



South Copeland GDF Community Partnership Newsletter



**Hello and welcome to the South Copeland
GDF Community Partnership newsletter.**

In December 2021 a Community Partnership was formed in South Copeland to look at what impact a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) – an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste – could have on this area, and continue discussions with the local community.

The South Copeland GDF Community Partnership, which was established in accordance with UK Government policy, has now been in place for a year and is committed to having a discussion with the Search Area electoral wards of Millom and Black Combe & Scafell.

Our group of community members is neither in favour nor against a Geological Disposal Facility being built in South Copeland; the Partnership is in place to ensure a fair process, the voices of local people are heard and that all relevant information is provided so that the community can make an informed decision.

We are currently recruiting new members so that the Partnership is reflective of our community and if you are interested I would encourage you to find out more and apply.

No decisions have been made about where a GDF could be sited as this requires both a



South Copeland GDF Community Partnership

suitable site and willing community. Three other areas in England are participating in the process, including Mid Copeland and Allerdale in Cumbria and Theddlethorpe in Lincolnshire. If a suitable site is found in South Copeland – a decision which could take 10-15 years – a Test of Public Support would give the community a direct say over whether or not the project goes ahead.

This Community Partnership is a starting point to consider the possibilities in more detail, ask questions and raise concerns with the GDF developer, who we will hold to account. We need to be open to both the benefits and impacts of a GDF and this needs exploration with independent help as more details become clear over time.

The formation of the Community Partnership allows access to £1million of Community Investment Funding (CIF) per year for community groups and projects in the Search Area. This funding is provided to South Copeland just for taking part in the siting process on what is a long journey to a final decision – there is no commitment on anyone's part in the community to site a GDF here. Please read on to page 10 to find out more about CIF.

We are only just beginning to engage with you on what is a long-term programme, and our goal is to ensure you are well informed and can feedback. That is why in July this year we spoke to a sample of residents to gain an initial baseline measure of awareness, understanding and support for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) across the Search Area. We also asked what information you would like to receive and how you would like to receive it, so that we

know how to communicate and engage with you as we go forward.

This newsletter will look at the results of this recent baseline resident research, what it means for our community, and start to answer some of the main questions and concerns that you have. We hope that you find this interesting, and I look forward to hearing from you as we continue to engage locally.

To keep up to date with the latest news from the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership, you can follow us on social media – we have Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts:

[f SouthCopelandGDFCommunityPartnership](#)

[in South Copeland GDF Community Partnership](#)

[@CopelandS_CP](#)



Ged McGrath

Chair, South Copeland GDF
Community Partnership



Would you like to be a member of the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership?



We want to help ensure all voices are heard as we take forward discussions as to whether South Copeland could be a suitable location to host a GDF.

We are continuing to look for new members in the sectors of Agriculture, Business, Landscape & Environment, Tourism, Seldom heard and Youth. If you feel that you could represent one of these areas as a member of the Community Partnership – providing information and helping ensure two-way discussion with people within one of these sectors – please take a look at the Recruitment Pack and application form on our website, or see our contact details at the end of the newsletter.

Recruitment is currently open-ended and membership will continue to evolve as the Community Partnership progresses.

Who is currently a part of the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership?

The current South Copeland Community Partnership includes:

Ged McGrath

Chair

Bob Kelly

Cumberland Shadow Authority Councillor for Millom

Copeland Borough Council

Represented by David Moore

Cumbria Association of Local Councils

Represented by David Savage

Doug Wilson

Copeland Councillor for Black Combe & Scafell

Felicity Wilson

Copeland Councillor for Millom

Kate Wilshaw

Friends of the Lake District

John Sutton

Sustainable Duddon

Millom Town Council

Represented by Dave Billing, deputy Denise Burness

Millom Without Parish Council

Represented by Carl Carrington, deputy Ian Lockwood

Nuclear Waste Services

Represented by Kelly Anderson

Whicham Parish Council

Represented by Maggie Cumming, deputy Lesley Cooper



South Copeland community survey: what you told us

I would be for protecting the wildlife.

Would it improve the railway lines if this stuff was transported?

What would it be stored in? How would it be kept safe?

I'm concerned about local people and creating jobs.

I just worry about the effects on us, the community, and what it will bring.

Local resident research took place across July with 158 residents to gauge the community's reactions, questions, and concerns regarding the siting of a possible GDF in the area.

The way the sampling for the survey was designed means that the 158 people's views are representative of the wider population. Quotas and weights were employed to ensure the random sample was representative in terms of the relative populations of the two wards and the age and sex profiles. With a sample of 158 and a 95% confidence interval, a +/-8% margin of error is expected, so this gives a good baseline of views across the Search Area.

The resident research was commissioned by the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership. Our Chair, Ged McGrath, said: "We commissioned this survey to gain an accurate baseline measure of awareness, understanding, information and support of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) across the Search Area in South Copeland."

Owen Thomas, Senior Director at independent research consultant, Yonder, who oversaw the programme of research, shares the detail on the findings.

How engaged were local community members on the subject matter?

Overall, residents were engaged with the subject matter. The majority (85%) recalled seeing, reading or hearing something about radioactive waste or geological disposal in the past year. Additionally, awareness of the Search Area and the formation of the Community Partnership was also high. Three-in-four (75%) claimed to be aware that a Community Partnership had formed in December 2021. A similar proportion (76%) claimed to be aware that a Search Area had been identified within South Copeland for further investigation of its suitability for a GDF.

What level of understanding did people have?

Though general awareness and engagement was high, detailed understanding of how radioactive waste was managed was more



limited. Two-in-five (42%) believed that the UK's radioactive waste was stored at interim surface or ground-level storage facilities at sites across the UK. However, 7% believed it was disposed of underground and 6% thought it was shipped to another country and one-in-three (33%) admitted that they did not know. Some residents' knowledge of geological disposal was also limited. Half (48%) were able to identify an accurate description of Geological Disposal Facilities. 20% said they had heard the term 'Geological Disposal Facilities' but did not know what they were, and 16% had never heard of the term. Please read on to 'Essential facts about GDF' for clarity on these points.

What level of support did respondents show towards a GDF?

When considering a GDF within the South Copeland Search Area, this initial survey showed there were more opponents than supporters of such a proposal. Three-in-five (61%) were opposed to the construction of a GDF within the Search Area, whilst a quarter were supportive (27%). NET support for the construction of a GDF in the South Copeland Search Area (calculated by subtracting the proportion of opponents from the proportion of supporters) stood at -34.

What information do people want to receive and how do they want to receive it?

There was appetite for further information regarding geological disposal and the siting process, and specifically relating to the impact on human health (47%) and why geological disposal was a safe and secure approach (46%). 32% wanted information regarding the impact on the local economy, and 26% wanted information about environmental protection. Two-in-three (67%) wanted to receive more information via postal information (e.g. leaflets / newsletters sent in the post), whilst one-in-three (36%) said they wanted more information via Facebook.

Comment from Ged McGrath, Chair of South Copeland GDF Community Partnership:

"The initial results showed that residents have a high level of awareness of the GDF programme, but still have many questions. The Community Partnership's role is to ensure that the community has all of the information it needs when considering the possibility of hosting a GDF in the future. The survey showed that many residents are not currently in support of the potential development, but there are questions, uncertainties and inaccuracies in people's current understanding on hosting a GDF which need to be addressed.

"We are only just beginning to engage on what is a long-term and detailed programme, with no commitment on anyone's part in the community. Residents have been clear in the survey about the information and knowledge they need and how they want to receive it, which will inform our engagement and communications approach as we move forward. Providing information and answers to these concerns and questions will allow the community to make an informed decision.

"We are listening to everyone's views, and we will continue to do so, having many conversations and gaining feedback. If a suitable site were to be found in South Copeland – a decision which could take 10-15 years – a Test of Public Support would ensure the local community makes the final decision as to whether or not they want a GDF in the area."



You told us you want information across 5 core areas

- Safety reassurances
- Environmental protection
- Transportation of the waste
- Local economic impact
- Impact on future generations

The Community Partnership is looking to provide information and open the conversation on these 5 areas as we progress in the New Year, but crucially, you also told us that you would like to know the key facts, such as what a GDF actually is. For that reason, the GDF developer, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), has provided the Essential Fact Sheet below.

Essential facts about GDF

Provided by the GDF developer



Community Partnerships in England

What is a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)?

Geological disposal involves isolating radioactive waste deep underground, inside a suitable rock volume to ensure that no

harmful quantities of radioactivity ever reach the surface environment. A GDF will be a highly engineered structure consisting of multiple barriers that will provide protection to people and the environment over hundreds of thousands of years whilst the radioactivity fades away naturally. This will be at a depth of between 200 and 1,000 metres.

Has any region been selected for a GDF?

No host site for a GDF has been identified. Discussions are happening with communities around England and Wales. Community Partnerships have been formed in four different areas of England to start exploring whether a GDF is right for their area and whether their area is right for a GDF. This is a consent-based approach with a Test of Public Support. Without suitable geology, community consent, and confirmation from the regulators – The Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency – that designs for a GDF, the proposed site, and the science that informs them are safe for people and the environment, the project will not go ahead.



Have other countries implemented geological disposal?

Geological disposal is internationally recognised as the best and safest option for managing longer-lived, more hazardous radioactive waste, following decades of science, technology and engineering research. A number of countries, including Sweden, Finland, France, Canada and Switzerland, have already implemented or are developing plans for this process. Among the most advanced is Finland which started constructing a GDF for spent nuclear fuel, called 'Onkalo', five years ago. In Sweden, a site at Forsmark has been identified following support by two communities, Osthhammar and Oskarshamm. France has also identified a suitable site. Its waste management organisation, ANDRA, is preparing to

submit applications for the Cigeo industrial geological disposal facility, located in the east of the country.

What is radioactive waste and where does it come from?

Radioactive waste is radioactive material for which there is no further use. Most comes from the generation of electricity using nuclear power but it is also a by-product of many medical and industrial processes, research and defence activities that make use of radioactivity and radioactive materials.

Where is the waste now?

Radioactive wastes that will be disposed of in a GDF are currently being packaged in specially engineered containers and stored at over 20 nuclear sites around the country. Although radioactive waste is stored at other



Countries implementing geological disposal



nuclear facilities around the country, the bulk of the UK's radioactive waste is stored above ground at Sellafield.



Sellafield, Copeland

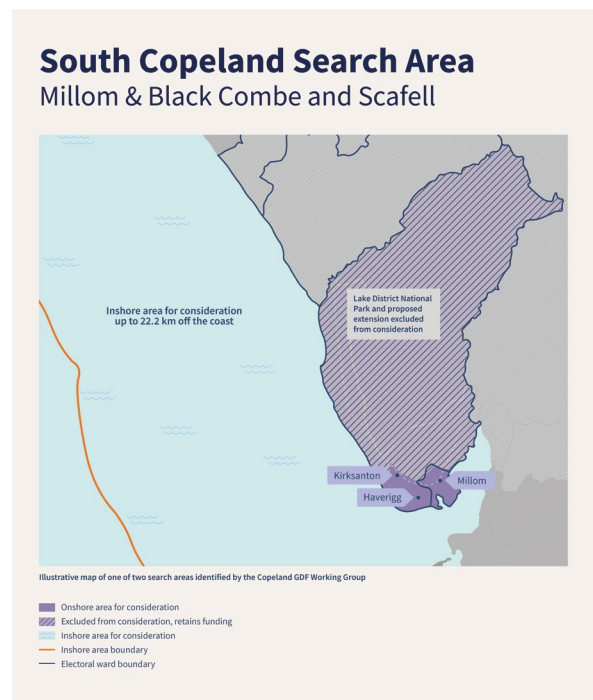
Why can't we leave the waste where it is?

Surface stores, whilst designed to be safe for around 100 years, do not provide a permanent solution. They need to be continually monitored to keep the waste secure and periodically refurbished while the radioactivity naturally decays. For some of the waste this will take many thousands of years, so even if well maintained, eventually, they will need to be replaced, or the waste moved elsewhere. Surface storage is also vulnerable to natural and human effects. It is therefore less safe than geological disposal for the long term, and would end up being much more labour intensive in the long run.

Where in South Copeland is being considered for a GDF?

The Search Area in South Copeland includes the electoral wards of Millom and Black Combe & Scafell. Search Areas have to be based on district electoral ward boundaries. The area within the Lake District National Park and Southern Boundary Extension is excluded from consideration. Deep geology beyond the coast (known as the 'inshore area') is being considered for the siting of the underground

elements of a GDF. A Marine Geophysical Survey took place over the summer to gather evidence about the geology in an area off the coast of Copeland and we will begin to find out the results of that survey in 2023. If, given appropriate geology and community consent, the development was to go ahead here, a 1sq km surface facility on land would provide access to a disposal area deep in the rock beyond the coast.



The Search Area in South Copeland

When will a GDF be built?

Construction will only start when a suitable site is identified, all the necessary consents and permits have been obtained and a host community has confirmed its willingness to host the facility through a Test of Public Support. This decision could take 10-15 years. It is assumed that a GDF could be available to receive the first waste in the 2050s. Filling a GDF with waste and then closing it, once full, will run into the next century.



We want this to be an open conversation



Interview with Kelly Anderson, Community Engagement Manager

Kelly Anderson, Community Engagement Manager for the South Copeland GDF Partnership sits on the Partnership to represent the developer, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), which is investigating potential GDF sites across the UK – and is encouraging people to ask questions and find out more.

She said: “Although I represent the views of the developer on the Community Partnership, my role is twofold. I am also here to listen to the views of Partnership members and the wider community and feed them back to the developer. Without representation from the developer on the Partnership, it would be difficult for us to understand local concerns and it would be more difficult for Partnership members to get community members the information that they need.

“In terms of looking ahead and continuing the conversation with the local community, we want to help people access the information that they want in a way that suits them, and the information that the Partnership received following the baseline survey earlier this year will help them to do that.

“The Community Partnership is planning to develop a forward plan of events where the community can come along and share their views or get more information. The last events that the Partnership held in Millom and Haverigg welcomed 200 people over the 4 days, but we know we need to make it easier for people to get the information they are looking for, so we will also be looking to join existing events, meetings and groups so that people don't have to go out of their way.

“The Partnership would be pleased to be invited along to your meeting or event to discuss and answer questions about all things GDF – just get in touch via the contact details at the bottom of this newsletter.

“If public events aren't your thing, there are a number of other ways you can find out more and share your views. We have a Contact Centre that you can email, phone or write to and ask your question or share your concerns. Since the launch of the Community Partnership, the Contact Centre has had hundreds of enquiries. Questions and comments have ranged from requests for the latest Community Partnership meeting minutes, to explaining how the baseline survey was representative and requesting that balanced information on a GDF is shared with the public.

“You can also follow the Community Partnership on social media – it has Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.

“If you are interested in what happens at the Community Partnership meetings, these meetings are now held in public and there is an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions.”

Read on for meeting dates.



Community projects in South Copeland have been awarded £710,000 in funding



Millom STEM Club

Twenty-one community projects have been awarded grant funding in South Copeland as the area takes part in the search for a suitable site for a GDF, bringing in a total of £709,651 since the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership launched in December 2021.

Formation of the Partnership gave access to £1million of Community Investment Funding (CIF) per year from the GDF programme as discussions continue around what a facility could mean locally.

The GDF may never be located in South Copeland – you make the final decision on that – but we are encouraging you to take advantage of the benefit of being a part of this long-term process. CIF can help to make a positive difference for our community.

The projects to receive CIF so far include:

Bootle & District First Responders, £8,982: to replace 8 defibrillators and purchase a laminator, clothing and additional equipment for when a Community First Responder is on scene and giving casualty care.

Cumbria Addictions: Advice and Solutions (CADAS), £106,662: to provide focused support to the local community on a variety of issues relating specifically to mental health and addictive behaviours.

Cumbria Community Foundation, £49,812: to support the Foundation's Winter Warmth Fund in South Copeland, providing individual grants to those over 60 who receive a state pension and/or pension credit or struggle to maintain a basic acceptable standard of living during the winter due to the cost of heating their home and the restrictions of cold weather. Copeland Age and Advice Service (CAAS) are helping to deliver the programme.

Eskdale Mill, £2,700: to support the purchase of a new chain drive for the Mill's small hydroelectricity generation scheme.

Friends of Eskdale School – St Begas CofE Primary School, £31,848: to supply and install a biodome for school and community use. The dome will be used as an inspiring learning space in which children can learn a wide variety of skills, such as food and plant growing skills. Parents and community members who have a keen interest in gardening will support the children and there are a number of ideas to engage with the wider community.

Inspira, £13,614: to fund a school engagement programme offering students direct access to a range of employers and information on employment opportunities.

Kirksanton Village Hall, £18,000: installing solar photovoltaics panels and battery storage to reduce energy costs and support financial sustainability.



Mental Health North West CIC, £33,200: funding a two-year project to provide a weekly Wellness Walk (Walk & Talk session) in various locations.

Millom Baptist Church, £40,000: to replace the wooden flooring in the community hall and remove and replace the old stairs, storage areas, and toilet.

Millom Cricket Club, £31,236: to make improvements to the clubhouse, facilities and grounds.

Millom First Responders, £19,984: to replace 8 defibrillators, and other equipment including a mannequin and training defibrillator.

Millom Rugby Union Football Club, £31,606: to update a range of groundskeeping equipment.

Millom STEM Club, £2,000: to fund Haverigg Environmental Science project including the planting of wild woodland and pond plants and building a dipping platform. The wildlife will be accessible to all local primary schools, and will encourage a greater diversity of wildlife to inhabit the area.

Millom Town Council, £46,737: to resurface the multi-use games area (MUGA) in Millom Park and install new fencing.

St George's Church, Millom, £8,666: funding to repair the church roof and gutters, so that the church can continue to be a welcoming place for worshipers, youth groups and community events.

St John's Waberthwaite Parochial Church Council, £37,240: to provide funding for a project which will create a resource centre out of an old building, once used as a laundry and bakehouse. The venue will be used for all kinds of community uses, including school groups, meetings and workshops.



**Ged McGrath, Chair of South Copeland
GDF Community Partnership, said:**

“I’m really pleased that the Community Partnership has been able to assist with the award of grant funding, and to see these projects helping to make a positive difference to the community in South Copeland.

“We’re receiving applications from a wide range of community developments and organisations, and we encourage anyone with an existing project or an idea for a new project to get in touch with Community Investment Funding team to see what is possible.

“We’re keen to support projects that provide economic development opportunities, enhance the natural and built environment, or improve community wellbeing. I’m looking forward to seeing what’s next for the funding as we move forward.”

For further information about CIF and how to apply, visit the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership website or contact us via the details below.



The Community Partnerships upcoming meetings in public are:

11th Jan 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Guide Hall
Millom

17th May 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Guide Hall
Millom

13th Sep 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Lighthouse Centre
Haverigg

8th Feb 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

Kirksanton Village Hall
Kirksanton

14th June 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

Kirksanton Village Hall
Kirksanton

11th Oct 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Guide Hall
Millom

8th March 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Baptist Church Hall
Millom

12th July 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

Thwaites Village Hall
Thwaites

8th Nov 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

Kirksanton Village Hall
Kirksanton

19th April 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Lighthouse Centre
Haverigg

16th Aug 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Baptist Church Hall
Millom

13th Dec 2023 | 18.30- 20.30

The Baptist Church Hall
Millom

There will be a 15 minute slot where members of the public will be able to ask questions of Community Partnership members. If you would prefer to ask your question in advance, please contact us a minimum of 5 working days before the meeting.

We are interested in all views and questions, so please do get in touch with us in any way you feel comfortable. The Community Partnership is here to help.

Contact us – the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership wants to hear from you!

Do you have a question? Would you like to talk to our community engagement team? Would you like further information? Are you interested in applying for Community Investment Funding?

Whatever your need please contact us here. Alternatively, please see our contact details below:

Email us: gdfinfo-southcopeland@nda.gov.uk

Community Investment Funding email:
communityinvestment-southcopeland@nda.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 369 0000

Write to us: South Copeland GDF Community Partnership, GDF Enquiries, PO Box 734, Swansea, SA1 9RP

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To see minutes of South Copeland GDF Community Partnership meetings click [here](#)