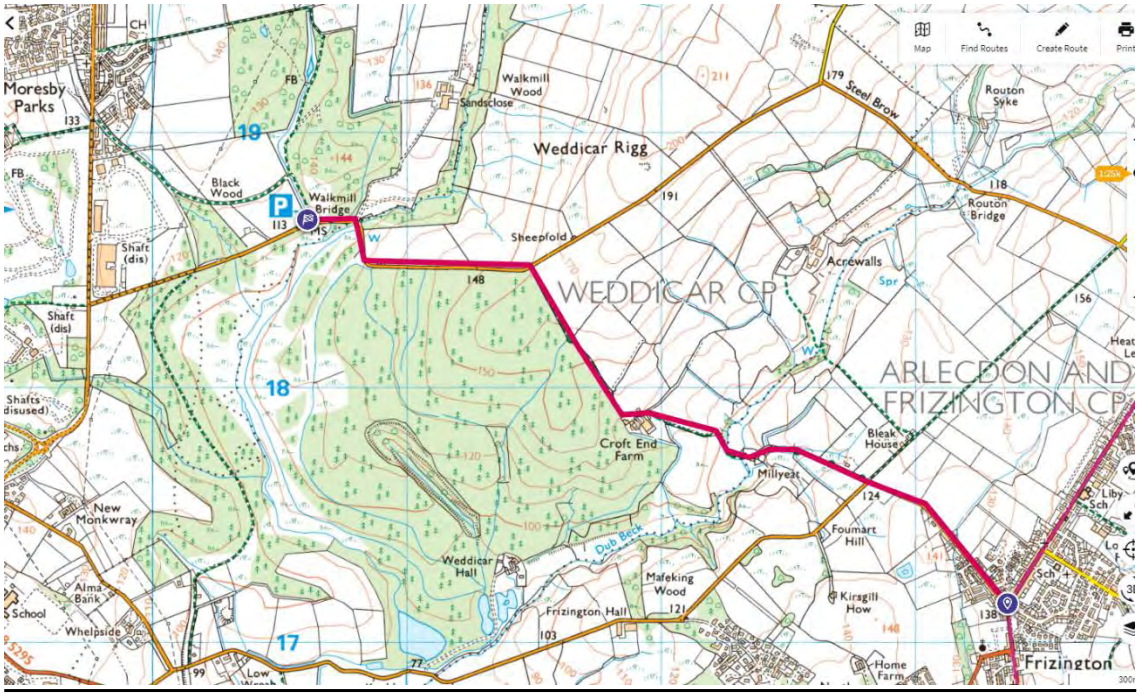
- Climate mitigation measures depend and impact on freshwater systems so water resources must be properly considered e.g., water-wise energy transitions.
- Water and sanitation management can play key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions e.g., through circular systems and low-carbon solutions.
- Prioritise nature-based solutions that safeguard freshwater resources/ecosystems to maximise climate change mitigation and other benefits to people and environment.
- Develop coordinated and strengthened governance around freshwater considerations to put freshwater at the centre of climate mitigation plans.

14. Key takeaways from Water Pavilion:

- Climate change mitigation cannot succeed without water.
- Water is the connector between sectors; all sectors rely on water (energy, food, sanitation) and therefore have a part to play to integrate water in climate action.
- There is an untapped potential for water and sanitation services to contribute to climate change mitigation through reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.
- The solutions to climate and water-specific issues are not necessarily large-scale and technology-based, but in fact can, and should be, low-cost, green and locally-led.
- Nature-based solutions are a "whole-of-society" approach enabling inclusive action; financing systems must be updated to enable investment in NbS for climate adaptation.

Appendix 5: Getting to Walkmill Community Woodland – Walking and Cycling Routes

Blue Route – From Frizington by bike

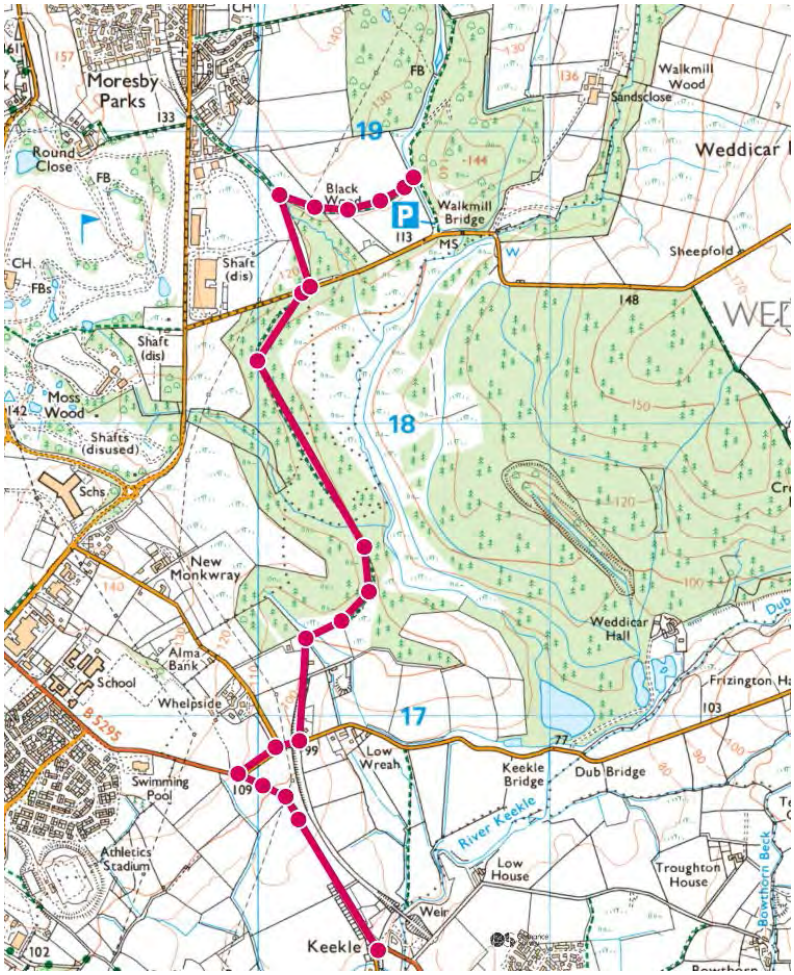


1	From the mini roundabout by former Griffin Pub, head down Mill Street, go straight on at the chicane, past a row of terraced houses on the left.	0.3km
2	At sharp left corner, keep straight on downhill to join the public bridleway.	0.6km
3	At the bottom of the hill cross Dub Beck at Mill Yeat.	1km
4	Follow the gravel track uphill to Croft End Farm. Go through a steel gate and follow the track to the left so that the farm is on the left and the bungalow on the right.	1.4km
5	The track continues to climb until the tarmac road (Moresby to Rowrah & Frizington) is reached.	2km
6	Turn left to go downhill to Walkmill Bridge.	2.9km
7	Continue on the road uphill to Walkmill car park.	3km

NB: The route involves an ascent of approximately 70m.

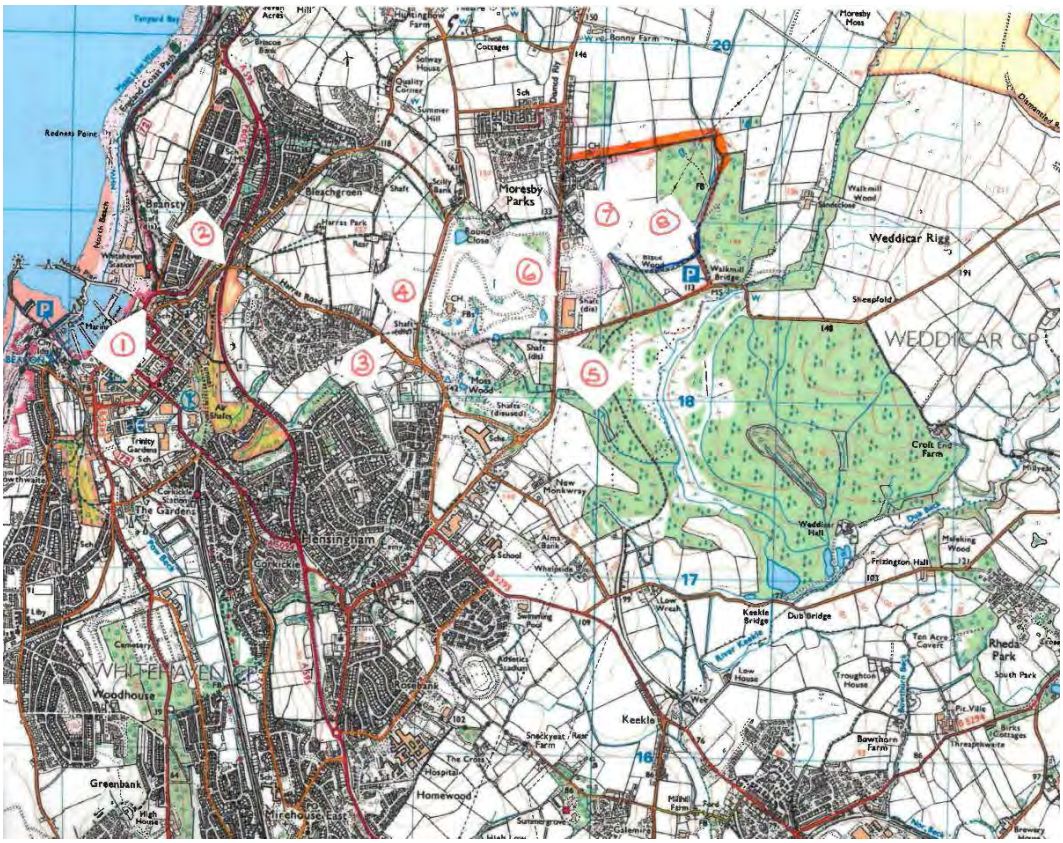
From Frizington on foot is the same as the route for bikes.

Keekle to Walkmill Wood on Foot



1	From the road junction where the road from Moor Row joins the road from Cleator Moor, head towards Whitehaven on the right hand side of the road, ie, next to the play park and opposite the community centre. Proceed past the row of terraced houses and the Keekle Inn	0.2km
2	Proceed along the pavement to the road junction to Frizington, and turn right to follow this road which has no pavement or path.	0.7km
3	Immediately after the left road junction, continue over the railway bridge, then turn left to follow the signposted footpath. After 200m on the left, turn through a steel gate. This is just before a bungalow where the main track follows a curve to the right and past the bungalow. Turn right and pass through a second steel gate. Follow the disused railway route alongside the bungalow and garden.	0.95km
4	After 200m pass through a third steel gate, and follow the gravel path crossing Priest Gill and a view of the River Keekle through a gap in the trees	1.15km
5	At the end of the gravel path, cross the road (Moresby to Frizington) to enter Walkmill Wood on a permissive path. Follow the permissive path (which can be slippery and muddy) to join a good gravel path at a sturdy steel bridge	2.5km 3km
6	At this point , you can access Walkmill Woods from two different directions. Go left to Moresby Parks village, turn right at the post office and follow the track to Moresby Parks rugby club where a track leads into the north side of Walkmill Woods. Or, turn right, and follow the road down for800m until you reach Walkmill Woods car park on the left.	

From Whitehaven to Walkmill Woods on foot

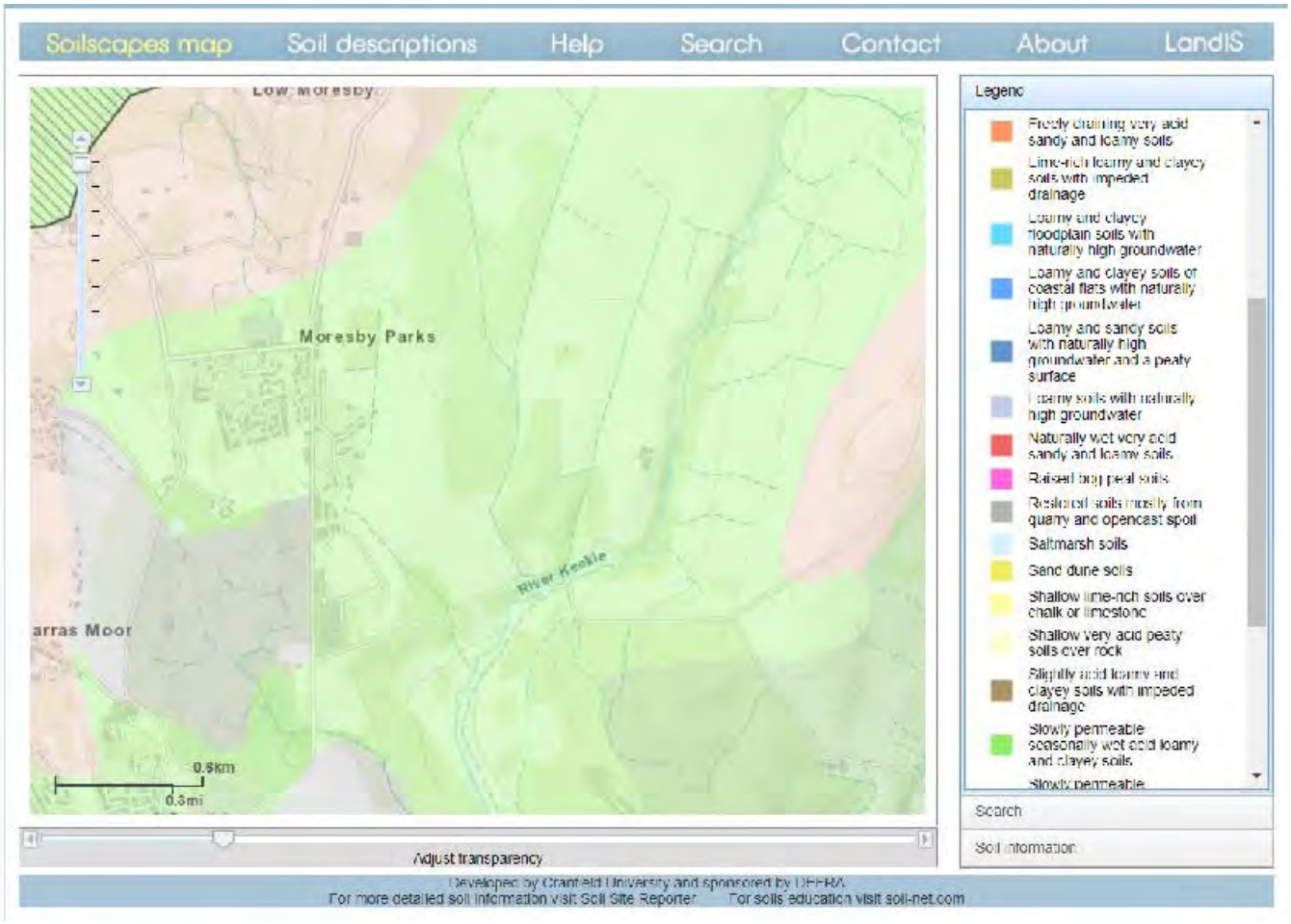


From Whitehaven to Walkmill Woods on foot

1	From the railway station or Tesco, or Whitehaven harbour, go towards Wetherspoons Pub. Facing the pub, skirt right and follow the pavement uphill so you are now above the pub to your left. This is Wellington Road which leads to Hillton Terrace and then Solway View.	
2	Turn right where the road goes under the loop road. Take care here as the bridge is narrow and has no pavement	0.6km
3	Follow Harras Road uphill for almost 1km past houses on both sides of the road, to a small iron gate in a wall bordering a field (soon to be a housing estate).	1.6km
4	Take the faint footpath across the field to a gate in the fence, and cross the road at a pedestrian crossing to enter the golf course via a wooden gate set into the wall. This public footpath crosses the golf course…take the middle indistinct path aiming for a small clump of trees 100m away. Continue on this path alongside the driving range and then past a circular pond.	
5	The path emerges on the Hensingham to Moresby Parks road. Turn left and follow the road towards Moresby Parks	2.6km
6	Cross the road and enter the Industrial Estate, passing the council depot on your right. Follow the road as it curves left	2.9km
7	Look out for a 'No Entry' sign on a vacant industrial estate plot and turn right off the road taking a muddy path	3.5km
8	Pass through an engineered gap in the fence to enter Walkmill Woods	3.6km

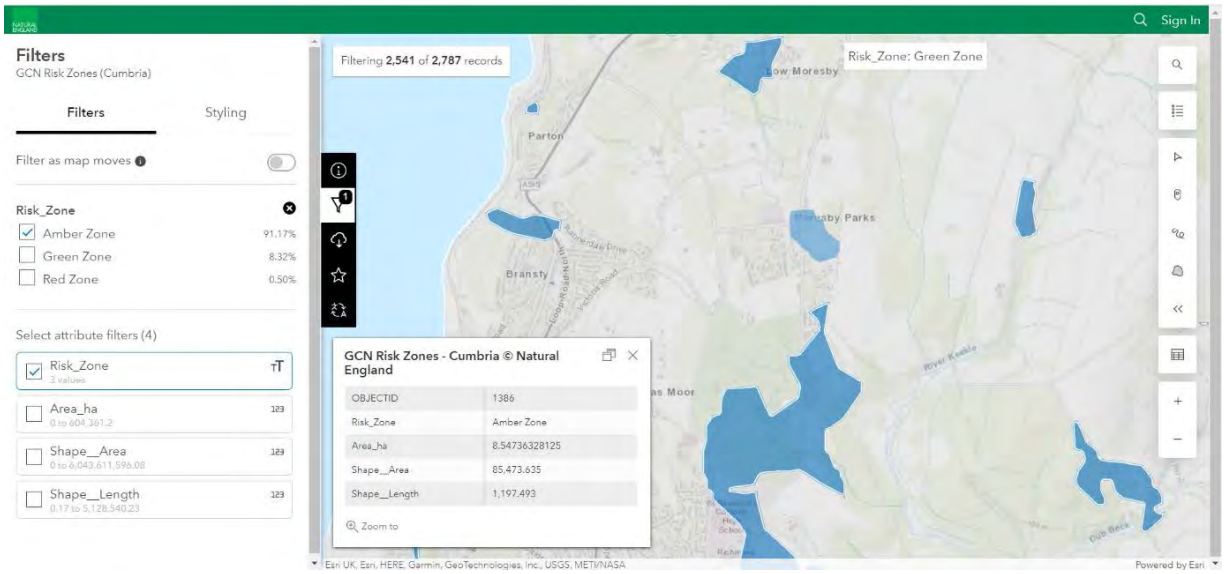
NB: This route involves an ascent of approximately 140m

Appendix 6: Soilscapes Map



Appendix 7: Natural England Great Crested Newt map

Great Crested Newt Zones. Moresby Parks listed as amber



Red zones contain key populations of GCN, which are important on a regional, national or international scale and include designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest for GCN (including all units of Duddon Estuary SSSI and unit 018 of South Walney and Piel Channel Flats SSSI, plus the 500m buffer).. Amber zones contain main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal. Green zones contain sparsely distributed GCN and are less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species. White zones contain no GCN. However, as most of England forms the natural range of GCN, white zones are rare and will only be used when it is certain that there are no GCN.