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Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000

unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR/ID495
Date: 24/09/2025
Email: EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

Your request

1. **Field-by-field 'To Do' Lists and Associated Progress**

Please provide a full copy of the internal documentation (whether reports, schedules, spreadsheets, maps, or internal tracking tools) showing:

- *A complete list of all field parcels/land parcels within the St John's, Castlerigg & Wythburn Parish boundary impacted by the works to construct the pipeline. I.e. All those with the working easement, and all land parcels on or affected by access routes/tunnels etc.*
- *The initial restoration or reinstatement "to-do" list created for each field/land parcel (including works such as wall rebuilding, hedgerow replacement, reseeding, access point removal, and any ecological reinstatement).*
- *A progress update or current status against each of these items on a field-by-field basis (e.g., completed, in progress, delayed, not started).*
- *The dates on which any fields have been handed back to landowners and the date each was deemed "completed" (or the date when compensation ceased, if applicable).*
- *If available, a map or GIS-based visual (such as the referenced 2024 map from Low Bridge End to Williamsgate) that clearly shows each field parcel with its associated restoration status or outstanding actions. Please note, we are not requesting personal data or landowner names – anonymised parcel references are sufficient.*

2. **Snagging Period**

Please confirm:

- *Whether the snagging period for monitoring and remedial works on the pipeline/access easements is 5 or 7 years.*
- *The start date and end date of this period, and whether it is calculated from:*
  a) The start of works on each field parcel,
  b) The date of completion of work, or
  c) The date of formal handover to the landowner.

- *Whether LDNPA (Lake District National Park Authority) is involved in reviewing or approving handovers or completion of any conditions attached to planning consent.*

3. Complaints, Concerns, or Disputes

Please provide:

- *A summary of any recorded complaints or concerns raised by landowners within the St John's, Castlerigg & Wythburn area since the project commenced.*
- *A summary of any disputes or refusals of access for restoration purposes within the St John's Castlerigg & Wythburn Parish areas, and how United Utilities is addressing or resolving these.*
- *Clarity on the role of the independent easement surveyor and any available reports or findings related to the condition of hedgerows, trees, and restoration progress over the last 12 months within St John's Castlerigg & Wythburn Parish Council area.*

4. Landowner Preferences and Restoration Exceptions

- *Information or policy guidance on whether landowners can opt to forgo reinstatement of features (e.g. walls, hedges) in return for compensation.*
- *Whether any such arrangements have occurred within the St John's, Castlerigg & Wythburn area and the rationale behind such exceptions.*

Our response

Brief background – St John's, Castlerigg & Wythburn Parish Council area covers a section of the raw water aqueduct running from Bridge End, Thirlmere, at the head of the pipeline, down to the Castlerigg Tunnel, which is some 5,110m in length.



This photograph, part of St John's Parish, provides a snapshot of the challenges this huge engineering project faced and the intricacies of laying pipes, literally uphill and down dale, through both drought and flood conditions. Construction activity was mostly completed by summer 2020 which was followed by extensive pipe cleaning and commissioning works during 2021 and 2022.

Reinstatement work progressed reasonably well but did face some challenges. For example, some reinstatement work completed in September 2023 after the land had just been reseeded and was still very exposed, was destroyed by extreme weather just a week later (over 10cm of rain fell in 24hrs). The challenge with high rainfall continued into 2024 and resources had to be deployed elsewhere. It is worth noting that works did continue throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period, from March 2020 through to March 2021.

We have always sought to keep landowners impacted by the project engaged and informed throughout meetings with them, via their appointed land agents, are held whenever requested. We continue to hold monthly internal meetings.

In response to the specific points within your information request.

1. **Field-by-field 'To Do' Lists and Associated Progress**

List of field parcels – Each field or enclosure along the pipeline has been allocated an identification letter running alphabetically A-Z and then AA, AB and so on. The requested parish council area covers fields A – AQ, including additional fields Afa, AFb, Ala, Alb and ALc as identified on the drawing in Appendix A

Initial restoration list – This information is contained within the original reinstatement plan which was created following consultation between Farrans Roadbridge, ecologists and the Lake District National Park Authority. A copy of which is attached (please see Appendix B).

Progress update – I have attached a copy of the latest internal reinstatement minutes (10 September 2025) which cover combined drainage and reinstatement activities on the raw water aqueduct within the subject area (please see Appendix C these minutes have been redacted in line with regulation 13 of the EIR, and UKGDPR to remove any personal information such as names and addresses). Where a field letter is not included in this update, it's because it has been completed.

Dates fields were handed back – Fields B – O and Y were handed back March 2025, which are coloured green, otherwise fields remain under reinstatement or completed but not handed back, which are coloured in blue (please see Appendix A).

2. **Snagging Period**

Length and start date of the snagging period – There is no time limit on the snagging period. The snagging work only ends when the work is completed, or in a very few cases, where equivalent compensation is agreed. Some minor outstanding snags may also be covered by full and final compensation agreements, for example minor activities of a seasonal/specific timing nature which are more practical for the landowner to address.

In terms of maintaining trees and hedgerows, there is a five-year maintenance period which starts from the date of handover to the landowner. Under the rules of the Limitation Act 1980, land drainage has a six-year period from handover, extending to a maximum of 15 years in some circumstances (latent discovery). However, in practice if an issue can be clearly demonstrated to arise from the pipeline, then it would be unusual for us not to address it. This is a long-term installation, and we recognise that we need to continue to maintain good working relationships with landowners.

Role of the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) – Handover agreements are made with landowners and although the LDNPA does not have a formal role in reviewing or approving the handovers, we keep them updated with progress.

3. **Complaints, Concerns, or Disputes**

Summary of recorded complaints – This has been a huge and long- term engineering operation, at one point being the largest engineering project of its kind in Europe. I can confirm that we have had no formal written complaints in this specific area. That said, landowners have expressed individual concerns at various times with common themes including soil conditions, temporary fencing, access to maintain severed areas, land drainage, soil compaction, stone picking, pipeline 'furniture' (washouts and in particular the raised air valves), weed control, ground levels and finished ground levels, and matching local craftsmanship/vernacular with wall rebuilds. These issues have been handled both directly with the landowner, or via the various escalation forums and ongoing working groups.

Disputes or refusals – I can confirm that we do not have any access refusals recorded for restoration (or construction purposes) within the St John's Castlerigg & Wythburn Parish areas.

Independent Surveyor – We do not recognise the term 'Independent Surveyor' so we have taken this to be 'independent ecologist'. We engaged Ash Bennett Ltd. Mr Bennett is primarily responsible for confirming that planning permission requirements have been met (from an ecological point of view) before handover. To support this, he takes records of the ecology of each land parcel, with particular reference to type of grassland and reseeding mix, details of trees planted and details of boundaries crossed. There were no hedgerows within the requested area.

4. Landowner Preferences and Restoration Exceptions

Policy guidance – The code of practice for pipelaying, which covers reinstatement and compensation is published on our website and can be accessed via this link https://www.unitedutilities.com/globalassets/documents/pdf/uuplc-code-of-practice-for-pipelaying.pdf.

Compensation in the requested area – To date, no landowners have forgone reinstatement of features (e.g. walls, hedges) in return for compensation.

In conclusion, we recognise that the initial engineering and the subsequent reinstatement works have and are taking some time due to the scale and nature of this huge project. We have made great efforts to ensure that the restoration works are properly completed and are monitored in accordance with planning permissions and agreed restoration conditions. Local feedback is actively sought, both directly with the landowners and via forums such as Parish Council meetings, so that t any issues raised can be addressed.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk, addressing your request to [redacted], and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Kind regards