**Minutes of the 25th Meeting of the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership**

**Held at St Mary’s Church Room, Gosforth,** [**Wasdale Road, Gosforth CA20 1BG**](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=2d12d2bdd4d346d4a7e797e58aef688d8753a4d80cf62d91836a48d4b2d331e1JmltdHM9MTc0Mjc3NDQwMA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=2b7a74e7-ec08-663b-1ce8-616cedfa67c9&u=a1L21hcHM_Jm1lcGk9MTI3fn5Vbmtub3dufkFkZHJlc3NfTGluayZ0eT0xOCZxPVN0LiUyME1hcnklMjdzJTIwUGFyaXNoJTIwQ2h1cmNoJnNzPXlwaWQuWU4xMDI5eDY5NDczMzEwNjQzMjAyODQxMyZwcG9pcz01NC40MTkyMTYxNTYwMDU4Nl8tMy40MzE2MDcwMDc5ODAzNDY3X1N0LiUyME1hcnklMjdzJTIwUGFyaXNoJTIwQ2h1cmNoX1lOMTAyOXg2OTQ3MzMxMDY0MzIwMjg0MTN-JmNwPTU0LjQxOTIxNn4tMy40MzE2MDcmdj0yJnNWPTEmRk9STT1NUFNSUEw&ntb=1)

**On Monday 3rd March 2025**

**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

Deborah Naylor Youth Sector Lead

Jackie Atkinson Gosforth Parish Council

Bob Jones Chair of Calderbridge & Ponsonby Parish Council

Julie Nugent Chair of Beckermet with Thornhill Parish Council

**NWS Support:**

Rachel Cornah NWS, Principal Site Evaluation Manager

Amy Shelton NWS, Principal Community Engagement Manager – Northwest

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

Mike Brophy NWS, Head of Social Impact

**Apologies:**

Jonathan Cook Cumberland Officer

**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. One member of the public was present.

Minutes from 2nd December 2024 were approved.

**Actions from the previous meeting:**

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| REF: 02122024 | MEETING ACTION LOG |
| Agenda 426062023 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 729072024 01 | CEM to arrange for Crown Estate to come along to a CP meeting in Autumn Ongoing |
| Agenda 114102024 01and Agenda 102122024 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*NWS Head of Social Impact gave response |
| Agenda 102122024 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 302122024 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.To progress this, The Community Partnership need to complete a business case. The Operations Manager will collaborate with the Partnership to identify the benefits for both the members and the community, as well as to determine potential invitees. If the Partnership decides to move forward with this initiative, Operations Managercan initiate the process by inviting relevant Partnership members to assist. |

**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**

The Chair attended one of the regular Joint Chairs’ sessions since the last CP meeting.

The Chair attended the Research Support Office Conference in Bristol in January 2025 , which was attended by over 100 graduates, and academics from across the country, all working on research relevant to the GDF siting process. The quality of the work and the enthusiasm demonstrated by the graduates was exceptional. The Chair expressed an interest in inviting some of these graduates to present their work at a future Partnership meeting.

The Chair explained that several events, delivered by NWS, have been held in Mid Copeland in relation to the recent announcement of Areas of Focus. While many local attendees initially expressed concerns, initial feedback suggested that they left feeling more informed.

**AGENDA 4: NWS Areas of Focus Update (AoF)**

The chair welcomed NWS Community Engagement Manager, Principal Community Engagement Manager and Head of Site Evaluation to provide an update with feedback from Community Partnership members:

The AoF events and webinars held in early 2025 gave NWS the chance to talk with the Mid Copeland community about what the identification of Areas of Focus means for them and for the GDF siting process.

• 191 people attended 4 events in Mid Copeland

• 46 people attended a joint Mid and South Copeland event

• 73 people attended 2 joint Mid and South Copeland webinars.

NWS has had some good conversations about the Areas of Focus during the events. Although this is not a consultation process, NWS has been listening, and views will be taken into consideration as the siting process continues.

**Common questions/themes from AoF events:**

• Transport – how will you access each Area of Focus?

• Environmental Impacts –

• Timeline and Test of Public Support (ToPS) - when will the community get a say? Who will get a say and how?

• Geology and site suitability – What is the geology like? What geology is required?

• Coastal erosion/climate change

• Accessways – there was confusion on the term accessways and what it means.

**Example feedback:**

• I’ve learned a lot – informative event

• Needs to be as close to Sellafield Site as possible

• Get a move on!

• Jobs/apprenticeships need to go to local people

• Investment in the roads/rail/buses is essential.

**Going Forward**

2 further Areas of Focus drop-in sessions are in the process of being arranged for 28th and 29th March at Seascale School, 3:30pm – 7:30pm and 10:00am – 3:00pm

**Community Partnership members gave feedback including:**

• Seascale Parish Council is to oppose both Areas of Focus in a letter to NWS, local MP and the Community Partnership Chair. Seascale PC also plans to put forward an alternative Area of Focus.

• A lot of people in Seascale were shocked at the Areas of Focus and were surprised by the proposed use of greenfield sites.

 The Seascale Parish member noted that a significant number of residents in the Seascale area did not attend the AoF events, resulting in their voices not being adequately represented.

• NWS needs to be clear as to how the Areas of Focus would be accessed.

• A CP member reported members of the public suggested Eskmeals as an alternative Area of Focus within the National Park, which is currently excluded from consideration.

• Community Partnership members felt NWS had sent the Areas of Focus landowner letters too late

• A CP member explained they needed more information about Moorside, to find out the alternate use.

• Community Partnership members expressed appreciation for the engagement team’s presence in the community, acknowledging their efforts to listen to residents’ views.

• Some Parish Councils haven’t met since the Areas of Focus announcement and will feed back after their meetings have taken place.

**NWS’ Head of Site Evaluation provided a re-cap of the Area of Focus methodology and the identified Areas of Focus in Mid Copeland.**

In the search for a suitable site for a GDF, three key elements are required with the right sub-surface geological environment deep underground, a suitable surface location, and the ability to connect the two areas with accessways.

Through the application of the Areas of Focus methodology, several potentially suitable and less constrained areas were identified in the Mid Copeland Search Area. Further consideration of these areas that took into account NWS’ Siting Factors, as well as community and programme considerations, resulted in the identification of two potential Surface Areas of Focus in Mid Copeland that NWS will prioritise and consider further at this time.

Applying the Areas of Focus methodology, NWS has identified potential accessways, within which the connection tunnels could be constructed, joining the Sub–surface Area of Focus to the Surface Area of Focus. This is significantly wider than will be required to allow for flexibility. For the onshore part of the accessways, NWS has sought to avoid passing directly beneath the Sellafield site and Seascale.

**NWS, PCEM then provided some context to the AoF**

The Areas of Focus launch enabled NWS to learn a lot about questions that are important in the community. We have taken those back and are now working with them on how to go about addressing those questions. Some of the topics, we know we won’t have answers to for a long time, 10-15 or more years. However, we will focus on explaining what work we are doing and why in the nearer term and we would like to work with the other members of the CP to determine the best way to share that with the community.

A Partnership member fed back that had the Partnership been involved earlier with AoF; they could have provided valuable insights on alternative ways to engage with landowners and the wider community.

**AGENDA 5:** **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

The Communications Lead recapped activity since the previous Community Partnership meeting. This included a printed newsletter sent to homes in the Search Area, plus a digital e-bulletin. Website updates included an article on how excavated material would be managed in a GDF; £3million Community Investment Funding (CIF) awarded in Mid Copeland across 3 years and an update on Nuclear Waste Services’ Areas of Focus work. Communications publicising a Partnership CIF ‘Meet the Funders’ public drop-in event on March 27 in Gosforth will go out shortly; the website refresh/update work is ongoing and early work for the next Partnership newsletter is under way.

Question: Partnership members asked who would be attending the ‘Meet the Funders’ event?

NWS, Cumberland Council, and Cumbria CVS were confirmed, other organisations were asked but were unable to attend. The Partnership requested the Chair write to Copeland Community Fund to ask if they could attend part of the event.

**AGENDA 6: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Engagement Co-ordinator explained that since the last CP meeting the Community Engagement team has engaged with approximately 360 people. The Community Engagement team will continue to inform Community Partnership members of these on a fortnightly basis.

The Beckermet Youth Group celebration session was held on 23rd January 2025. The presentations were well-received, with key themes including the need for additional space at the church, improvements to roads and transport, healthcare, and various forward-looking initiatives.

Events attended since last Community Partnership meeting:

* Beckermet Coffee, Cake and Chat x 3
* Gosforth Toddler Group x 2
* Chatty Lunch x 1
* Thornhill Pensioners
* U3A Chair based exercises x 3
* U3A Indoor Bowling
* BVA Blue Monday dinner
* BVA Soup Lunch

**AGENDA 7: COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUNDING UPDATE**

The Community Investment Panel (CIP) has approved 5 new awards for Year 4. There is currently £772,626 of funding remaining for year four with 5 more CIF Panels scheduled.

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

The CIF team has continued their meetings with Cumberland Council to seek leads for potential applicants, they will promote CIF in their Community Panels, Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership and via the Community Development Officers – this will continue going forward too.

# Of the 93 awards made to date:

# 52 awards met the Community Wellbeing CIF criteria.

# 16 awards met the Improvements to Natural / Built Environment CIF criteria.

# 20 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.

The Chair expressed gratitude to the seconded Grants Manager for his dedication and hard work. Additionally, it was noted that the former Grants Manager has resumed her role effective 1st March 2025.

**AGENDA 8: AOB**

CEM explained that the Visioning Subgroup is scheduled to meet in the coming weeks and will provide feedback at the next meeting.

**AGENDA 9: ISSUES FOR ESCALATION**

None

**AGENDA 10: PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None

**AGENDA 11: DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING**

The Community Partnership agreed to future meetings being quarterly and to bring forward the start time to 13:00.

The next Community Partnership meeting will be 2nd June 2025.

1. **Additional meeting dates in 2025**

• Wednesday 3rd September

• Monday 1st December

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| REF: 02122024 | MEETING ACTION LOG |
| Agenda 103032025 01  | Chair to circulate RSO Conference Report produced by South Copeland Representative. |
| Agenda 403032025 02  | Partnership member (Seascale PC) to reach out to the NDA regarding Moorside to enquire about potential alternative uses. |
| Agenda 403032025 03 | NWS PCEM to meet with Seascale Parish Council member to address their concerns. |
| Agenda 5 03032025 04 | The Chair to write to Copeland Community Fund to ask if it could attend part of the "Meet the Funders" event. |