

Three Counties: Lune Valley



Introduction

The Lune Valley has some of the North West's finest countryside, rich in historical and cultural heritage, supporting diverse wildlife and habitats, and home to vibrant communities.

A number of local organisations are working together to develop a major scheme to conserve and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the central Lune Valley area, which crosses the boundaries of Cumbria, Lancashire and North Yorkshire. Its range of natural, built and cultural heritage features gives it a unique character and sense of place.

The Three Counties: Lune Valley scheme is expected to deliver a wide range of projects and activities that makes it an even better place for people, heritage and nature and which offers numerous opportunities for people to get involved or find out more about the area. The opportunities and benefits of the area's heritage, and the threats to that heritage, undoubtedly provide a strong basis for a landscape-scale scheme.

The scheme is being developed by a steering group comprising representatives of Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Forest of Bowland AONB, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Sustrans, Lune Rivers Trust, county Wildlife Trusts, and local authorities. The partners have developed and successfully run similar schemes in other areas of the National Park and AONB.

The views of local residents, workers and visitors are fundamental to how the scheme develops, what it delivers, and in defining the geographical area that should be included. Together, we are at the start of the process to develop a strong programme that's been well thought out, that has public support, and which makes best use of public and private funding. Even at this early stage it is clear that there is a strong desire and willingness to work in partnership to achieve shared and complementary objectives.

The complexity of the scheme and the level of fundraising required mean that it will take a few years to fully develop, so it is expected to start in spring 2025 and run for 3-5 years.

How will it be funded?

Funding will come from the partner organisations (in particular Sustrans, to develop new traffic-free, multi-user paths along much of the Lune Valley) but it is expected that £3-4million will come from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities to the national, regional and local heritage of the UK.

The scheme must help the Heritage Fund to achieve its nine outcomes:

- A wider range of people will be involved in heritage
- The funded organisation will be more resilient
- People will have greater wellbeing
- People will have developed skills
- The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit
- The local economy will be boosted
- Heritage will be in better condition
- Heritage will be identified and better explained
- People will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions

What should an area-based scheme include?

An area-based scheme is made up of a balanced portfolio of integrated projects, including:

Physical works to repair and enhance the historic area, such as:

- conserving, restoring or reinstating historical structures, architectural detail and heritage features
- restoring or enhancing wildlife habitats
- re-introducing traditional land management techniques
- conserving and interpreting archaeology and geology

Activities to help people engage with the heritage, such as:

- providing training in traditional nature or building conservation skills for contractors, trainees and the public
- bringing the community together to explore their heritage through open days, exhibitions and events
- improving access for all, including people with disabilities
- recording, assessing and investigating what gives the area its unique character

Possible projects for a Three Counties: Lune Valley scheme

The following have been proposed to date:

Opportunities for people

- Schools
- Apprenticeships and training courses
- Public events
- Outreach work with under-represented/disadvantaged communities
- Community grants

Opportunities for landscape enhancement and nature conservation

- Reuniting the river with its floodplain
- Pearl Mussel conservation
- Removing obstructions (weirs)
- Peatland restoration
- Pollinator corridors
- New woodlands
- Ancient semi-natural woodland managed by Lancashire Wildlife Trust (Aughton Wood)
- Burton and Lawsons Woods
- Natural Flood Management
- Undergrounding electricity cables (Casterton to Bull Pot)

Opportunities for access and recreation

- Traffic-free route between Bull Beck (near Caton) and Kirkby Lonsdale, and from there to Sedbergh and Ingleton
- Charging points for electric bikes
- Missing links in Rights of Way network and bridge crossings over the River Lune
- Caving (Three Counties Cave System)
- Repair and enhancement of Rights of Way eg erosion on deep peat around Bull Pot
- Increasing riverside access (with agreement of farmers and landowners)
- Hermitage Field (Lancaster City Council)
- Crook o' Lune (LCC)
- Enhancement of the River Lune, Ruskin's View, St Mary's Church and Devil's Bridge

Opportunities for heritage and culture

- The Three Men of Gragareth (research, archaeology, conservation)
- Celebration of caving and the Three Counties Cave System
- The story of the area's geomorphology and geology (eg Dent Fault)
- Transportation: turnpike road, railway heritage, canals, Roman routes
- Claughton brickworks and aerial ropeway
- Charcoal hearths in woodland
- Wray Castle
- Aughton Pudding Festival, at which the 'world's largest pudding' is prepared
- The Caton Oak
- Wray floods of 1967
- Wray Scarecrow Festival
- The story of the 'cheese wedge' and county stone

How do I get involved or find out more?

Visit www.ydmt.org/what-we-do/three-counties

Email threecounties@ydmt.org

Write to Three Counties, YDMT, Old Post Office, Main Street, Clapham, via Lancaster, LA2 8DP

Take part in our online survey at arcg.is/1bHbuq (open until 30 April 2022)