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| For Immediate Release |

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| 21 May 2020 |

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| **Lake District thanks visitors for slow return and respecting local communities** |

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| Cumbria’s multi-agency Local Resilience Forum is thanking people for postponing their trips to Cumbria and the Lake District after visitor numbers last weekend were lower than anticipated. But ahead of the Bank Holiday weekend and half-term holidays, the message remains that the county is not quite ready for visitors to return in their usual numbers.  Across the area the majority of shops and visitor attractions and amenities, including public toilets, remain closed and many in the local community remain concerned about the potential for further infection spread. As such people are being asked to think carefully before visiting.  While the overall number of visitors was low, some ‘hotspot’ areas such in Windermere, Ambleside and Glenridding were busy, as were locations popular with motorcyclists such as Alston and Devil’s Bridge at Kirkby Lonsdale. People are being encouraged to avoid these very popular spots if possible to reduce the risk associated with large groups and ensure that social distancing rules can be maintained.  Richard Leafe, Chief Executive at the Lake District National Park Authority, said:  “Thank you to everyone who listened to our call not to rush back to the Lake District just yet, you’re helping us prepare for a safe, new way to welcome visitors, while protecting our communities. If you do visit the Lake District, please plan ahead: find a safe place to park using [**saferlakes.co.uk**](https://smex12-5-en-ctp.trendmicro.com:443/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=https%3a%2f%2flinkprotect.cudasvc.com%2furl%3fa%3dhttps%253a%252f%252fsaferlakes.co.uk%26c%3dE%2c1%2cGzh%2dhwel2dy8Fo6KUzcRuL9CHVsqIDQMjMKKqkFGf%5fYxfe7QKERQe2qaO5SRMgox1QRQQrde%2dYzWS3%5fOwgS7zpio0VisemEiU4QtEAhPI8xv%26typo%3d1&umid=2d0ca9e5-b9d5-43bc-a7ab-4b1b43d1173c&auth=438558d5329f5814a0a31cfd8e89073841978136-fd910e8bb283b4733b55691da10d76b314779e87), remember some of our public toilets remain closed and it’s not currently possible to stay overnight. We ask people to continue to show respect and consideration to each other during this adjustment, maintain social distancing and remember many paths are near farmer’s homes.”  Colin Cox, Cumbria’s Director of Public Health, said:  “I continue to urge people to keep their Lake District plans on hold as we grapple with the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak in the county. I understand that people may feel their individual visit won’t cause a problem, but when thousands of people have the same idea then that has the potential to create genuine issues. Staying at home as much as possible and exercising locally remains my advice.”  For those visiting the area there are three key messages:  **Respect our local communities**   * Be considerate and don’t do things that increase the risk or cause problems for local people, particularly the vulnerable: avoid using paths through farmers’ yards; keep your dog on a lead and take your litter home. * Plan ahead and avoid busy places: use [saferlakes.co.uk](https://smex12-5-en-ctp.trendmicro.com:443/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=https%3a%2f%2flinkprotect.cudasvc.com%2furl%3fa%3dhttps%253a%252f%252fsaferlakes.co.uk%26c%3dE%2c1%2c9YA8Xzt71ljVVHiLGBmXyAyLflMLVrz1fVc31FoeZz3Ane9ARN3HUWBQdpC4d9vGQqJaqhYM1a5%5fTwcizM%5fdrWgrSsrMsrtWZUoY4%2dRVS%2dJP4k7p26EdWvO6EEo5%26typo%3d1&umid=2d0ca9e5-b9d5-43bc-a7ab-4b1b43d1173c&auth=438558d5329f5814a0a31cfd8e89073841978136-f91d81ff46addcc8fce52a12880ba6043fb9d57d) to park safely and considerately and avoid the more popular destinations. * Bring your own food and drink to avoid pressure on local shops. * Consider the lack of toilet and washing facilities and don’t behave in an anti-social manner.   **Respect the risk**   * Cumbria continues to record new cases of the virus every day and the threat has not gone away * Don’t take risks on the fells, on the water or on the roads. Stay within the limits of your ability and equipment at all times. * If you get into trouble help may take longer to arrive and you will put unnecessary additional pressure on local health and emergency workers as well as volunteer mountain rescue and coastal rescue services.   **Respect the rules**   * Observe all the Government’s social distancing rules. * No overnight stays, no camping, no visiting second homes. * Avoid crowds. * Wash your hands regularly.   Chief Constable Michelle Skeer, Lead for the Strategic Coordinating Group within Cumbria’s Local Resilience Forum, said:  “It was really good to see that most people followed our advice and postponed their visit last weekend. It was much appreciated by all in Cumbria. Our partners are working hard and putting plans in place to get ready for visitors coming back when it’s safe to do so, but we are not there yet.  “We need to remember why we’re doing this - it’s to stop the transmission of the Covid-19 virus and therefore keep people safe. There is still a public health risk to have large numbers of people congregating in some of our more popular destinations.  “I’ll continue to say, the Lake District isn’t going anywhere, so please put off your visit for now, but if you do come please show respect, consider the lack of facilities and that overnight stays are not allowed at the moment.”  **ENDS**  News Release available online at: [https://www.cumbria.police.uk/News/News-Articles/2020/May/Cumbria-LRF-Lake-District-thanks-visitors-for-slow-return-and-respecting-local-communties.aspx](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.cumbria.police.uk%2fNews%2fNews-Articles%2f2020%2fMay%2fCumbria-LRF-Lake-District-thanks-visitors-for-slow-return-and-respecting-local-communties.aspx&c=E,1,ZRo1i5SKaKQjkxk2mk9Jj-8WHmNLVwGbXqAY4BoySvQQEmYI01fmThLTuuBKxfdAYvBJz-I7M6nYoQFsbKHUyr6R-ca7lGYq5CeihmGfe4qgzHIbZn0,&typo=1) |
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