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Mid Copeland
GDF Community Partnership

Issue 3

MID COPELAND GDF News

SUPPORTING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT A GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY IN OUR AREA

£75,000 grant is a life-saver

Funding for Mountain Rescue Team from GDF programme

A LIFE-SAVING team has been able to purchase a frontline emergency vehicle following funding from the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership.

Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team (WMRT) was awarded £75,497 in the first year of funding as part of the GDF programme and now the new rescue vehicle has been fully kitted out with blue lights, crag kit – including ropes and pulleys, casualty care equipment and radio communication.

The voluntary team of 50 people is one of 12 teams in the Lake District and helps to rescue and save the lives of those who get into difficulty, often in treacherous conditions. Historically, they deal with on average 100-120 emergency 999 call-outs a year, however this vital service has seen an increase in demand with 129 callouts before the end of August this year alone.

John Bamforth, Chair of WMRT, who has been a part of the team for about 27 years, said: “This funding from the GDF programme to provide the team with a fourth emergency vehicle is absolutely fabulous and will help us with this extra demand. Sometimes we can have two or even more call-outs in one day.

“It costs us £75,000 a year to run the team and we are totally reliant on donations and raising our own funds.”

John said the increase in call-outs appeared to be due to a number of

reasons including the Covid pandemic, which had encouraged more people to take holidays in the UK, such as the Lakes, and also down to people using social media to share photos and experiences of mountain adventures without the context of difficult terrain and adverse weather conditions.

He said: “The Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association is sponsoring a campaign called AdventureSmart (www.adventuresmart.uk) which encourages people to ask themselves three questions before they set off on an adventure: Am I confident I have the knowledge and skills for the day? Do I know what the weather will be like? Do I have the right gear?”

John added: “Sometimes we must walk for over two hours to even reach a casualty. On a recent occasion a mother and son had got stuck in a 200-metre ravine with no mobile reception and they were suffering from hypothermia. It was so windy we couldn't use a helicopter to help us initially.

“We had to set up a rope system to haul the casualties out then fortunately the weather improved enough for a helicopter to evacuate them to hospital. We were out for over 10 hours on that call.”

The team – who all live locally within 20 minutes of base – includes engineers, builders, teachers and accountants. They have a range of skills and can train in Mountain First Aid and the next level Casualty Care – which provides similar training to a paramedic.

Andy Pratt, Chair of the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, said: “Seeing this funding spent on something as important as a life-saving emergency vehicle really brings home how important this funding is and the diverse ways it can be used to benefit

the community.

“While we're part of this GDF process, our Community Partnership has £1million a year to award to local groups and organisations to help make a difference. Whether that's a new play park, a community service, a new youth centre or helping to save lives – every project we're able to fund is hugely important.”

A GDF is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership provides access to £1million Community Investment Funding (CIF) per year from the

GDF programme as discussions progress around what a facility could mean locally.

The Mid Copeland GDF Search Area covers the electoral ward of Gosforth which includes Seascale, Gosforth, Beckermeth, Calderbridge, Haile, Thornhill, Nethertown and Braystones. The Lake District National Park is excluded from consideration – however CIF can be used for eligible community projects in this area.

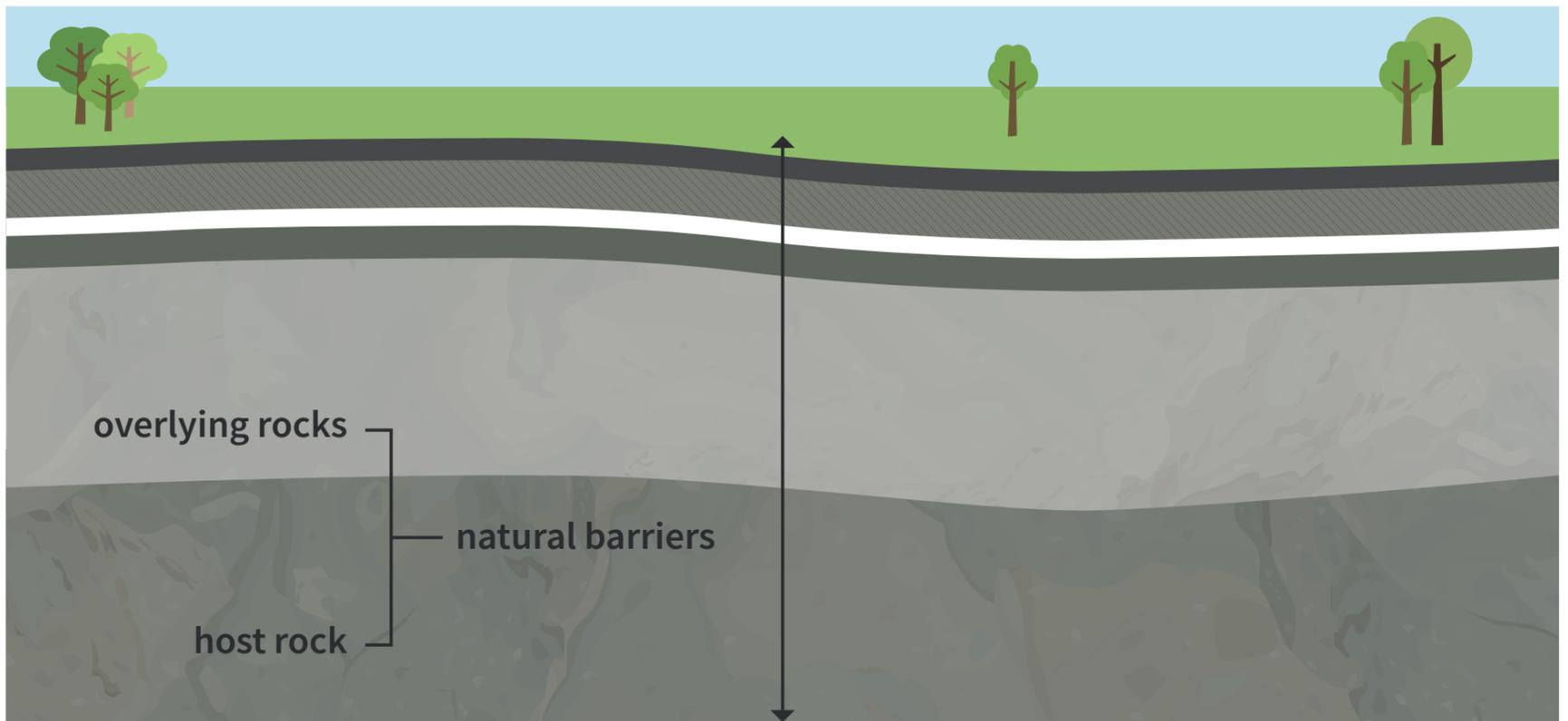
Deep geology beyond the coast is being considered for siting the underground elements of a GDF in Mid Copeland. This means a surface facility on, or near, the coast would provide access to a disposal area deep in rock beyond the coast.

The GDF programme requires both a suitable site and a willing community and is still in the early stages.

Construction will only start on a GDF when a suitable site is identified, a Potential Host Community has confirmed its willingness to host the facility through a Test of Public Support, and all the necessary consents and permits have been obtained. These steps could take around 15 years.

For more information about Community Investment funding go to: www.midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk
For more information about WMRT go to: www.wmrt.org.uk

GET IN TOUCH! EMAIL YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO GDFINFO-MIDCOPELAND@NUCLEARWASTESERVICES.UK



Why underground?

Deep disposal and multiple barriers help isolate and contain the waste

YOU might have heard the term 'multi-barrier approach' during discussions about geological disposal. But what is this, exactly?

A combination of natural and man-made barriers will be between people and the waste, and these work together to help safely isolate and contain radioactive waste.

Isolation means putting the waste well away from people and the surface environment. Containment means keeping the waste where it is placed.

Liam Payne, Research Manager for GDF developer Nuclear Waste Services, said: "A GDF cannot be built and operated unless it can be robustly demonstrated to the regulators that it will be safe. The multi-barrier approach is key to demonstrating this long-term safety and it will be a key factor in how we characterise

a site and then subsequently how we construct and operate the GDF so we know that it will remain safe and not cause harm to people and the environment."

In a GDF, the waste will be isolated in sealed vaults and tunnels deep underground, between 200m and 1,000m (656ft and 3,280ft) below the surface. The radioactive material is then contained while it decays naturally over time, and is prevented from reaching the surface in levels that could cause harm.

WHAT GOES INTO A GDF?

Only solid radioactive waste will go into a GDF. This makes it safer to handle, transport and dispose of. The solid waste is packaged into secure engineered containers made from a durable material, typically copper, steel or concrete, depending on the type of waste and geology.

The containers are designed to last anywhere between a few hundred years to tens of thousands of years, depending on the nature of the waste inside.

The radioactive waste containers will be carefully placed in a GDF, surrounded by a protective backfill and buffer material.

This backfill of cement or clay prolongs the life of the containers and slows down the release of radioactivity when containers eventually do fail.

The final barrier is the natural barrier of several hundred metres of stable rock, preventing radioactivity from moving towards the surface when other barriers eventually degrade over the very long timescales.

Only solid radioactive waste will go into a GDF

MULTIPLE PROTECTION

Nuclear Waste Services says that, once complete, the GDF will provide safety without the need for further action.

Together, these barriers are designed to help provide multiple levels of protection from the waste for many thousands of years, deep underground, far away from people and the environment.

All the time, the levels of radioactivity in the waste will be falling.

HOW MUCH WASTE GOES INTO A GDF?

ROUGHLY 750,000m³ of packaged waste could be destined for a GDF – about the same amount as in 300 Olympic-size swimming pools.

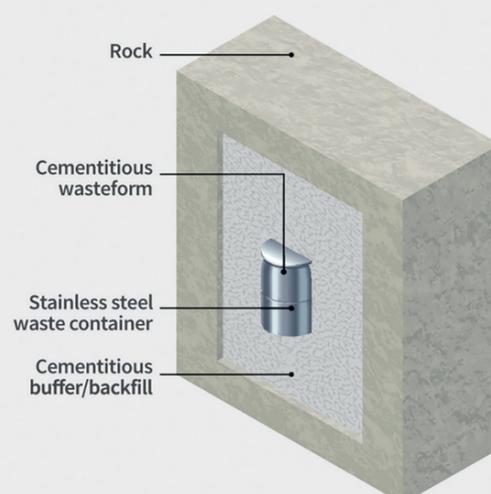
There is a large amount of legacy waste to deal with in the UK. This has been building up for more than 70 years and while it is currently stored safely above ground, this is not a sustainable solution for the thousands of years the waste continues to be a hazard.

All waste destined for a GDF will be UK-owned. International law states that spent fuel and radioactive waste remain the ultimate responsibility of the country in which it was generated.

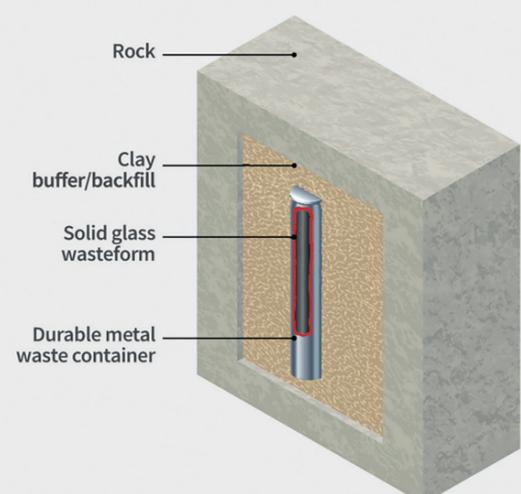
For more about the UK inventory visit ukinventory.nda.gov.uk

How the waste will be stored

Intermediate Level Waste



High Level Waste



Welcome to our newsletter



WELCOME to the third printed newsletter from the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, as we mark the end of our second year.

We've held or attended more than 60 events this year, speaking with around 1,500 people about what hosting a GDF could mean in this area.

And we want to hear all views – whether you are for GDF, against, undecided, or need more information – we are interested in what you have to say and are here to help.

For our events, we make sure we hold them across the Partnership area.

We also attend regular community groups, plus some larger events such as the successful Rotating Wheels and Gosforth Show, to have conversations with people and answer questions. If we can't answer something on the day, we will always come back to you and follow up.

When you attend our events, we're also gathering ideas about what you'd like to see locally in the long term if this area progresses in the GDF programme: What do you think would make this

area a good place to live and work for future generations? What big change would you like to see? What do you value most about living in this area?

In addition, Nuclear Waste Services has been carrying out events in neighbouring communities such as Whitehaven, Egremont and Cleator Moor. I attended some of these and thought they were really useful for helping to reach a wider audience and ensure people are kept informed.

We've also held a really useful interactive session recently with members of two communities in Canada to learn about their experiences around the GDF process over there and how that can help shape our work.

The Partnership has been working with young people involved with Shackles Off, a youth and community project in the Seascale and Gosforth area, who took part in a programme learning about GDF with the Community Engagement Team and careers guidance provider Inspira.

They gave us their views and provided insight into how to engage with other young people. This work included the group giving a presentation to the Partnership and writing an article in this edition of the newsletter.

Any groups who would like to know more about the Partnership or geological disposal, please do get in touch.

In member news, we've said a huge thank you to David Moore who was our Local Authority Lead since Copeland Working Group first formed in November 2020 and then on both Mid

and South Community Partnerships and we have welcomed Sam Pollen who is now the Cumberland Council representative on the Partnership. David has taken up the position of Seascale Parish Council representative and we've said goodbye and thank you to Lizzie Mawson for her work in that role.

A second resident research survey was carried out in our area over the summer to ask people's views on GDF, nuclear waste and the Community Partnership to measure awareness, understanding and support.

This has indicated a small increase in support, for example, trust in the Partnership has risen from 46% in 2022 to 60% in 2023.

And finally, Community Investment Funding (CIF) of £1million was awarded in year one and, as this newsletter went to press, we were on the cusp of the £1million mark for year two. I'm sure that will have been reached by the time you read this.

We've supported a wide variety of projects across this area – many of which may not have been able to access funds or make these projects a reality without GDF funding – so to share this community news shows what a difference this is making. Take a look at our website for further details about CIF and how you can put in an application: www.midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk

I wish everyone best wishes for the approaching festive period and a happy and healthy 2024.

Andy Pratt
Chair, Mid Copeland GDF
Community Partnership

Drop in-events

THE Mid Copeland team will be out and about at drop-in events across the area next year. Dates will be publicised in advance – keep a check on the website:

midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/get-involved

We are also available to attend one of your events, drop us a line to have a chat: midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/contact-us

In addition, Nuclear Waste Services will be holding further events in neighbouring communities next year – dates will be shared in advance.

Upcoming meetings

THE Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership's meetings are held in public. People can submit questions in advance or ask in person.

Meetings will be held on the following dates:

- Monday, December 11, 3-5pm, at Bailey Ground Hotel, Seascale
- Wednesday, March 6, 3-5pm, venue TBC

Some venues have yet to be confirmed and details will be posted on our website, midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk, as soon as they have been confirmed.

GDF programme progresses with marine aerial surveys

DATA from aerial and other environmental surveys will help Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) understand an area's suitability to host a GDF.

NWS is carrying out marine aerial surveys in Mid and South Copeland once a month. Two planes will fly on the same day, at the same time, and the expectation is for planes to be flying on one day each month during daylight hours, until March 2024.

The data collected during this first phase of survey work will help to inform more extensive environmental impact assessments going forward, including a second phase of planned environmental surveys that is likely to commence in April 2024 and run until October 2024, to capture data from the spring and summer season.

These aerial surveys will provide NWS with information on the presence and numbers of birds and marine wildlife in the area and, together with other environmental surveys, will provide baseline data as part of work to understand if an area is suitable for a Geological Disposal Facility.

Simon Hughes, Director of Siting and Communities at NWS, said: "These aerial surveys are an important part of gathering the data we need to understand the environment of an area.

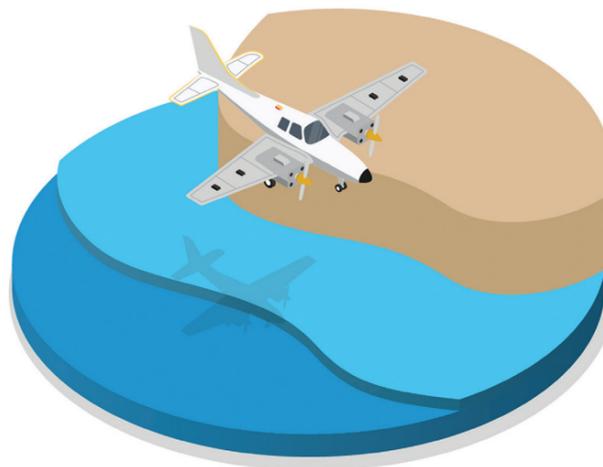
"The planes will fly at a low altitude, at least 1,600ft (500m) height in accordance with recognised best practice, yet be high enough not to disturb the wildlife being observed.

"At this stage we are not looking for any specific species, although the data will be used to get a better understanding of protected species using the area."

NWS is committed to environmental protection and the GDF programme is one of the largest infrastructure projects in the country. It will dispose of higher activity waste deep underground, safely and securely containing and isolating the waste making it safe for future generations.

The GDF programme requires both a suitable site and a willing community and is still in the early stages.

Construction will only start on a GDF when a suitable site is identified, when a Potential Host Community has confirmed its willingness to host the facility through a Test of Public Support, and when all the necessary consents and permits have been obtained. These steps could take around 15 years.



“These aerial surveys are an important part of gathering the data we need to understand the environment of an area.”

Andy Pratt, Chair of Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, said: "As a Community Partnership, we feel it's important we share news from NWS with you. The data gathered from these aerial surveys will be added to the current environmental data available.

"As a Partnership, we think it's important for as much data as possible to be gathered as part of this GDF process, to inform what actions must be taken to ensure the beautiful environment and wildlife around us is protected."

Marine Geophysical Survey update

A MARINE geophysical survey was successfully completed off the coast of Copeland in August last year to provide data to support Nuclear Waste Services' (NWS) assessments of the potential of deep geology to host a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Fiona McEvoy, Head of Geosphere Characterisation for NWS, said: "Work to date in Mid and South Copeland has indicated potentially suitable geology. At this stage we don't know enough about the rock and its properties, so we have started the next phase which is to get more information about the geology through further analysis of the geophysical survey data as well as information from nearby existing oil and gas boreholes.

"This work will continue into next year and when available will inform ongoing engineering and safety assessments about the suitability of the geology to host a GDF."

The Community Partnership and the public will be kept updated as the work progresses.

NWS decided not to take Allerdale further in the GDF siting process due to limited suitable geology. Following a comprehensive evaluation of information, it was concluded only a limited volume of suitable rock was identifiable and the geology in the area was unlikely to support a post closure safety case.

HOW GDF FUNDING HAS BEEN SPENT IN OUR AREA IN YEAR TWO



Over £920,000 awarded to Mid Copeland projects from GDF programme

A NEW youth centre, lifesaving workshops, two play parks and a transformed community hall are just some of the projects awarded funding from the GDF programme.

As this newsletter went to print, the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership had so far awarded £922,574 in Community Investment Funding to local projects during its second year, as the area takes part in the search for a suitable site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

A GDF is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

A total of £1million was awarded in the first year, most of which has now been spent and new facilities and services provided across Mid Copeland.

Community Partnership Chair Andy Pratt said: "It's brilliant to see all of these local projects receiving funding, coming to fruition and making a huge difference to so many people across our communities. There's such a wide range of projects which shows the versatility of the funding and all of the different ways it can be used to provide new and enhanced facilities.

"Last year we made a total of 28 awards totalling £1million and so far this year we have made 12 awards. If you have an idea for a project, it's always best to get in touch with the Community Investment Team before you start your application to ensure the best chance of a successful outcome."



HOW GDF FUNDING HAS BEEN SPENT IN OUR AREA IN YEAR TWO



The Shackles Off youth and community project is delighted to have been awarded a total of £412,879 from this year's and next year's Community Investment Funding for a purpose-built youth and community centre near the Windscale Club, in Seascale.

"We're absolutely over the moon that we have received this funding to make our dream a reality – this has been four years in the making and I don't think we could have done it without GDF," said Mandy Taylor, executive officer of Shackles Off.

Phase one includes demolition of a pre-fabricated building and putting in foundations for the eco-friendly project and phase 2 will be the new-build and fitting out which will include community room, youth space, kitchen and storage.

We express our heartfelt appreciation to GDF for their invaluable support, which has allowed us to take a giant leap forward."

"We have tried to make it as eco-friendly as possible with air-sourced heat pump, solar panels and a water collection system," added Mandy. The project also received £150,000 funding from Copeland Community Fund.

Shackles Off started in 2008 by a group of volunteers and has grown to work with a total of 550 young people across Seascale and Millom areas – almost 300 of those in Mid Copeland. Joanne Pears is manager and there are seven other staff offering informal education, fun activities and one to one work.



Youngsters are enjoying Calderbridge play area thanks to a revamp which includes four new pieces of equipment. The project was awarded £47,918 through Calderbridge and Ponsonby Parish Council. Hannah Webb, Parish clerk, said: "We're a small parish and we didn't have the funds so without this GDF funding it wouldn't have been possible to do this."

Villager Sam Arden filled out the Community Investment Funding application which she said was simple to do. "It's good we've been able to provide something for both younger and older children, every day there's families down here now enjoying the park."

Scott Robertson, Parish Council Vice Chair, said: "Improving our playground is one of the objectives in our community plan. While we've done some things ourselves, such as erecting new fencing and rebuilding walls to make the playground safer, this much needed enhancement to the play equipment for our children would have been very difficult to achieve without the support of the Community Partnership.

"We express our heartfelt appreciation to GDF for their invaluable support, which has allowed us to take a giant leap forward towards a brighter future for our community."

Parish Council Chair Bob Jones added: "This improves the assets for the village and helps to encourage more people to become involved in the community. It's also a facility which will be used by the wider Mid Copeland area."

Beckermet Reading Rooms was awarded a total of £267,930 from the GDF programme in years 1 and 2, for a feasibility study and refurbishment.

Projects to benefit from funding so far in year two are:

- £302,500 for Shackles Off for construction of a new youth and community centre, and a further £110,379 agreed from next year's funding
- £47,918 to Calderbridge and Ponsonby Parish Council for Calderbridge Village Playground to update the village play area
- £130,871 to Beckermet with Thornhill Parish Council for Thornhill play park
- £64,200 towards Beckermet Reading Rooms refurbishment project
- £9,990 Gosforth Juniors AFC development – including new goals, training equipment and strip
- £29,086 for Copeland Age and Advice Service to support Mid Copeland people aged over 55
- £37,731 to Seascale Parish Council, for Seascale Bowling Club to fund fencing and a mower
- £3,960 to Age UK West Cumbria, to provide a veterans' session at the Muncaster Men in Sheds project
- £2,640 for Little Lifers First Aid Ltd, delivering Flat Stan First Aid Workshop to Year 3 Primary Schools in Mid Copeland
- £3,126 towards Gosforth Agricultural Show, for marquee hire and 10 tables
- £14,865 for Gosforth Parish Council, for Gosforth Public Hall refurbishment feasibility study
- £9,670 to Beckermet Nursery for refurbishment and repairs
- £9,999 for new projection equipment for St Mary's Church, Gosforth
- £119,016 to replace Gosforth Play Park with new equipment
- £48,000 for outdoor learning area at Seascale School
- £74,000 to Seascale Golf Club for an electric greens mower
- £15,000 for Mental Health NW CIC to create a wellness walks group and volunteer walk leader training (plus a potential further £12,380 funding next year)



The workshops have been a fantastic success, all the children have lots of fun while learning vital lifesaving skills."

From initial planning in February last year until now, it's had a major transformation and redesign into a community centre, including new roof, heating and air conditioning system, floor, storage, décor and furnishing.

Geoff Nugent, a director of Beckermet Reading Rooms Community Interest Company, has project managed the renovations. He said: "Without GDF funding we couldn't have delivered this project for the community. We needed a proper community centre for the village to appeal to all age groups and I'm very proud in what we have created."

A successful village show was held at the re-opening, attracting around 100 people, which was followed by a larger celebration event in September to mark the building's centenary. Geoff added: "Everyone is amazed at the total transformation of the centre, it's a really big achievement."

Year 3 pupils in Mid Copeland have been learning lifesaving skills – such as CPR, dealing with choking and the

recovery position – thanks to Flat Stan First Aid workshops. They are run by Little Lifers First Aid Ltd where local businesses sponsor schools so they can have access to the free workshops. Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership awarded £2,640.

The funding will be used over the next three years in Mid Copeland. This year 75 local primary children have taken part from Beckermet, Gosforth, Seascale and Thornhill schools. Natalie Groggins, Adult and Paediatric First Aid Instructor, said: "The workshops have been a fantastic success, all the children have lots of fun while learning vital lifesaving skills. Thank you to the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership for funding."

Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership provides access to £1million Community Investment Funding (CIF) per year from the GDF programme as discussions progress around what a facility could mean locally.

The Mid Copeland GDF Search Area covers the electoral ward of Gosforth which includes Seascale, Gosforth, Beckermet, Calderbridge, Haile, Thornhill, Nethertown and Braystones. The Lake District National Park is excluded from consideration – however CIF can be used for eligible community projects in this area.

FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

A LOCAL project focusing on exercise, mental well-being and fostering a sense of community togetherness has achieved remarkable success since its inception last year, with the support of the Mid Copeland community.

The project was awarded £159,330 in Community Investment Funding from the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership with unwavering commitment and active participation from local residents.

Delivering the Wheels of Wellness and Happy Healthy Neighbours programmes from 2023-2026 is iCan Wellbeing Group CIO. The project has been met with a positive response from the Mid Copeland community, enabling the continuation of these programmes for the next two years.

Molly Champion, of Gosforth, has taken on the role of Exercise and Community Engagement Coordinator for Mid Copeland. Alongside her, Hannah Wright, who lives at Seascale, is the Exercise and Community Engagement Facilitator. Both Molly and Hannah have been passionately dedicated to the project's success, and their roles have been made possible by the Community Investment Funding support.

The team prioritises diverse and inclusive activities, catering to people of different abilities and age groups across every programme. A typical session includes a low-impact, high-intensity workout on mini trampolines, followed by an activity such as the popular Health & Well-being Bingo! The group then engages in a chair-based exercise routine involving resistant bands and exercise balls. To date, the project has reached 260 people. Sessions have been conducted at various community centres, including Beckermert Reading Rooms, Calderbridge & Ponsonby Village Hall, Haile Village Hall, St Bega's Missionary Church, and Santon Bridge Village Hall. Additionally, the project has collaborated with existing



Both Molly and Hannah have been passionately dedicated to the project's success.

organisations such as Bee Unique Autism, West Cumbria Home Ed Group, and Santon Bridge WI.

Molly and Hannah are committed to continuing to utilise local community spaces and are currently seeking locations for funding in year two. Molly said: "The

support from the Mid Copeland community has been overwhelming. While our focus includes improving community access to local support, enhancing motivation, increasing physical activity, improving mental health, reducing social isolation, and fostering community neighbourliness, our top priority is to make every session a welcoming and inclusive space."

The project's positive impact extends beyond the scheduled sessions. The sessions serve as a platform to connect the community to existing fitness and social groups. Molly and Hannah have created a Facebook Group that provides

an ongoing platform for communication and connection among members. The group posts photos from the sessions as well as sharing local activities and events.

The iCan Wellbeing Group CIO team is continuously seeking health and well-being activities to promote within the community. Molly is also a volunteer with the Muncaster Parkrun and extends an invite to all to go along to the event which is held every Saturday at 9am. For those interested in contributing or participating in any of these activities, Molly and Hannah can be reached via email at midcopeland@icanfitnesscumbria.co.uk



Funding helps to put groups on the right track

• WEST Lakeland Rotary Club was awarded £4,300 for improved footpath accessibility near the River Irt, Holmrook, including replacing stiles with gates – this work is now complete.

• West Lakes U3A was awarded £9,934 towards a two-year programme of activities. These have included Live Longer Better exercise classes, walks and organised trips.

Giving an update, the group said: "The GDF grant has certainly helped West Lakes U3A provide a very varied programme of events and talks and helped to reduce rural isolation among people in Gosforth and surrounding villages – helping to provide fun and friendship enjoyed by so many older members."

• The Community Partnership has provided funding to help Gosforth

Show for the past two years. This year it was awarded £3,126 for marquee hire, plus 10 tables.

Allan Lowrey said: "The staging of the show involves about 390 members of the community working together. It's an agricultural show with lots of trade stands, food stalls, entertainment, animals and sports which is enjoyed by so many and it really brings the community together."

"GDF funding again this year was very much appreciated by the 30 local small craft businesses who showed off their skills and showcased their wares in the Rural Enterprise Tent. They enjoyed the day and many people did birthday and Christmas shopping there, so that helps sustain the local economy and local craft skills. Thank you for providing funding for this tent at the show."

FRANCE APPLIES FOR GDF CONSTRUCTION LICENCE



A 'crucial step' ahead

French say safe, long-term disposal of waste is an ethical responsibility

FRANCE is among the countries making progress in developing a GDF. The French national radioactive waste management agency, Andra, submitted a construction licence application in January for its Cigéo project (Industrial Centre for Geological Disposal).

This is a GDF for radioactive waste to be built at a site straddling the Meuse and Haute-Marne districts in the north east of the country.

The facility will dispose of highly radioactive, long-lived waste produced by France's nuclear facilities.

Andra has said this "crucial step" follows more than 25 years of research work.

Protecting people and the environment

The Cigéo project – which is similar to GDFs under construction or under consideration worldwide – aims to protect people and the environment from the danger posed by radioactive waste by disposing of it deep underground, which isolates the waste from the surface by housing it in suitable rock, which provides containment.

Andra has said that deep disposal meets the "ethical responsibility" of not passing on to future generations the responsibility for waste created now.

The developer added: "We are demonstrating our responsibility to future generations, especially against the background of uncertainty in our society, to make sure that we do not leave them with the burden of the radioactive waste that we have produced."



The Cigéo project follows more than 25 years' work, including regularly reviewed research. Three laws were passed as part of the project, in 1991, 2006 and 2016, with public debates held to hear concerns and answer questions.

Safest solution

The French parliament embraced the principle of deep geological disposal more than 10 years ago, believing it to be the safest solution for radioactive waste.

France is not alone in opting for deep geological disposal – this is the favoured option across Europe, internationally and here in the UK.

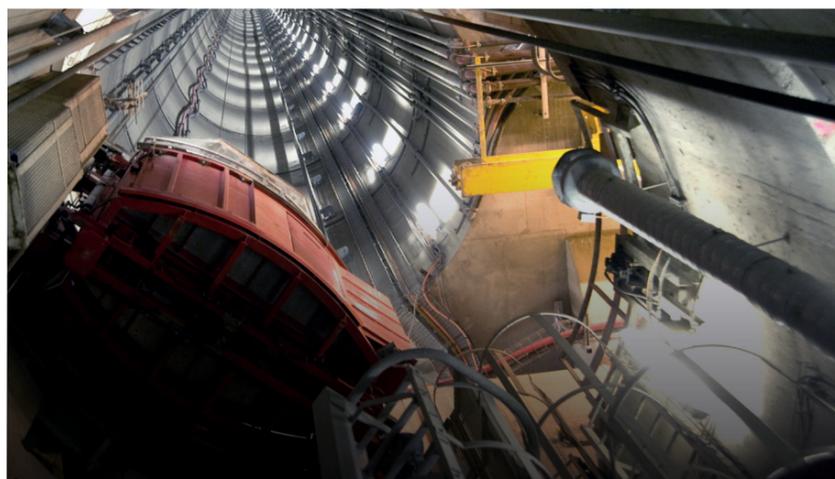
Like Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), the GDF developer in the UK, French agency Andra, is committed to an active, joint construction process with the community.

This approach involves ongoing discussion with the planned GDF's neighbours, as well as a consultation with the region's stakeholders.

Employment and training

Andra has said Cigéo represents an opportunity for the host region, particularly in terms of employment – even before construction begins, jobs will be created by site preparation and preliminary development.

The GDF's construction will require up to 2,000 people over five years. The workforce will stabilise at around 600 people during site operation. Cigéo will also generate indirect jobs for more than a century.



Andra is also involved in training young people through partnership agreements with the Universities of Lorraine and Champagne-Ardenne, as well as local vocational colleges.

The agency also welcomes students for work-study programmes and internships, and supports doctoral theses on subjects related to its activities.

Dr Simon Norris, NWS Principal Research Manager, said: "NWS and Andra have worked together for decades.

Such international collaboration ensures effective knowledge exchange, the sharing of ideas and experiences, and is very cost-effective and time-efficient.

"NWS is very interested to further its understanding of the suitability of the rocks present in Mid Copeland to host the UK's GDF – this is an essential part of the siting process alongside community willingness to participate.

"Drawing on international experience will be a key input to this process."

FINDING THE RIGHT HOME

THE location for the Cigéo GDF was chosen because of the suitable geology of the area. The host rock is 160 million years old, 145 metres (476ft) thick and between 400 and 600 metres underground.

A spokesperson for Andra said: "The disposal facility's depth and design, and the type of rock in which it is located, as well as the geological stability, mean that the waste can be isolated from human activity and natural events on the surface (e.g. erosion and glaciation) in the very long term.

"Once closed, the facility will not require any further human intervention: the safety of the site is described as 'passive.'"

Learn more at bit.ly/CigeoProject

Young people encourage others to get involved in the GDF programme and have their say

WE are a group of young people from Shackles Off social action group and earlier this year we took part in a 10-week programme with the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership and Inspira.

The sessions were centred around learning what a Geological Disposal Facility is and the opportunities it could bring to our area.

We got the chance to express our feelings and concerns around if the GDF was to be built in the area, we also looked at the facts and educated ourselves to make informative decisions.

We want to encourage other young people to have their say in the GDF process and get involved to make their voices heard too.

During the sessions, our opinions were mixed. Lucy thought that the GDF would “increase local jobs, provide better transport links and it would lead to more investment in the local community which could lead to better shops and leisure facilities”.

However, Elsa was worried that the facility might “spoil the views and if a new facility is built here, there will be an increase in traffic in the local area”.

Tanzin was worried that GDF would bring more people to the village and would mean there would be no affordable housing for the younger generation leaving them unable to stay and live in their home communities.

Charlie said: “Being underground means the facility will protect humans and the atmosphere. A lot of work needs to be done first to check if the geology of our area is suitable. If GDF means more money and more jobs, then I’m in.”

We were also asked to provide insight for Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership about how they can engage with young people. Neave had some great ideas involving social media and other technology. She said: “You could create videos and ask young people to help create them. You could also design a game that represents the GDF process and make this an app that you could download on your phone and promote in schools and youth groups.”

After we took part in the project we created a presentation, with help from staff, compiling everything we learned and discussed and presented this to both the Community Partnership and Nuclear Waste Services.



The group were keen to voice their views

Mid Copeland Community Partnership Resident Research Survey results

THANKS to residents in Mid Copeland who took part in a recent survey. Between July and August 2023, a sample of 182 people living in the Mid Copeland Search Area electoral ward of Gosforth were asked questions about their awareness of the Community Partnership and geological disposal.

The Community Partnership’s preference was for the researchers to offer a mixture of face-to-face surveys (at Gosforth Agricultural Show and Rotating Wheels) and via telephone.

This is the second survey carried out in Mid Copeland Search Area to look at awareness, understanding and support of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) across the Search Area, the first one was August-October 2022, where 150 people were surveyed.

We asked the Chair of Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, Andy Pratt, to share his initial thoughts on the findings and independent research consultant, Yonder, to summarise the results.

Andy said: “Thank you for taking part in this survey and sharing with us your thoughts, questions and concerns around the possibility of hosting a GDF in our area.

“We’re still at the very early stages of a long process which involves gathering data and information needed to inform us if our area is suitable to progress in the search to build a facility off the coast of West Cumbria.

“The numbers of residents we surveyed this year was larger than the previous year, with many figures coming out similar to last time. Where there are large differences in data gathered, we will be working closely with stakeholders to understand these differences and address them with the community so we can ensure we provide accurate information in a format that is understandable and accessible.”

Summary

More than half of the people taking part in the survey (56%) would support the potential construction of a GDF in the Mid Copeland Search Area, while 15% would be opposed. This compares with 62% and 23% respectively in last year’s survey. 28% said they neither supported nor opposed the proposal (compared to 16% last year).

The NET support for the construction of a GDF in the Mid Copeland Search Area stood at +41 from this survey (compared to +39 last year). NET

Support is the percentage of residents surveyed that support, minus the number that oppose (excluding those undecided).

Of respondents, 78% stated they were able to recall seeing, reading or hearing something about radioactive waste or geological disposal in the past year (compared to 79% last year) and 47% attributed this to a leaflet, newsletter, or something posted through the door. Of the 78% that recalled seeing or reading or hearing something, 46% claimed to have done something in response, such as spoken to family/friends, compared to 66% last year.

Two-in-five (40%) said they had seen and read the GDF News newsletter. Another 22% said they had seen the GDF News but not read it. Of those respondents who recalled seeing, reading or hearing something about radioactive waste or geological disposal over the past year, half said they had read the newsletter.

In total, 82% said they were aware that a Search Area covering the Gosforth electoral ward as well as areas underneath the seabed off the coast of Copeland had been identified for further investigation of its suitability for a GDF, compared to 80% last year.

And 46% of residents asked were aware of how the UK’s radioactive waste is stored, compared to 67% last year, while two-in five (41%) identified the accurate description of a GDF, compared to 60% last year, 30% said they had heard of the term but didn’t know what it was, compared to 28% last year. Two-thirds (65%) supported the national policy to construct a GDF in a willing community, which was the same as last year, while 8% of those residents asked were opposed to the national policy, compared to 16% opposed last year.

NET support for the national policy stood at +57 (compared to +50 in August 2022).

The support for a GDF within Mid Copeland was higher than average among those that had a direct connection with the nuclear industry.

Respondents most often requested information about the general approach/geological disposal (37%); more information on safety (28%) and information on the impact on human health (13%). In last year’s survey the figures were: safety (40%); the potential impact on jobs/local economy (36%); more information related to human health (26%) and information about the approach/geological disposal (24%).

Over half (54%) wanted to receive more information via post, compared to 45% last year; 24% wanted to receive more information at in-person events (28% last year); whilst 12% wanted to access information online on websites (38% last year).

One-in-four (24%) cited the local council as the source of information they would like to hear more from regarding geological disposal and the siting process, 23% wanted to hear from experts, 15% wanted to hear from national government, while 12% sought information from nuclear industry management. Last year, 44% cited they would like to hear from a local council; 28% wanted to receive more information from environmental groups; while the same proportion wanted to hear more from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

For the full article please see the website: <https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/latest-news/>

Join the GDF conversation



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