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Tell us what matters to you and your area

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Mid Copeland
GDF Community
Partnership

MID COPELAND



News

Issue 4: Summer 2024

Supporting community engagement about a Geological Disposal Facility

2nd Seascale Scout Group at the presentation event



Scouts share their vision for future

Youngsters' project highlights what GDF could mean for their area

A WATER sports centre, pop-up cinema and virtual reality gaming area are just some ideas emerging from a group of young people in Seascale.

The 2nd Seascale Scout Group was asked what their future community could look like as part of a project with Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership and careers guidance provider Inspira around what a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) could mean for their area.

Thirty scouts considered what Seascale looks like now, what it could look like in 5/10 years' time and what it could look like in 50 years.

They showcased their ideas to Community Partnership members, staff and some parents during an event at Seascale School.

Illustrations brought their ideas to life and included:

"Visioning work is really important to us. This is your future and it's important that you have a view, so thank you for your time and commitment."

— David Moore, Partnership member, Seascale Parish Council

- Sea water pool, beach huts and water sports centre
- Development of Coniston Park to include a multi-use games area, youth shelters
- Pop-up cinema
- Nature trails with signage
- Dedicated wildlife areas such as a bug hotel and hedgehog houses
- Improved public toilets and bins.

The Community Partnership has started to consider how a community vision could benefit the local area and what it would contain, should a GDF be hosted in Mid Copeland.

Seascale Parish Council is also going to work with the scouts to apply for Nuclear Waste Services' GDF Community Investment Funding (CIF) and make some of the ideas a reality in the shorter term.

David Moore, Seascale Parish Council member on the Community Partnership, handed out certificates to the scouts and said: "Visioning work is really important to us, this is your future and it's important that you have a view so thank you for your time and commitment. And looking at some of these ideas, there's things we can get started on in the short term."

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Creating a community vision for the future

THE Partnership is in the very early stages of considering what a community vision could look like to benefit the local area, should a GDF be hosted in Mid Copeland.

As part of the GDF programme, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) will work with communities engaged in the process to help develop a positive and inclusive vision for the future.

It will involve the Partnership asking the community what matters to them to help generate ideas and consider what they would like to see being developed.

Significant Additional Investment will be made in a community that hosts a GDF, to enhance the economic benefits that are inherent in hosting a nationally significant infrastructure project and to recognise the commitment from the community. This could include improved local education and skills capacity, enhanced transport infrastructure, or improved recreational facilities.

PARTNERSHIP

For the community that is chosen to host a GDF, this significant additional investment would be in addition to the investment and jobs that a major infrastructure project of this kind will bring to an area.

The NWS local team is working with Community Partnership parish members to help start generating ideas in order to assist Parish Councils with their



Mid Copeland – what could benefit the local area?

visions/plans which, over time, will assist with the community vision.

Andy Pratt, Chair of the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, said: “We would like the community to be front and centre, as this is about creating a positive future vision for this area if it was to progress in the GDF programme.

“We’ve also been working with some local groups of young people, together with careers guidance provider Inspira, to get ideas and influence about what they think their community could look like and benefit from. We’d like to thank Shackles Off and also the 2nd Seascale Scout Group for getting involved.”

Learn more about the Community Partnership at midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk

We want to hear from you!

Join us at one of our focus groups to share what matters to you about the future of your area.

We would like to hear a range of opinions and views as part of this visioning work.

The relaxed and informal sessions will explore what you would like to see in the near and long term. No previous experience is needed.

For more information and to register, scan here:



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Neil Henderson, Scout Troop Lead Volunteer, said: “The Scouts were introduced to GDF and the transformation that it might bring to the area. Once they realised the kind of things that might be possible, their imaginations ran wild and some incredible and thoughtful ideas were generated, culminating with the Scouts enthusiastically describing their ideas to the visitors.

“The entire process gave the scouts a good insight into the issues relating to the GDF. They also earned part of their Teamwork badge, which will help them towards their Chief Scout’s Gold Awards.”

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

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.



The Scouts enjoyed the event



Partnership Chair Andy Pratt chats to some of the scouts

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 up to 15 years.

Whatever your view, we want to hear it – Chair

WELCOME to the fourth printed newsletter from Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership. We're now more than halfway through our third year as part of the GDF programme.

We're also well into awarding the third £1million allocation for the Mid Copeland community to enhance the local area, create new projects and provide new facilities. As this newsletter was in production, our latest total awarded so far from GDF Community Investment Funding this year stood at £428,281.

There are now further applications in the pipeline and plenty of opportunity for more grants, so do get in touch.

While this Community Investment Funding is being granted to local projects, we're also now thinking about the longer term. If this area was to progress further in the GDF programme, what could a community vision look like to benefit this area?

We'll be progressing this work, which is in the very early stages, by having lots more discussions and involvement with local people.

Community engagement is an important part of our role, which includes sharing information and keeping people up-to-date. Whatever your view, we want to hear it. It's important to keep having conversations as we progress through this journey and hearing how people feel. If you have concerns or questions, we're here to help find those answers.

Last year we held or attended 73 events, which resulted in discussions with just short of 1,000 people and, so far this year, we've held/attended around 31 events as part of our engagement.

We also issued eight press releases last year and added 15 articles to the news section of our website. We sent three of these printed, newspaper-style newsletters to homes in Mid Copeland

The year in numbers:



and three e-bulletins to our online subscribers. We also use digital advertising and our own social media channels to help keep people informed.

Our youth work continues by engaging with young people in our area to talk to them about geological disposal and listen to their thoughts and ideas.

Some Partnership members attended a visit to the British Geological Survey (BGS) in Nottingham this year to learn more about the rock off the coast of Copeland.

They also found out more about the techniques used to interpret the geological data and how it informs assessments by developer Nuclear

Waste Services (NWS) of the potential of the geology for a GDF.

NWS is also continuing to carry out monthly aerial surveys off the coast to gather information on the presence and numbers of birds and marine wildlife in the area. Together with other environmental surveys, they will provide baseline data as part of its work to understand if an area is suitable for a GDF. Our annual residents' survey to gather a snapshot of views towards GDF, the nuclear industry and the Partnership will be held in the coming weeks. This will feature an independent organisation gathering opinion and feedback in person by attending some local events and door to door surveys, plus some telephone interviews. So if you see the team out and about, please do give your views and have your say.

Andy Pratt, Chair, Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership

Upcoming meetings

The Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership's meetings are held in public, so do come along.

People can submit questions in advance or ask in person.

The next meeting will be held on the following date:

- Monday, July 29, 3.30-6pm, at St Mary's Room, St Mary's Church, Gosforth

Further meetings and details will be posted on our website:

midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk as soon as they have been confirmed.

Andy Pratt, Chair of the Partnership



Funding buys life-saving kit for local volunteers

The group with the new life-saving kit



Volunteer First Responder group receives more than £17k for new kit

A GROUP which supports the ambulance service by providing a quick response to life-threatening emergencies has received £17,510 from the GDF programme.

The Gosforth and District Community First Responder Group, which has 15 volunteer members, is delighted to be able to replace its aging life-saving kit and buy new equipment.

The group was set up in 2002 for the Gosforth area and covers around 105 square miles. There are members throughout the patch, which includes Calderbridge, Gosforth, Seascale, Wasdale and surrounding areas.

Team Leader Stuart Robb said: "Due to the nature of our rural communities, ambulance response times can be lengthy. Community First Responders are able to attend more quickly from within the community and treat the patient until the ambulance arrives.

"This intervention can be critical when the patient has a life-threatening condition. The Responders are part of the process that looks after the health and wellbeing of their community." A population of around 4,000 is served by the team but there is also a seasonal influx of some 100,000 tourists, said

Being primarily a self-funding group, we are always grateful to organisations that are prepared to consider making grants available to us and this grant has ensured that we are able to have equipment that will allow us to continue for years to come."

— Stuart Robb, Team Leader

Community Investment Funding events showcase what can be achieved

ALMOST 50 people attended Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership's events earlier in the year to learn more about how to apply for Community Investment Funding from the GDF programme.

Held in Beckermeth and Gosforth, the events also provided an opportunity to meet other local people who had successfully applied for funding and

provided new facilities in the Mid Copeland area.

Cumberland Council, Copeland Community Fund and Nuclear Waste Services representatives attended to provide details of their funding opportunities.

Through the GDF programme, the Community Partnership awarded £2 million in its first two years to a variety of local projects as

discussions progress around what a facility could mean for the Mid Copeland area.

Andy Pratt, Chair of the Community Partnership, said: "We were delighted with the number of people who came through the doors during the two half days when we held these community events.

"People were pleased to have the opportunity to

speak to a range of different funders we brought together.

"The Partnership received some excellent feedback from those attending, who got to see what can be achieved with Community Investment Funding – now in its third year for Mid Copeland – as well as from other funding providers. We hope to organise something similar later in the year."

Stuart, who is also Chairman and trustee of the Gosforth and District First Responder Charitable Trust, a registered charity.

Some of the kit used by the team was up to 20 years old and the Community Investment Funding grant awarded by the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership has provided every team member with a brand new full operational kit, a new lightweight summer hi-vis vest

and a vehicle identification sign, plus other equipment.

Stuart added: "We've also replaced an aging laptop and display monitor and bought a power bank to allow us to use our IT and Bluetooth equipment at remote locations as well as at training sessions for both the team and the public.

"Being primarily a self-funding group, we are always grateful to organisations that are prepared to consider making

grants available to us and this grant has ensured that we are able to have equipment that will allow us to continue for years to come.

"Thank you to the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership for this award."

Learn more about Community Investment Funding and how to apply at midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/community-investment-funding



Volunteer members support the ambulance service

Community Investment Funding – what has been awarded so far in year 3?

TO DATE, funding totalling £428,281 has been awarded from the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership from the GDF programme:

- **West Cumbria Domestic Violence:** £10,000, towards a counselling project.
- **Seascale Events:** £2,190 for Seascale Gala Week.
- **Gosforth Parish Council:** £12,000 towards Gosforth Public Hall refurbishment design.
- **Egremont & Area Regen Partnership:** £24,360 for Florence Arts Centre to grow creative opportunities for Mid Copeland.
- **Calderbridge and Ponsonby Village Hall:** £196,018 (incl contingency of £25,419) for renovation work, including a new roof.
- **Centre for Leadership Performance:** £7,920 for a 12-week Bright Stars programme in four schools.
- **Beckermet Village Association:** £5,420 for the purchase and installation of



a defibrillator at Beckermet Reading Rooms.

- **Lake District National Park Authority:** £41,850 towards a Wasdale Valley community shuttle bus service.
- **Gosforth Agricultural Show:** £5,764 for hire of Rural Enterprise marquee and show equipment.

The current year also includes two funding commitments awarded during Year 2 totalling £122,759 that were allocated from the Year 3 funding. These are:

- **Shackles Off:** £110,379 for new youth centre.
- **Mental Health North West CIC:** £12,380, for the creation of wellness walks groups.

HOW TO APPLY FOR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUNDING

Funding is available to support projects in Mid Copeland that provide economic development opportunities, enhance the natural and built environment or improve community wellbeing.

For further details, visit our website at midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk or get in touch by email at communityinvestment-midcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk



One of the events was at Beckermet Reading Rooms



Several funders took part in the event

Andrew joins engagement team

ANDREW Monaghan has joined NWS as part of the Mid Copeland Community Partnership engagement team.

Andrew, who is from Copeland, previously worked for careers guidance provider Inspira for around eight years, mainly working with young people.

During that time, he worked on the National Citizen Service (NCS) contract as Area Coordinator for West Cumbria, which involved organising and delivering a summer programme for young people aged 15 and 16.

Andrew said: "While working with Inspira, I was involved with both Mid and Allerdale GDF Community Partnerships around youth engagement. I'm enjoying continuing this community work in Mid Copeland with the Community Partnership and, in particular, helping to expand our work involving local young people and ensuring they have a say on GDF."

In his spare time, Andrew plays football for a local club, where he is also a committee member and youth coach.

"I'm enjoying continuing this community work in Mid Copeland."

— Andrew Monaghan



Andrew has joined the team



Mark Fryer - view from Cumberland Council



Mark Fryer,
Leader of
Cumberland
Council

CUMBERLAND Council is participating in the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process as the

Relevant Principal Local Authority for both the Mid and South Copeland Community Partnerships: a role established in the UK Government's GDF siting process and that gives the Council certain powers and responsibilities.

The primary purpose of the Community Partnerships is to give people credible information about what a GDF is, about why it is considered the right way to manage the UK's most hazardous radioactive waste and about what it might mean if a GDF were in fact constructed here.

Cumberland Council fully supports that work and our representatives on the Partnerships are keen to play an active role.

The Council fully appreciates there are differing views about whether it would be a good thing for our area to host a GDF and we remain neutral on the matter.

But we do recognise there is a real need for a permanent solution to managing the waste concerned – ongoing surface storage is not a longer-term solution.

"We do recognise there is a real need for a permanent solution to managing the waste concerned – ongoing surface storage is not a longer-term solution."

Participating in the GDF siting process means the question of whether West Cumbria might or might not be a suitable location for a GDF can be properly resolved once and for all, while allowing us all to examine in detail what the implications of siting a GDF here might be and whether it is something that could fit with our own ambitions for this area.

Given that much of the waste intended for a GDF is held at the Sellafield site, Cumberland will be affected by the GDF project regardless of where the facility itself is located, so it makes sense for our community to be part of the conversation.

The task of examining the geology off our coastline and assessing whether it might provide a suitable site for a GDF is challenging and could take the developer some years to conclude.

During that process, I hope people will continue to engage positively with the Community Partnerships, take an interest in the site evaluation work as it progresses and help us to ensure any concerns and questions people may have about the project are properly examined and addressed.

Members learn more about rock off coast of Copeland in BGS visit

MEMBERS of the Community Partnership have visited the British Geological Survey (BGS) in Nottingham.

The day was designed to be an introduction to the BGS and provided an opportunity for the Community Partnership members to understand the processes and techniques used to interpret geological and geophysical data.

BGS is one of many organisations that provides geological support and expertise to developer Nuclear Waste Services (NWS).

Members looked at some of the data from the marine geophysical survey, which was acquired in the Copeland inshore area in August 2022. They also had a discussion around the interpretation of the data and how it is used to inform the NWS assessments of the potential of the geology in the inshore area to host a GDF.

The Partnership group toured the BGS facilities during the March visit, including rock laboratories and the National Geological Repository (NGR), which is the largest collection of geoscience samples from the UK. Members had the opportunity to view samples of the rocks being evaluated to host a GDF in the inshore Copeland area.

The Partnership group was accompanied by members of the NWS Site Characterisation team and BGS experts.

NWS has stated that work to date in Mid and South Copeland has indicated that potentially suitable geology is present in the inshore area and that work is ongoing to further develop subsurface understanding.

Partnership member Julie Nugent, Chair of Beckermeth with Thornhill Parish Council, said: "It was a really worthwhile visit to the BGS. I was not aware of the depth of work that they do, not just for the UK but worldwide.

"It was also reassuring for myself to see that an independent organisation such as the BGS is carrying out work to understand if the geology is suitable to host a GDF."

David Moore, Partnership member for Seascale Parish Council, added: "The visit was very useful to help understand how the data will be analysed from the seismic survey.

"Viewing the core samples from earlier boreholes let us see and touch the Mercia Mudstone and evaporites that we hear talked about in presentations."



The Community Partnership and engagement team visited the BGS



Samples of rock on display



Partnership Chair Andy Pratt

Aerial surveys to continue

NUCLEAR Waste Services carried out six marine aerial surveys off the coast of Copeland between October 2023 and March 2024.

These surveys have given the developer information about the birds and marine wildlife in the inshore area.

Two planes flew once every month, during daylight hours, and they used high-resolution video cameras to take pictures of the different species in the air or on/in the water.

These images were looked at by computer software and trained ecologists.

BIRDS AND WILDLIFE SPOTTED

Information from the surveys show which species have been identified. Harbour porpoise have been

spotted, while the most common birds seen so far are:

- Guillemot
- Herring gull
- Oystercatcher
- Razorbill.

The surveys were initially carried out for six months, during the autumn and winter months. Data to cover all the seasons is required and the surveys will continue.

SPRING AND SUMMER SURVEYS

A second phase of environmental baseline surveys began in April. These will run until October to capture data from the spring and summer season. Further surveys after October are also being considered.



Oystercatcher



Guillemot

The surveys will be dependent on the weather in terms of visibility, cloud height and sea conditions. Flight dates can therefore change at short notice. Similar surveys are being carried out off the coast of East Lindsey, Lincolnshire.

NWS is committed to environmental protection

and the GDF programme is one of the largest environmental protection programmes in the UK.

The data from these surveys will be used together with other environmental baseline data to understand if an area is suitable for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Journey to a GDF

A GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY

(GDF) is a facility designed to safely and securely dispose of the most hazardous radioactive waste in highly engineered vaults and tunnels deep underground. The GDF programme requires Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) to find both a suitable site and a willing community and is still in the early stages.

GDFs are internationally recognised by governments, technical experts and scientists as the best solution for the safe, permanent disposal of our most radioactive waste.

NWS is the developer of a GDF and, as part of its process to evaluate the three Community Partnership Search Areas in Mid Copeland and South Copeland in Cumbria and Theddlethorpe, in Lincolnshire, will gather data to understand if an area could be suitable to host a GDF.

NWS will evaluate each potential site, through its site evaluation process, to establish its suitability based on six siting factors: safety and security, community, environment, engineering feasibility, transport, and value for money.

Detailed studies and investigations will be conducted over a number of years to help ensure a GDF can be constructed, operated, and closed safely and securely. Simon Hughes, NWS' Siting and Communities Director, said: "We are acquiring a significant amount of data through our studies and investigations. All of it needs to be assessed and analysed. Once we have a clear picture of the findings, we will share progress and updates with the Community Partnerships and the public."

How NWS will identify a preferred site

DUE to the complex nature of the siting process, NWS is many years away from being able to confirm the suitability of any potential site.

Ongoing evaluation will inform NWS' decisions on the places where it will undertake site characterisation work. This includes drilling boreholes to better understand the geology deep below the surface, where the underground part of a GDF would be built.

Its decision on the site(s) to take forward for site characterisation will be considered by the Secretary of State.

NWS has started its work on a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the drilling of boreholes over

150m deep. A DCO application is the means of obtaining planning permission for developments categorised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

NWS will engage and consult widely on the evolving information within the DCO application as it's taken forward and eventually an examination in public will be held, as part of the Planning Inspectorate process.

It's important that everyone involved and interested is able to see the information, ask questions and have an opportunity to have their say on the proposals.

In parallel, NWS will also work with the Environment Agency, one of its regulators, as it will consult with the

public on environmental permits required for the work. Only once NWS has all the necessary permissions and consents, can this site characterisation work begin.

Simon added: "As information from site characterisation becomes available, along with results from research and development activities, our technical understanding increases. This will allow us to develop a design and safety case which is suitable for a particular site."

A second DCO application will be required – this time for the site itself. Before this is submitted, it will be necessary to carry out a Test of Public Support (ToPS) in the potential host community

for a preferred GDF site. Relevant principal local authorities on a Community Partnership will have the final say on if, or when, to take this test.

If residents of the potential host community do not return a positive ToPS then the project cannot progress in that location. A positive test would mean NWS could then take its decision to the UK government to seek approval from the Secretary of State to progress with a DCO application for its preferred site.

This process to identify a preferred site is expected to take 10-15 years, while building, operating and closing the facility would take 150 years or more.



Safety and Security

If NWS cannot demonstrate that a site will be safe and secure during its construction and operation, the GDF will not be built. The geology must be suitable to support the Safety Case after it has been closed, and the facility must satisfy the UK's strict safety and security standards.



Community

Through engagement, research and assessment, NWS will seek to ensure that the social and economic impact of a GDF will benefit the community.



Environment

The delivery of a GDF will represent one of the largest environmental protection projects in the UK. To successfully deliver a GDF, NWS will need to assess the impact on the natural and historic environment, protected habitats and species.



Engineering Feasibility

The geology of an area will significantly influence whether and how a GDF can be designed, constructed and operated safely during its operation and closure. NWS will assess if the design, construction and operation of a GDF at a specific location is feasible.



Transport

To build and operate a GDF, NWS will need to be able to transport waste and construction materials safely and securely.



Value for Money

A GDF will be built where it represents good value for money for the taxpayer over the long term.

NWS will evaluate each potential site to establish whether it's suitable, based on **six siting factors**.



**Mid Copeland
GDF Community
Partnership**

 @Copeland_WG

 WIPCopeland

 www.midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk

 GDFinfo-midcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk

 0300 369 0000 (NWS Helpdesk)

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