

Parts of the Cumbria County Council Landscape Conservation Strategies that are Relevant to Levens Parish

These provide the background context against which the Levens Environment Group can operate.

Coastal Limestone (type 3)

Changes and pressures

- Increasing recreational use, associated caravan sites and resulting increasing traffic.
- Development of residential and holiday homes, minor road improvements and recreational facilities leading to some suburbanisation of the rural character.
- Intensification of agriculture could affect distinctive features such as species rich grassland, traditional field boundaries and woodland.
- Decline in the distinctive character of historic parklands and the fabric of historic features such as lime kilns.
- Extension of small-scale local industry.
- Use of non-native species, especially in woodland.

Guidelines for Management

Woodlands/trees

- Conserve and restore the broad scale pattern of ancient semi-natural woodland through appropriate management for amenity and nature conservation benefits.
- Encourage appropriate species and structural diversity of woodlands to maximise ecological interest and attractive combinations of colour and texture.
- Retain the character and structure of woodlands dominated by yew.
- Retain and appropriately manage areas of historic 18th and 19th century parkland.
- Enhance the appearance and value of existing commercial and coniferous plantations, including the removal of planted woodland from pavement areas.

Unimproved Grassland

- Conserve and enhance through appropriate management the biological diversity of the characteristic open mosaic of bare rock outcrops, species rich calcareous grassland, heath and scrub vegetation.

Field Boundaries

- Conserve and restore through appropriate management the drystone walls and hedges which enclose the historic pattern of small-scale fields and lanes.
- Discourage field enlargement and the introduction of fencing to subdivide fields or to replace or gap-up walls and hedgerows.

Natural and Cultural Features

- Encourage natural diversity through the reversion of drained and intensively managed mossland and pasture back to semi-natural wetland and meadows.
- Conserve and enhance disused quarries and historic structures such as farmhouses, wells and lime-kilns.

Development

- Resist the further expansion of villages beyond their natural and historic settings, avoid sprawl and encroachments into the surrounding countryside.
- Protect village fringes from unsympathetic peripheral development. Ensure that any new developments are visually contained and respect the scale, traditional form and character of the settlement.
- Resist infill development of valued open spaces within the village.
- Enhance villages through sensitive environmental improvements to entrances, village greens etc.

Recreational Facilities

- Resist the expansion or further development of tourism or recreational facilities which would prejudice the quiet scenic qualities of the area.
- Develop traffic management schemes to address problems of congestion and parking whilst avoiding measures to increase capacity for cars.
- Protect sensitive natural habitats through careful routing of paths and provision for vehicle restraints.

Sub-Coastal Features

- Reverse the effects of agricultural improvements and scrub/woodland encroachment on remaining wetland mosses.
- Encourage the reversion of drained and managed mossland back to semi-natural woodland.

Major Valleys: Broad Valleys (type 8b)

Changes and Pressures

- Changing agricultural practice leading to neglected landscape features
- Pressure for village expansion
- Pressure for housing, caravan sites and large-scale farm building.
- Water pollution and enrichment, changes in the management of riverside features.

Guideline for Management

Woodland/Trees

- Reinforce established broad-leaved woodlands through improved management.
- Extend tree cover into adjacent areas, hedgerow trees and roadside plantings, encouraging the use of native species.
- Plant trees to enhance vistas whilst emphasising contrasts between wooded valley sides and open flood plain.
- Encourage the use of deciduous trees along the valley sides to give increased definition to the watercourses and encourage the development of riverside habitats.
- Introduce open areas within woodland and manage water and wetlands to increase landscape and nature conservation value.

Field Boundaries

- Improve the management of existing hedgerows to create stronger patterns in the landscape.
- Encourage the replanting and renovation of gappy overgrown hedges.
- Create ecological corridors to enhance nature conservation values.

Development

- Minimise the impact of recreational development such as caravan sites.
- Minimise the impact of infrastructure and housing developments, avoiding development on open valley floors, setting higher standards of landscape treatment.

Farm Buildings

- Conserve and enhance traditional farm buildings and features.
- Encourage retention and restoration of stone gate posts, historical artefacts and other features that form part of the cultural heritage.
- Reduce the impact of new buildings through scale, location and design.

Natural Features

- Maintain the natural condition of rivers and floodplains whilst conserving and enhancing marginal wetland features to provide wildlife and landscape diversity.
- Protect, enhance or restore marshes, wet meadows and pastures, ponds, willow, alder and bankside trees.
- Ameliorate incongruous river and flood engineering.
- Maintain and enhance semi-natural habitats.

Cultural Features

- Renovate parkland.
- Conserve historic buildings and structures.

- Conserve historic earthworks through avoidance of agricultural activities such as infilling, tipping and cattle poaching.