

New member

Sadie joins Partnership
page 3

Youth voice

Young people get involved
pages 4-5

Funding focus

Local grants awarded
pages 5-7



Mid Copeland
GDF Community
Partnership

MID COPELAND



News

Issue 8: Summer 2026

Supporting community engagement about a Geological Disposal Facility



A group has been set up by Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership to bring more young voices into the conversation – full story pages 4-5.

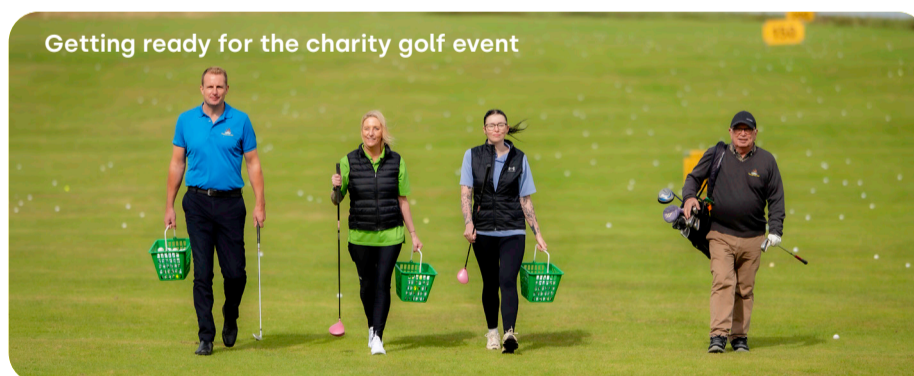
Teeing up for fundraising charity golf day in Seascale

The Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership is teaming up with Seascale Golf Club for a charity golf day.

The Texas Scramble competition takes place on Saturday, June 13 throughout the day.

The day will be raising funds for the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) and is also a chance to catch up with the work of the Partnership.

The entry fee goes directly to the GNAAS, a service which is not NHS-funded, but which brings pioneering pre-hospital care to the scene, rescuing hundreds of severely injured or ill patients every year.



Getting ready for the charity golf event

In 2024-25, the charity attended 1,998 incidents and the daily operating cost of this vital service is £25,969. Deborah Usher, GNAAS community fundraiser, said: "We're incredibly grateful to the Partnership and Seascale Golf Club for choosing to support us at the charity golf day. "As a service that relies on

public donations, events like this make a real difference and help ensure we can continue providing life-saving care when it's needed most." Last year, Drigg Young Farmers' Club raised over £100,000 for the GNAAS by pulling a replica helicopter 77 miles from Drigg to Langwathby, the charity's base.

Community Partnership Chair and trustee of Drigg Young Farmers' Club, Andy Pratt, said: "The Partnership thought it would be a good idea to combine its information-sharing around our work as part of the GDF programme with bringing a local event which could also raise awareness and money for this much needed service."



There will be prizes and a raffle on the day. For further details, scan this QR code.

Meet the Funders: Come to our event about Community Investment Funding - details page 2

2 Engagement



Coffee, cake and community chat at Beckermat

Catching up at a recent session in Beckermat Reading Rooms

Community engagement is important to the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership – and that includes everything from arranging drop-ins to attending other people's events and holding meetings.

For the past five years, the Partnership and its engagement team have attended hundreds of events, speaking with thousands of people along the way about whether a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) could be right for the local area.

One of the regular events the team calls into is the Beckermat Coffee, Cake and Chat in the Reading Rooms.

And just recently, the volunteers were able to have a sit and chat with local people while the GDF engagement team helped out in the kitchen.

Andrew Monaghan, Community

Engagement Co-ordinator with the Partnership, said: "They work hard at the event, serving all the teas and coffees, so I thought it would be nice to give them some time to relax and catch up with the local community while we put a shift in!"

John Mackay, head of Beckermat Village Association, said: "Regular attendance by the GDF team at our sessions has been a great way for our community members to be able to talk

with them over a cuppa, keeping us all updated with matters pertinent to progress on the possibility of the facility being constructed in our area.

Serving up quality time

"The new initiative of them taking on the role of our volunteers, serving the community their teas and coffees, has been a great success. It's given the team the opportunity to talk to everyone who attends in a less formal manner, and more importantly, it has enabled myself and the other volunteers to be able to spend quality time chatting to all who attend."



Gillian to leave role

Gillian Johnston, Community Engagement Manager for the Partnership, is leaving her role at the end of June.

From Copeland, Gillian has worked for Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) supporting the Partnership throughout its journey to date with the GDF programme.

She said: "I'd like to thank our Chair Andy Pratt and all the Partnership. I've really enjoyed working together over the past five years and also with the community, which has been really engaged with the



GDF process. I'm taking a step back from the world of work for a while."

Andy said: "Gillian has been a real credit to NWS in her role with the Partnership. She has worked consistently to ensure the Partnership and the community have the right information at our events and access to expert advice when we needed it."

Meet the Funders event

A drop-in event is being held for people to see how their organisation could apply for Community Investment Funding through Nuclear Waste Services' GDF programme.

The Community Partnership is inviting people to find out more at the event on **Thursday, July 30 in Beckermat Reading Rooms, 10am-3pm.**

The Mid Copeland GDF Search Area covers the electoral ward of Gosforth, which includes Seascale,

Gosforth, Beckermat, Calderbridge, Haile, Thornhill, Nethertown and Braystones. The Lake District National Park is excluded from consideration – however, Community Investment Funding can be used for eligible community projects benefiting this area.

Up to £1m of funding is available annually for each Community Partnership as part of the GDF programme.



Sadie joins Partnership

A new member of Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership joined earlier this year.

Sadie Clarke has lived in Drigg for 26 years and is a member of Drigg and Carleton Parish Council. She represents the parish council on the Partnership in a non-voting seat.

Sadie has a varied and rich background, having worked on farms in Cheshire, Scotland, Canada, America and Australia. She has also worked as an animal keeper at a wildlife centre, a process operator for a large pharmaceutical company, an owl keeper, and as an events assistant and general assistant within the tourism industry.

Sadie, who became self-employed 15 years ago, said: "I've been a parish councillor for Drigg and Carleton parish for three years and my main aim is to ensure our parish remains a pleasant place to live and improve the parish for the benefit of the residents."

Partnership meetings in public 2026

Meetings will take place on the following dates:

Monday, September 7
Beckermet Reading Rooms, 1-3.30pm

Monday, December 7
Venue and time TBC



A word from our Chair

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership. We're over halfway through our fifth year as part of the GDF programme and we've made a lot of progress over the years engaging with local people, sharing information, attending/ holding events and helping to answer questions.

Last year, the Partnership held or attended 94 events, speaking to more than 2,800 people; 29 funding awards were made to local projects totalling £1million; and there were over 7,000 visits to the Partnership's website. We're always happy to have a conversation, so do get in touch if you have a question or a comment you wish to make.

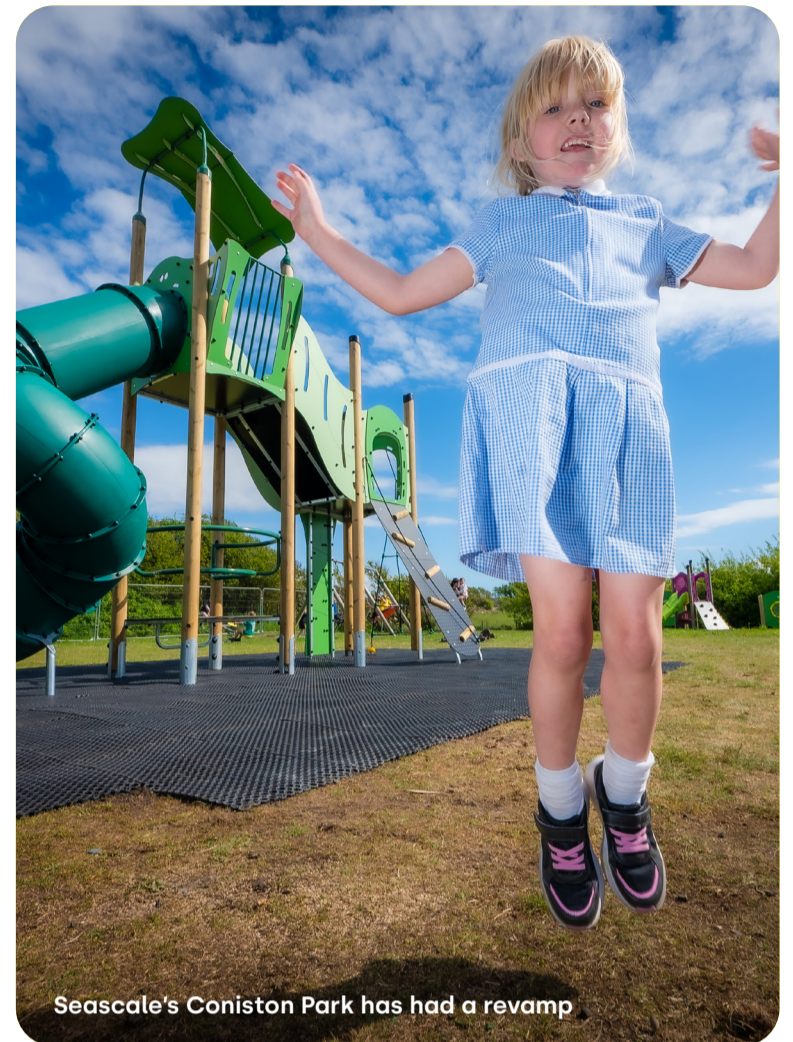
This year sees us expand our work with young people by setting up a group which will then feed views back to the Partnership. The group has already met to take their role forward and I look forward to continuing to work with them around the best ways to engage with young people.

Helping a life-saving team

We have a golf event coming up this weekend with Seascale Golf Club, which will also be an information-sharing event for the Partnership around its work, plus a fundraiser for the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

The life-saving team is so vital living in a rural area and we thought it would be beneficial to hold this fun event and raise funds at the same time – all entry fees will go to the charity.

As we're into our fifth year, we're also into our fifth year of awarding Community



Seascale's Coniston Park has had a revamp

Investment Funding locally from the GDF programme. Once again, there are some fantastic projects which are taking up this opportunity. For more details and how to apply, see later on in this newsletter.

Andy Pratt
Chair, Mid Copeland
GDF Community
Partnership



The year in numbers:



19
news articles added to the website



29
funding awards were made to local projects totalling
£1M



94
events held or attended. Speaking to more than
2,800
people



2 newspaper-style newsletters were each sent to
3,017
homes in the Mid Copeland Search Area



2
e-bulletins delivered to the Partnership's
780
online subscribers



3
press releases issued



Content on Partnership social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and X) was viewed
56,266
times



11
members are currently on the Partnership



7,112
people visiting the Partnership's website over the past year

*excluding paid-for social advertising



Young people join group to work with Community Partnership

A group has been set up by Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership to bring more young voices into the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) conversation.

Young people were invited to meet up and hear about the work of the Partnership and the GDF programme at Muncaster Castle.

The event was supported by Inspira, which provides career guidance, skills development and employment support to young people and adults in Cumbria and is also a member of the Partnership.

The 13 young people worked together during the day and took part in a team-building exercise. This was followed by

round table discussions about a GDF, the Community Partnership and what they thought was important when engaging with young people.

Building on youth work

Partnership Chair Andy Pratt said: "We're building on the strong work we have already established in the area working with young people through our development of shaping a Community Vision.

"Creating a group for young people to meet with the Partnership will take the youth voice to the next level in discussing and debating what they think a GDF could mean for them and their area,

while feeding that into our programme of activities going forward."

Partnership Community Engagement Co-ordinator, Sue Shepherd, said: "The feedback from the young people was really positive. They were delighted to be included in the conversation and could see that their opinions mattered.

"Their fresh ideas and creativity will be so useful for the Partnership going forward and they also recognised that being involved could help them in their own careers as they gain extra skills and enhance their knowledge."

The group currently has 9 members signed up (aged 18-25) from the Mid

Understanding the role of bringing more young people into the GDF conversation, at the Muncaster event



"Their fresh ideas and creativity will be so useful for the Partnership going forward"

Sue Shepherd, Partnership Community Engagement Co-ordinator



The young people tried their hand at some activities at the initial event before the round-table discussions



Copeland/Copeland area, and they have since met and started looking at their role and purpose.

They will help the Partnership to engage with more young people around a GDF by offering help and advice and will also feed their work back into Partnership meetings.

Underground disposal facility

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

Understanding more about nuclear waste disposal

The feedback video from the event can be viewed here:



Year five funding so far - from sports and shows to revamps and recreation

We're over halfway through year 5, and funding of £548,674 has been awarded so far from Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership through the GDF programme to the following (recent grants will be added to the Partnership website):

St Olaf's Church, Wasdale: £32,830 towards refurbishment of the church.

SASRA: £2,997 towards a squash programme to Mid Copeland primary schools and a percentage of the junior squash programme for Mid Copeland residents.

Wasdale Head Show: £4,565 to replace tables and chairs.

Beckermet Village association: £4,778 towards continuation of project to support social activities twice weekly in Beckermet Reading Rooms for one year.

Always Another Way: £16,614 to fund a mental health support programme for young people and adults.

Thornhill Football Club: £1,500 to support purchase of away football strip and 3/4 zip tops for over 35s team.

1st Beckermet & St Bees Scout Group: £2,200 to fund purchase of a small marquee (shelter), 3-man tents, sleeping bags, mats and radio communications for scout leaders.

St Cuthbert's Parochial Church Council, Seascale: £2,976 to fund the sand, seal & revarnish of hall floor.

Wasdale Action Group CIC: £25,000 to support provision of the Wasdale Explorer shuttle bus for 2026 high season, to ease congestion.

Gosforth Parish Council: £250,000 to support phase two of Gosforth Public Hall refurbishment.

Seascale Cricket Club: £64,680 for Game On Sports to deliver two years of free multi-sports camps in Seascale in school holidays.



Coniston Park, Seascale

Cardiac Risk in the Young – The Frankie McMillan Fund: £10,000 for free heart screening in Mid Copeland for young people aged 14-35 years.

Gosforth Juniors AFC: £7,500 to support purchase of grass-cutting equipment to improve pitch quality and sustainability.

Gosforth Agricultural Society: £22,223 to support Gosforth Show, including marquees hire, headline show, promotional materials, rosettes and young handlers' prizes.

St Olaf's Parochial Church Council: £26,520 for churchyard improvements, including upgrade of paths, gates, slate bench and small maintenance shed.

Workington Reds: £18,700 for multi-sports holiday camps in school holidays in Mid Copeland.

Egremont Regeneration Partnership (Florence Arts): £55,590 towards Making Tracks programme of creative activities, followed by 12-month outreach programme.

Focus on funding: see how the grants are being spent in the community - pages 6-7

6 Community Investment Funding



Major upgrade for community hub

USA country dancing is just one of the many activities which take place at Gosforth Public Hall

Over the next two years, £500,000 Community Investment Funding will be provided from the GDF programme towards a major revamp of Gosforth Public Hall.

It's a central hub for the community, where local groups meet, events take place and performances are held, attracting thousands of people each year.

The funding, awarded by Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, will go towards refurbishment of the main hall and extension at the rear of the building for a new kitchen and storage area. There'll be new heating, electrics, toilets, flooring and improved access during phase two of the £1.2million refurbishment project.

The community hall is in need of an upgrade and the funding (£250,000 in this funding year and the same in the next) was awarded to Gosforth Parish Council, custodian trustee of the building for the use of Gosforth Public Hall management committee – a registered charity.

The Council's 'Jackies' have taken on leadership of the project – that is Jacqueline Williams, parish clerk, and councillor Jackie Atkinson.

Partnership supports revamp

Jacqueline said: "We're delighted our application was successful. The GDF Partnership has supported our project from the beginning with grants for an options appraisal, followed by further development work and now with this huge grant we

can look forward to seeing the public hall future-proofed for generations to come."

Andy Pratt, Community Partnership Chair, said: "Awarding funding towards this project will ensure it can provide the community with first class facilities as a focal point and hub of activity for the area. It's a well-used venue and organisers have worked hard to secure funding to bring it up to date."

Gosforth Parish Council received funding for phase one of the project through Historic England and Copeland Community Fund. That phase should be complete in the summer, which includes library and meeting spaces in the listed part of the building. Phase two should be complete in April 2027.

Fun for all at new village play park

Seascale's Coniston Park has been transformed thanks to the hard work of local people and funding from the GDF programme.

Seascale Parish Council was awarded £116,519 through the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership in year 4 to enhance the village playing field and now plans have come to fruition, with fun for all!

Dawn Thompson-Dennett has lived in the village all her life and has been a driving force behind the project, together with a working group from the parish council.

"It's very much needed," said Dawn. "It's something that will really benefit the community and I've been wanting to do it for years, so it's brilliant that this funding is available."

There's play equipment for all ages and abilities now, including slides, climbing frames, swings, games, picnic tables and benches.

David Moore, from Seascale Parish Council, said: "We're delighted to work with Dawn to enable this project to go forward. The Council has responsibility for Coniston Park, which has a small play



provision already. When Dawn brought this idea to the Council, it was already well developed, ambitious and was fully supported.

"The Council set up a group to deliver the playpark, which comprises myself,

Zoe O'Hanlon and Dawn, and we're delighted to now see the results of all the hard work. This will be a great asset to the village and benefit the whole community."



New bus for rural service

A new Muncaster Microbus is now on the road thanks to funding help from the GDF programme.

The voluntary organisation which runs the minibus service needed to replace the aging previous bus. The Partnership awarded £67,900 from its Community Investment Funding last year and South Copeland awarded £29,100.

How to apply for Community Investment Funding

Visit our website at midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk or get in touch by email: communityinvestment-midcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk

Lifesaving kit for villages

SEVEN lifesaving defibrillators have been installed thanks to Community Investment Funding.

£13,065 was awarded to Lowside Quarter Parish Council by the Partnership in year 4 to fund the defibrillators, which are in Nethertown, Braystones, Middletown and Coulderton areas.

Residents from the villages worked together to decide best locations with Kirstin Lang, Parish Council Chair, leading the project.

Kirstin said: "This allows access to lifesaving defibrillators

for all parish residents and visitors, something previously unavailable. Awareness of defibrillators, their benefits to a person's chances of survival and their ease of use has been spread through the parish.

"The community was enthusiastic, encouraging and welcoming of this project and having the input of North West Ambulance Service with information about defibrillators, their cabinets and placement has been invaluable and reassuring."

Kirstin added: "It's been a pleasure to work together with the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership to see this community project into fruition – rural and more isolated communities are in need of such investment in order to keep their health and welfare at the levels it should be."



Kirstin Lang is delighted with the installation of the new defibrillators

Wintering Bird Surveys map life on Copeland coast

Over the winter months, Nuclear Waste Services surveyed wintering birds along approximately 30km of the West Cumbria coastline to understand how birds use coastal habitats over time.

Surveys were carried out monthly between September 2025 and April 2026, with each session lasting several hours and timed to coincide with tidal cycles and daylight hours.

Ecologists stood at selected viewpoints and observed bird activity along the coastline. Using binoculars and telescopes, they scanned the shoreline at regular intervals, recording:

- Species present
- Numbers of birds
- Behaviour (e.g. foraging, roosting, flying, etc)
- Movement between habitats
- Any disturbance events and bird responses

What was seen?

Ecologists recorded a varied mix of coastal birdlife, with each month adding new insight into how species use the shoreline. Up to 46 species of waterbirds



Oystercatcher

were recorded during the survey period, including:

- **Curlew** – regularly recorded in high numbers and a key conservation priority
- **Oystercatcher** – consistently present along the shoreline, often in significant flocks
- **Knot and Dunlin** – important migratory waders using intertidal habitats during winter
- **Eider** – with winter counts peaking at 600 in November and 1,100 in December
- **Herring Gull, Black-headed Gull and Cormorant** – common but ecologically important coastal species recorded throughout the survey period

- **Redshank** – widely recorded and particularly abundant in winter
- **Wigeon** – a common winter visitor, with numbers building from autumn into winter
- **Auks (including Guillemot and Razorbill)** – recorded in lower numbers, reflecting their more seasonal and offshore use of the survey area
- **Kittiwake, Gannet and Red-throated Diver** – observed occasionally in smaller numbers

Understanding the natural environment is a key part of developing any nationally significant infrastructure project. These surveys form part of wider environmental studies, which would help inform future environmental assessment work.



Curlew

GDF programme update

NWS is nearing the end of the current phase of work to identify if a community, or communities, could move forward to Site Characterisation for a GDF. This would include deep borehole investigations, an important next step in

understanding whether an area is suitable. NWS was expected to submit its decision to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in May 2026, as this newsletter was going to print. A decision to move forward to deep boreholes

requires approval from the Secretary of State. There is no set timescale for this process. When we do have an update, the Community Partnership will be informed and information shared on NWS' website, [nuclearwasteservices.uk](https://www.nuclearwasteservices.uk)