



Fix the Fells is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund

## Fix the Fells Volunteer Newsletter Winter 2021



*Blencathra summit March 2021. Mandy Foulkes*

More people and paths – Joanne Backshall, Fix the Fells Programme Manager

Fix the Fells has had a very productive year, with more funding, staff, heli-lifts, machines, publicity, volunteer drain runs and work parties, and paths repaired and maintained than ever before. This has made a real difference to the Lake District fells, reducing erosion damage and increasing the resilience of the upland path network. This would not have been possible without the fantastic help of the Fix the Fells volunteers and we thank you most sincerely for all your hard work.

Our path work is needed now more than ever, with the growing numbers of visitors to the Lake District and the increasing recreational pressure we've witnessed over the last two years. The expansion of our practical work has been made possible by grant funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for which we are very grateful. This currently covers about half of our costs, but we still need to provide the match funding, and the grant ends in June 2023, leaving us with a substantial hole in our finances and a worry for the future.

In the meantime, with your help, we're working hard to tackle the erosion damage and keep the fells beautiful for all to enjoy now and into the future. We couldn't continue this work without your help so a heartfelt thank you to all Fix the Fells volunteers for your amazing contribution to looking after the beautiful environment we use and love.

You can read details of what the Rangers have been up to this year in the [Fix the Fells Newsletter Winter 2021 – Fix The Fells](#) and see details of other news here [News – Fix The Fells](#).

## Is There No Stopping Them? Volunteer update by David Brooks

Fix the Fells volunteers returned to the fells post lock down at the end of March 2021 for a much shortened fell fixing season. What impact would we make with so much lost time? Could we make up the time let alone lost work?

Er, yes is most certainly the answer.

Even with volunteers still concerned about the impact of Covid, by the end of November 97 volunteers have so far been out on the fells in all weathers gifting 2130 days of upland path work. Each volunteer offers to give at least 12 days a year so it is remarkable that 51 have already met or exceeded that “target” with 17 having gifted 30 days or more and 4 contributing over 110 days each, including one volunteer in particular gifting over 150 days!

Our core business is path maintenance days (PMD`s) where we clear out drains and sweep the pitched paths (stone steps) – yes, we really do sweep the paths! So far we have worked on 762 routes which is a new record at this time of year.

Volunteers have also carried out and attended some 187 work parties (WP`s) again a new record, both supervised by National Trust Rangers and unsupervised led by suitably qualified volunteers. Working smarter and being guided by our path administration team we have made up for lost time completing more PMD`s and WP`s than ever before in 10 weeks less time – no mean feat.

A remarkable achievement considering all by volunteers, not paid staff. It is going to be another great year of hard graft, a little bit of fun and a whole lot of laughs whilst doing so in all weathers with hopefully more record work to follow.



*Gowbarrow Fell Ullswater November 2021. David Brooks*



*Volunteers Alan and Richard start building a new drain on Side Pike, Langdale (left) and the finished product (right)*



*The upland path on Bursting Knott Wasdale (left) – spot the drain? There is one here! After much shovelling and sweeping, as if by magic, a drain appears (right).*

## Volunteer events calendar

The on-line calendar of FtF volunteer events this year has been even more impressive than usual, with at least one, and sometimes several, events every day of the week except Sunday. This phenomenal offer and the volunteer activity it facilitates would not be possible without the constant hard work of those who manage the on-line calendar. With ever changing covid guidelines and **over 100 people's personal** circumstances to accommodate, this is a daily task and full time job! So a huge thank you particularly to David Brooks, Alan Manby and Jon Whiteley for all their efforts on the calendar on behalf of us all.

## Volunteer extranet and Fix the Fells website

The on-line calendar of volunteer events would not be possible without our volunteer extranet, which also hosts a wealth of news and information for FtF volunteers. This is expertly managed by volunteer Jon Whiteley, who helped to update and now manage the public FtF website too. Our whole on-line presence has evolved and greatly improved in recent years, thanks to the expertise and constant efforts of Jon Whiteley. **We couldn't** function without our extranet and website and our sincere thanks go to Jon for his constant efforts.

## Volunteer Co-ordinator – Rob Clarke

Fix the Fells volunteers helped me get off to a flying start in my new role with a return to Martcrag Moor to complete (finally!) the work on the sheep fleece path, something many were already familiar with from working there with myself and the team from the National Trust's volunteer centre High Wray Basecamp. With Basecamp mothballed due to the pandemic it was lovely to be able to continue this job after 3 years work and see so many familiar faces returning to help.

After this our work parties became focussed on building a 'roman' style path on the Wythburn path up Helvellyn. With this job being much bigger than anticipated the South Lakes path team hadn't the time to tackle it alongside other ERDF priorities, so it was fantastic to have so much help to complete it. At the end of the season it's still looking great and stands as testament to the volume and quality of work it is now possible to undertake working alongside the Fix the Fells volunteer community.



*Wythburn path before (left) and after (right) constructing a "roman" style path*

Higher on the same path it was great to once again hold a summer 'blitz', working to landscape out multiple shortcuts between zig zags on the machine built section. By shutting off the shortcuts we hope to have preserved the work here, preventing the need for greater expenditure on this path in the future. The 'blitz' was a popular part of the Basecamp calendar so it was lovely to see it return in spirit, if a little sad to not be returning to Basecamp for the evenings.

Moving into winter, I'm trying to identify jobs it is practical to continue working on right through the season. I know there's great interest in doing this, but we need to make sure there are plenty of lower level options!



*A shortcut on the path up to Helvellyn from Wythburn – before work (left) and during landscaping work by volunteers to hide the eroding line and encourage people to stay on the path (right).*

Volunteer Co-ordinator – Matt Tweed

With covid restrictions continuing into the first part of the year, and with practically the whole of 2020 lost to the pandemic, it was extremely gratifying to welcome volunteers back on to work parties in March, although I must confess to feeling a little nervous after a twelve month hiatus! I needn't have worried. It was marvellous to see familiar faces again, and once we'd all reacquainted ourselves with the basics such as what a stone looked like and which way round to hold a mattock, we soon got into our stride and were able to make proper inroads into addressing the work schedule. In fact, ably led by our fantastic volunteer co-ordinators, we were also able to ramp up the programme of unsupervised jobs, which has really magnified the scope of our achievements this year.



*Repairing a badly gullied section of the Coast to Coast at Tongue Ghyll, Grasmere – during (left) and after work (right)*

As the year progressed we also welcomed back the Young Rangers into the fold, and it's great to see the nascent beginnings of renewed interest from community and corporate groups, who provide valuable practical and financial support.

As one year ends and another quickly approaches, it's exciting too to be making plans to welcome another cohort of lengthsman into the ranks early in 2022. I look forward to working with our mentors new and established in teaching them the ropes; and I know you will all join me in making them feel at home in FtF. So thank you, whatever your role or involvement with Fix the Fells, for all that you do to make FtF the outstanding success that it is.



*Rebuilding the Borrowdale megadrain on the Rigghead Quarries path!*

<b>Matt's Volunteer Work Parties:</b>	
Work Parties with volunteers	61
Volunteer days on Work Parties	296
Individual volunteers on Work Parties	69
Drains repaired or built	28
Stone pitching repaired or built	68 m
Landscaping in conjunction with path repairs	95 m
Other works completed to repair or arrest erosion	100 m
Number of paths work on	16
Unsupervised Volunteer Work Parties:	
Unsupervised Work Parties	63
Volunteer days	299
Individual Volunteers	47
Number of paths	25

2021 Reflections – Annie Duckworth, Lake District National Park Fix the Fells Ranger

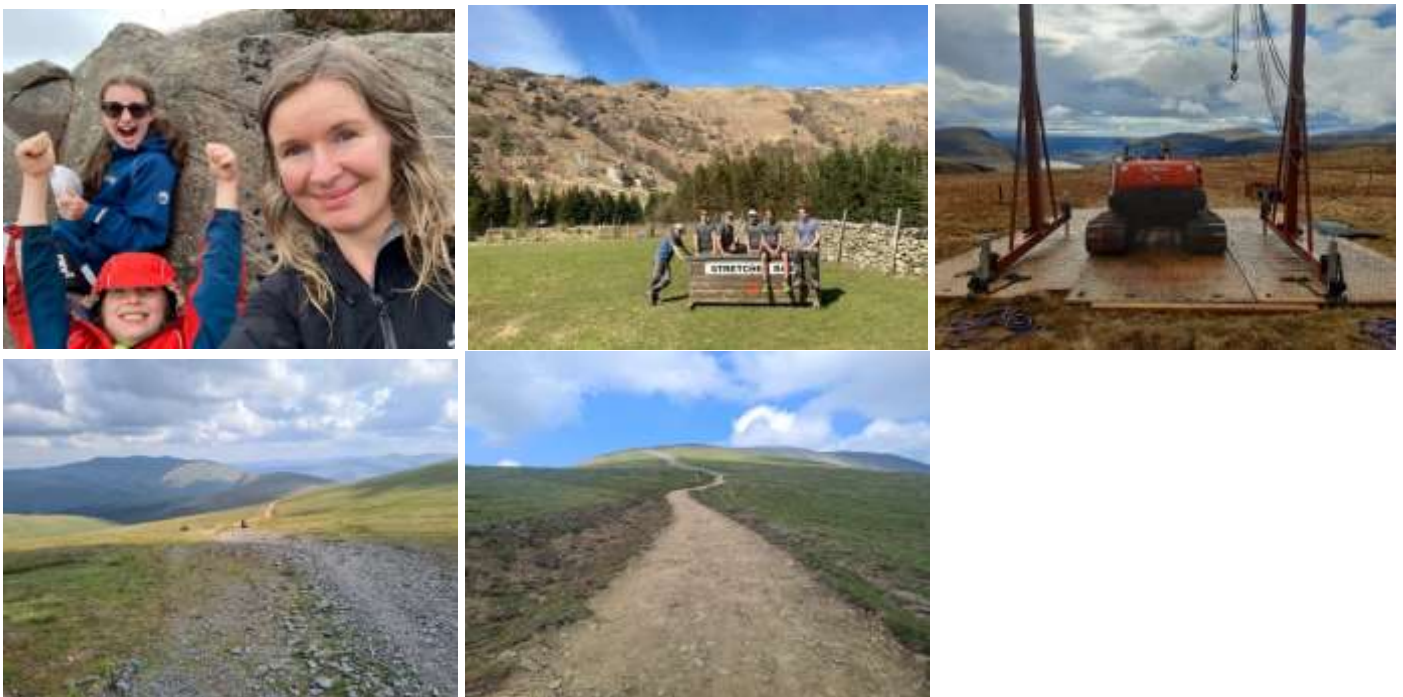
When I think back to this time last year, I was still deciding whether or not to apply for the role of Fix the Fells Ranger. Could I do it was uppermost in my mind. How could I possibly contemplate stepping into the shoes of someone who had done the job so well for so long.....

Well I hope I have given it my best shot and I really have loved (nearly) every minute of it. It is far bigger and far more complex than I could ever have imagined but it's also been more enjoyable and interesting than expected

and the team of people I have as colleagues within Fix the Fells are definitely a special bunch. Thank you staff and volunteer colleagues.

So what have I actually achieved this year? Here are some of the highlights:

- Managed two Heli Lifts that flew about 800 tonnes of material including 700 tonnes of stone, a dismantled digger on to Scafell Pike and then off again, a new Mountain Rescue Team stretcher box, two bridges and various other materials required for our operations.
- Overseen the successful completion (including all the logistical negotiations around access and permissions plus regular monitoring) of four machine paths on Armbboth Fell, Scafell Pike, Skiddaw and Askham Fell.
- Prepared the initial specifications for the machine path work planned for 2022 which includes work on Barf, Stephenson Ground, Red Tarn, Angle Tarn and Goats Hawse.
- Visited all of the Ranger teams on a fairly regular basis to see the range and breadth of their work. Collectively staff have worked on an incredible 30 paths this year not to mention all the essential monitoring and maintenance work that our volunteer lengthsmen undertake.
- Started to piece together and understand all the amazing work that goes on behind the scenes to keep Fix the Fells funded and functioning – fundraising, accounting, administration of the calendar to name but a few!
- **Acquired my own giant paper copy of the lengthsmens' map, overlain with the boundaries of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest and important archaeological sites.**
- Developed relationships with various stakeholders and partners through meetings and fieldtrips to showcase our work.



*Annie and her children, the Ranger team moving the stretcher box for the Mountain Rescue, the gantry on Scafell Pike used to assemble and dis-assemble the digger on the mountain, the machine path on Skiddaw before and after work*

- Developed and trialled a new system for recording and evidencing our work – an essential requirement for our funders.
- Asked lots of questions and learnt lots about various aspects of Rights of Way management including negotiating the complex tiers of interaction that exist in a National Park.
- Realised that I made absolutely the right decision in applying for the job and hope that sentiment is reciprocated.

Woolly hats for FtF volunteers!



*Gowbarrow Fell Ullswater - Alan, Paddy and Ian model nice woollen hats knitted specially for us by Mrs Eileen Smith from Chester who saw Fergie and co out on a drain run. She knitted the hats and left them for us at the Old Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale! David Brooks*

Volunteer representatives

To facilitate and support our work we have two management groups which meet quarterly – the Operational Working Group (OWG) which covers the work of the Rangers and the Volunteer Management Group (VMG) which covers all aspects of FtF volunteering. We've produced new Terms of Reference for these this year to make sure they are as helpful as possible to us. Now some volunteer representatives on these groups have decided to step down after long service and others have kindly taken their places.

We'd like to thank Christine Hurford and Martin Oxtoby for their many years of service on the VMG. They have brought wisdom, fun and insight, facilitated many positive events and developments, and given us an enormous

amount of their time, energy and enthusiasm. A very big thank you to Christine and Martin! Their places on the VMG will be filled by Clare Houlihan and Duncan Hogg in January 2022 and we're very grateful to them and to all who expressed an interest in these roles. We really appreciated this time and commitment to our cause.

We'd like to say a very big thank you to Barry Capp who has stepped down from representing the volunteers on the OWG and the FtF Partnership Board. Barry's contribution to Fix the Fells in so many ways and over many years has been immense and we simply wouldn't have evolved in the positive way we have without his considerable skill and input. A very big thank you to Barry! We're glad Barry is still very active as a volunteer and we are delighted to see him on the fells on many of our events. Mim Porter takes his place on the OWG and Jon Whiteley has filled his role on the FtF Board. We're very grateful to them both for taking up these positions and to those who expressed an interest in these roles.



A previous member of the OWG was David Brooks and Lottie Thompson was previously on the VMG. We'd like to recognise and thank them both for their time and helpful contribution in these roles over many years. FtF is a progressive organisation which constantly learns and adapts, and this is thanks to the many people who care and contribute so much.



*Rangers and volunteers working on the path on Gowbarrow Fell Ullswater (left) and the finished section of path (right)*

## Volunteer recruitment 2022

We haven't been able to recruit any new volunteers for the last two years because of the pandemic but in January 2022 we'll be opening our recruitment again. The details are on our website here: [Volunteer Lengthsmen – Fix The Fells](#). To facilitate a positive experience for new recruits we'll be identifying some more mentors amongst our experienced volunteers, up to about 15 in total, to enable us to take on about 30 new people. Thank you to all new and existing mentors for your time and help with our new volunteers. They'll undertake the necessary induction, taster and training days and we look forward to welcoming them in to the FtF family.

## Path Tracker

To keep tabs on the maintenance and condition of the paths we oversee, we have a comprehensive Path Tracker on our volunteer extranet. This has been reviewed and overhauled this year with help from volunteer Andy Struthers and input from Alan Manby, David Brooks, Jon Whiteley, Ian Ferguson, Barry Capp and Mark Dakin. It was originally developed by volunteers, has been continually updated and maintained by volunteers, and is now significantly improved, again by volunteers. A very big thank you to all concerned. We currently have 760 paths on our list, including 209 routes which we regularly maintain and totalling 414 km. We also have 189 observation routes visited every 1 or 2 years and 360 survey routes visited on a 5 yearly basis (see table below).

Area	Maintenance Work Routes				Observation & Survey Routes						
	Reds		Amber	Greens	Blue	Total	Blue	Brown	Purple	Grey	Total
	2 month	3 month	4 month	6 month	Annual	Work routes	Annual check	2 Yearly check	5 Yearly check	Staff Only	Obs & Survey routes
South & Central	4	32	31	20	2	89	17	39	50		106
North	4	10	18	26		58	25	52	177		254
East	1	3	10	11	2	27	8	19	63	2	92
West	1	9	8	15	2	35	4	25	70		99
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>551</b>

## Lengthsmen's Map

We've updated and improved the maps of the paths repaired and maintained by Fix the Fells and these are accessible to volunteers and staff on the LDNP volunteer website. The updates come from the hard work of volunteers Jon Whiteley, Barry Capp and Mark Dakin, working with colleagues in the LDNPA – thank you to them all. We realise there are further additions and updates which would be helpful and details of these can be sent to Mark Dakin for action when capacity permits.

## Fell Care Days

We've regularly taken part in Fell Care Days which are organised by our partner Friends of the Lake District (FoLD). These lovely events have provided opportunities for people to join our volunteers for a day and see what they get up to. Many FtF volunteers have been involved in these – orchestrated frequently by David Brooks – and our thanks go to all involved. This year FoLD celebrated 10 years of Fell Care Days and you can read more about them here: [Fell Care Days are 10! Celebrating a decade of large scale volunteering events | Friends of the Lake District](#)

## Armbboth Fell project

Earlier this year a stone flagged path was created through peatland on Armbboth Fell. This was a large and complex project with Fix the Fells working in partnership with NT Riverlands, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, United Utilities, Natural England, Skyhook helicopters and machine work contractors Terra Firma Environmental. See here for more information: [Derwent Riverlands - behind the scenes | National Trust](#). Some pictures of this project are shown below and it is well worth a visit.



*Armbboth Fell before (left) and after (right) creation of a stone flagged path in 2021*



*New stone flagged path and peatland restoration on Armbboth Fell. Picture Rob Grange*

### Additional ERDF funding secured



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund

*Fix the Fells is part-funded by  
the European Regional  
Development Fund*

We were very grateful to secure additional grant funding in October from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This will add to our existing ERDF-funded project, which now totals £2,513,936 over five years (1 April 2019 - 30 June 2023). This was an increase of £312,414, and 60% comes from ERDF - £1,508,362 in total.

The main focus of this extra money is to complete a stone flagged path next year on the Greenup Edge section of the Coast to Coast, similar to the Armbboth Fell project shown above. The path is well used and the ridge-top section is badly eroded, which means the surrounding peatland habitat is being damaged and the route is very wet and boggy.

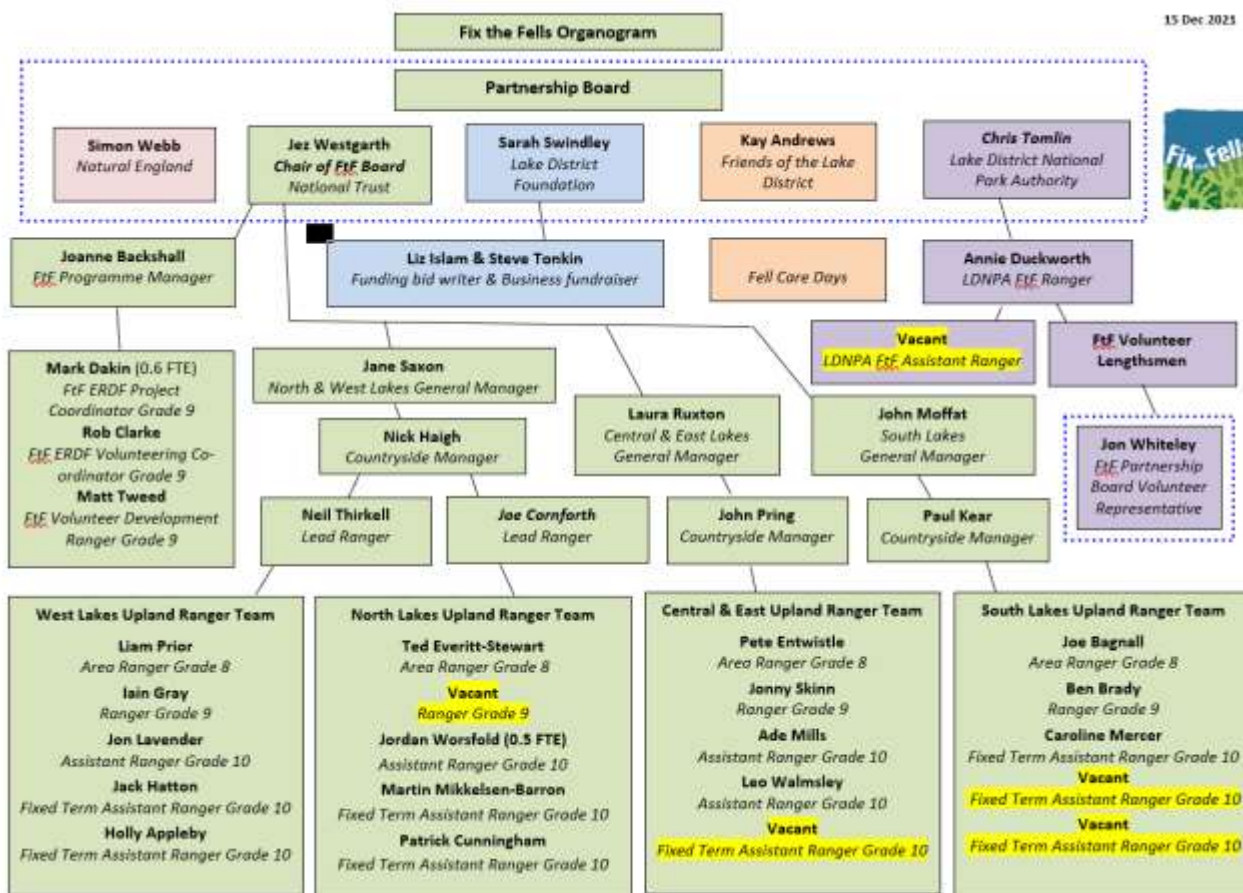
### FtF Staff changes

The additional ERDF funding allows us to recruit a new LDNP FtF Assistant Ranger in the New Year. The role will assist Annie in delivering our ERDF project targets and runs until the end of June 2023. Next year we have 7 machine work projects and the new assistant will ensure we can manage all the hand and machine work projects effectively. The machine projects next year are on E450 Boredale Hause to Angle Tarn, N292 Barf to Lords Seat, E330 Greenside Mine to Red Tarn, S273 Stephenson Ground Bridleway and S263 Walna Scar to Goat's Hause, N830 Greenup Edge to Stonethwaite and C130 Greenup Edge to High Raise.

**We're delighted that** Ted Everitt-Stewart has been appointed as the Area Ranger in the North Lakes to lead the FtF Ranger team there. **Ted stepped up into Joe Cornforth's role in April when Joe was promoted and** immediately took on a team of four new recruits to deliver a significantly expanded work programme and helicopter lift. He blossomed in the challenging circumstances and excelled in a tough recruitment exercise – well done to Ted.

We're saying a fond farewell to five of our Fixed Term Contract Rangers this year, all going on to good jobs in other areas, which is great to see. We wish Jimmy McCrickard, Kevin Brooks, Dave Thorp, Dave Emery and Charlie Hawkins well in their new roles and we thank all our Fixed Term Contract Rangers for their hard work

and enthusiasm this year in their new roles. This means we have some vacancies to recruit in 2022, to bring us up to four teams of five Rangers, as shown in the FtF Organogram below.



## Lake District Foundation fundraising

The Lake District Foundation (LDF) is our fundraising partner and has been very active this year fostering support for our work in the fells. The Big Give Christmas Challenge has raised over £27,000 for us, which was a fantastic result – see more here: [Festive windfall for Fix the Fells - Lake District Foundation](#). Local businesses who recognise the importance of the landscape and path network for their customers have been very generous in supporting us and the FtF volunteers have worked with LDF to distribute and manage collection boxes, new posters and QR codes around the Lakes.

We're extremely grateful to every individual and business for their donation and it will help us look after the upland paths which are used and loved by so many. Our thanks also go to the whole LDF team and the FtF vs and staff who facilitated this support. The funding raised by LDF will be used for volunteer expenses which amount to about £30,000 a year.

## Work Plans 2021 & 2022

Within our ERDF-funded project this year we've enhanced and protected over 10 km of fell path, by hand and machine, with Rangers, volunteers and contractors. The paths we've worked on are shown in the table below. Further paths have been worked on by volunteers, in addition to our ERDF-funded project, increasing our erosion repair work and adding resilience to the path network. More details of these projects and those planned for 2022 can be found on our website here: [Paths to be fixed – 2021 – 2023 Work Programme – Fix The Fells](#).

2021	ERDF Path Projects
C&E	C611 Loughrigg
	E211/E212 Gowbarrow
	E421 Boredale Hause
South	C121 Grisedale Hause to Seat Sandal
	C131/C132 Far Easedale/Greenup
	C920 Nan Bield zig-zags
	N930 Armboth to High Tove (Ben)
	S261 Low Water / Coniston Old Man Upper
	S263 Walna Scar to Goats Hause (Ben)
	W420 Three Tarns to Bowfell
North	N323 Scar Craggs to Sail
	N660 Scarth Gap to Haystacks
	N671 Fleetwith Pike
	N830 Greenup Edge to Stonethwaite
	N840 Gillercomb
West	N661 Peggy's Bridge to Scarth Gap
	W140 Lingmell Col
	W164 Broad Crag Col
	N881 Green Gable
	W151 Bursting Knott
	W161 Piers Gill
	W162 Corridor Route
	W112 Gavel Neese
	W141 Brown Tongue
	W145 Lingmell Breast route
Rob	C211 Mickleden to Stake Pass
	C213 Martcrag Moor
	C361 The Band
	N471 Rosthwaite to Watendlath
	N960 Wythburn to Helvellyn
	S240 Sun Inn Old Man Lower
Matt	C370 Side Pike
	E330 Greenside Mine to Red Tarn
	E350 Mires Beck
	N521 Rigghead Quarries
Machine	E110 Howtown to Moor Divock
	N140 Skiddaw / Jenkin Hill
	N931 High Tove to High Seat
	W141 Brown Tongue

## Marking 20 years of Fix the Fells

This year Fix the Fells marked its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we looked back at some of the changes we've seen during that time. You can read more about this and other news on our website here: [Fix the Fells Twentieth Anniversary – Fix The Fells](#). This includes some remarkable “Before and After” images illustrating the recovery

made possible by our work, for example in the Langdale valley shown below. You can see more of these in a gallery on our website here: [Video and Photo Gallery – Fix The Fells](#)

This is all thanks to your fantastic help and we couldn't achieve it without you. We thank you most sincerely because together we're tackling erosion in the Lake District fells and protecting the scenery and environment for everyone.



Above: Stickle Ghyll Langdale before (1985 – left) and after (2021 – right) work by Fix the Fells

Below: Redacre Gill Langdale before (1994 - left) and after (2021 – right) work by Fix the Fells

