**Working in Partnership Copeland**

**DRAFT Minutes of the 24th Meeting of the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership**

**Held at Seascale Golf Club, The Banks, Seascale, CA201QL**

**On Monday 2nd December 2024**

**Commencing at 3:00pm**

**Present:**

Andy Pratt Chair

Sam Pollen Cumberland Council Lead

Gillian Johnston NWS Community Engagement Manager

Cllr David Moore Seascale Parish Council

Karen Warmoth Drigg & Carleton Parish Council

Mike Slater Farming Sector Lead

Yvonne Clarkson Business Sector Lead

Jonathan Cook Cumberland Officer

Deborah Naylor Youth Sector Lead

Jackie Atkinson Gosforth Parish Council

**NWS Support:**

Simon Hughes NWS, Siting & Communities Director

Rachel Cornah NWS, Principal Site Evaluation Manager

Chris Keenan NWS, Head of Community, Operations & Land

Amy Shelton NWS, Principal Community Engagement Manager – Northwest

Anne Broome NWS, Community Partnership Operations Manager

Chris Bundock NWS, Grants Manager

Gill Thorne NWS, Communications Lead

Sue Shepherd NWS, Community Engagement Coordinator

Andrew Monaghan NWS, Community Engagement Coordinator

Jodie Dougherty NWS, Community Partnership Assistant

**Apologies:**

Bob Jones Chair of Calderbridge & Ponsonby Parish Council

Julie Nugent Chair of Beckermet with Thornhill Parish Council

**AGENDA 1: HOUSE KEEPING, WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS TO INCLUDE DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND MINUTES/ACTION LOG OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair welcomed the Community Partnership members. No members of the public were present.

Minutes from 14th October 2024 were approved.

**Actions from the previous meeting:**

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| REF: 14102024 | MEETING ACTION LOG |
| Agenda 5 03  11122023 | CEM and Comms Manager to discuss with NWS potential events in the wider communities within Cumberland. **Complete** PCEM working on Out of Search Area strategy |
| Agenda 4  22042024 01 | CEM/OM to review concerns arising from Withdrawal Subgroup meeting and report findings back to Partnership. **Ongoing** |
| Agenda 10  22042024 01 | Former OM provide Chair with breakdown of applicants of NWS National Youth Forum by postcode/geographical area. To identify those from Cumbria and potentially involve them in partnership. **Complete for CP**, Chair now taking this to Joint Chairs’ meeting |
| Agenda 4  26062023 01 | Site Evaluation Manager to provide timeline of siting activity to Community Partnership members before going on the website. **Under review** |
| Agenda 7  29072024 01 | CEM to arrange for Crown Estate to come along to a CP meeting in Autumn **Ongoing** |
| Agenda 1  14102024 01 | Can NWS clarify the acreage on Longlands Farm Was previously **Complete** - ~600ha (+/- 5%). Now ongoing action as clarification on this has been requested by CP member (see meeting actions of 2nd December below) |
| Agenda 1  14102024 02 | All - Agree dates for all actions to be completed in a timely manner. **Complete** |
| Agenda 1  14102024 03 | CEM to arrange for Programme Director to attend CP Meeting. **Complete -** Agenda item for December meeting. |
| Agenda 6  14102024 | CP Assistant to send email to Members regarding Meet the Regulators meeting. **Complete** |
| Agenda 8  14102024 | CEM to provide NWS with public questions for approved response. **Complete** |
| Agenda 1  14102024 | CP members requested potential national / international familiarisation visits to other GDF sites and relevant construction projects i.e. Tunnelling **Complete –** PCEM to investigate further. |

**AGENDA 2: ROUND THE ROOM INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions were made by the Mid Copeland Community Partnership members and NWS support team.

**AGENDA 3: CHAIR’S REPORT**

Chair explained that himself and other Partnership representatives attended a conference in Vienna since the last Partnership meeting. People from over 60 different countries took part, discussing best practices on engagement and how to move forward.

The Chair informed the Partnership that he had met with an advisor to Cumberland Council, with a focus on building on local visioning activity aligned with plans and opportunities for Cumberland more widely.

The Chair explained they welcomed members of the Theddlethorpe GDF Community Partnership, as they attended the area for several days to gain insight into a nuclear area.

The Chair explained that there is an NWS Research Support Office (RSO) Annual Conference in Bristol in January 2025 with an opportunity for him to attend. The Chair described the conference as an opportunity for academics working on geological disposal to showcase their work.

**AGENDA 4: NWS PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The Chair welcomed NWS Siting & Communities Director who explained developments in the NWS Programme. He presented a GDF timeline for the coming years, explaining the different stages and processes. This included explaining that NWS will identify smaller ‘Areas of Focus’ in the Search Area, as the next step in the process of finding potentially suitable sites, which is similar to the approach taken by other large infrastructure projects. Areas of Focus are identified using existing information and help NWS consider where may have the potential to host project infrastructure.

This stage isn’t to define an exact site, it’s to help decide which areas could be taken forward for more detailed investigations. This could include drilling boreholes to better understand the geology deep below the surface, where the underground part of a GDF would be built.

Siting and Communities Director was asked a couple of questions

**Question**: If a Partnership leaves the process, would you move forward with only one community?

**Answer:** Yes, if it fits all the criteria.

**Question:** Will engagement continue in all the Search Area or just the identified Areas of Focus?

**Answer:** The Community Engagement team will continue with engagement with the whole search area.

**AGENDA 5:** **COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUNDING (CIF) END OF YEAR REVIEW**

It was noted that there has been a collected effort from the whole team and Partnership members to ensure that all of year three Community Investment Funding was allocated.

The Community Investment Panel (CIP) has approved 33 new awards for Year 3.

The smallest award was £1,065 to Egremont Town Band to help them towards room hire for their rehearsals. The largest award of the year was £196,018 for Ponsonby and Calderbridge Village Hall to refurbish the Hall.

There are two applications that were deferred at the final panel meeting of the year. There are two small applications for consideration by the panel on Thursday, 05th December. The total for these is approximately £226k.

The CIF team are talking to several organisations and community groups about their planned projects and helping develop their proposals before they submit full applications.

The CIF team continue to reach out to and work with organisations within the pipeline

Of the 88 awards made to date:

* 50 awards met the Community Wellbeing CIF criteria.
* 15 awards met the Improvements to Natural / Built Environment CIF criteria
* 18 awards met the Community Wellbeing and Natural / Built Environment CIF criteria.
* 2 awards met the Community Wellbeing and Economic Development CIF criteria
* 3 awards met the Community Wellbeing, Built Environment and Economic Development CIF criteria.

**AGENDA 6: AOB:**

**01 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

The Communications Lead recapped activity since the previous Community Partnership meeting. This included finalising a newsletter to be sent out week commencing 9th December to homes in the Search Area, plus a digital e-bulletin to subscribers.

A summary of residents’ research results has been added to the website, plus a Q&A on High Heat Generating Waste and information on the GDF siting process and how Areas of Focus are identified within Search Areas.

**02 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Community Engagement Co-ordinator explained that since the last CP meeting the team have engaged with approximately 230 people. The Community Engagement Team will continue to inform Community Partnership members of their future events on a fortnightly basis.

The Youth Lead on the Partnership gave an overview of Youth projects delivered since the Partnership last met, including the delivery of a visioning project with the 1st Gosforth Scouts. There is one more session planned in for February 2025, with an end of project celebration in March.

The Community Engagement team were invited to a newly established youth group in Beckermet to conduct a similar project on visioning. One session has taken place and will recommence in the new year. A celebration will take place January 2025.

All Community Partnership members will be invited to both end of project celebrations, calendar invites to follow.

The Youth Lead also mentioned the successful one-off visioning session delivered in collaboration with South Copeland Community Partnership at Drigg Young Farmers and explained the outcomes and the young farmers’ aspirations that came out of the session.

The Youth Lead spoke about the Community Partnerships engagement with young people, stating this engagement is crucial because they are the future stakeholders of our community.

The young people that the Community Partnership have met have been very eager to share their ideas with us; their attachment to the locality is strong, and they are passionate about protecting the environment while also being excited about improving their area, particularly through better transport links. The work that we, as a Community Partnership are doing with our young people mirrors international best practices, where successful geological disposal facility projects have emphasised community engagement, including young people, to build trust and support.

We are very grateful for the support we have received from the leaders of the groups we have visited. Their cooperation has been invaluable, and we plan to return to these groups to keep them informed. Ongoing communication is essential to ensure that everyone remains engaged and updated.

In addition to our current engagements, we would like to extend our discussions to apprentices, graduates, and those in early careers. We will share more information in due course.

**03 VISIONING UPDATE**

The Operations Manager updated the Partnership on the Community Visioning work that was taking place. There had been 9 Community Visioning Forums that had taken place in the form of round table discussions. These forums followed an earlier workshop with parish councillors, to discuss community challenges and aspirations.

The community visioning forums had a total of 48 attendees. Also delivered were 10 Youth sessions, engaging with a total of 185 young people at 1st Seascale Scouts, 1st Gosforth Scouts, Drigg Young Farmers and a re-cap session with Shackles Off Youth Group.

Although the Forums haven’t been attended as well as we had anticipated, we have seen common themes emerging particularly around Transport & Infrastructure, Health & Wellbeing, the lack of non-nuclear skills options for school leavers and the distance they currently must travel to some colleges and training facilities.

A community idea put forward as part of vision suggestions was a multi sports facility with a hotel, wellbeing centre and a GDF Visitors Centre. This was a recurring idea in several Forums.

There is also a Visioning Questionnaire on the website with 20 completed to date.

The next steps are pulling the common themes together in a draft vision and going back into the community in February to test the vision.

**AGENDA 7: ISSUES FOR ESCALATION**

None

**AGENDA 8: PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None

**AGENDA 9: DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING**

Next Community Partnership meeting will be confirmed in New Year

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| REF: 02122024 | MEETING ACTION LOG |
| Agenda 4  26062023 01 | Site Evaluation Manager to provide timeline of siting activity to Community Partnership members before going on the website. Completed at Dec CP Meeting |
| Agenda 7  29072024 01 | CEM to arrange for Crown Estate to come along to a CP meeting in Autumn Ongoing |
| Agenda 1  14102024 01  and Agenda 1  02122024 01 | CP member has asked NWS to further clarify the acreage on Longlands Farms (answer given as - ~600ha (+/- 5%) in December 2024 meeting) |
| Agenda 1 02122024 02 | Withdrawal subgroup to look at the Senior Policy Advisor’s response to action: *Agenda 4 22042024 01* |
| Agenda 1  02122024 03 | Sitings and Communities Director to clarify Senior Policy Officer’s response regarding what happens to the Community Investment Funding if a community withdraws from the process. (see action agenda 22042024 01 and agenda 1 02122024 02)  Response from the Senior Policy Officer:  Any Community Investment Funding (CIF) already made or committed for the financial year in which the withdrawal takes place will be honoured and NWS would work with the Community Partnership concerned to ensure that its work comes to an end in a planned and respectful manner.  Precise details would need to be worked out at the time. Existing Partnerships may find it helpful to look at how CIF was handled by NWS and the Allerdale Community Partnership following NWS’ decision to withdraw from that community. |
| Agenda 3  02122024 01 | CEM and PCEM to look at securing some national and international visits for CP members to other GDF sites and large infrastructure project i.e. tunnelling |