

An aerial photograph of a coastal town. In the foreground, a wide, sandy beach meets the dark blue ocean. The town is built on a slight rise, with numerous houses and buildings. In the background, rolling green hills stretch towards the horizon under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

ANNUAL REVIEW

Looking back on 2023

**South Copeland
GDF Community
Partnership**

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Chair's update – The journey so far

Taking a moment to look back on the past year, it is with gratitude and commitment that I share this annual report with you.

The South Copeland GDF Community Partnership was launched in December 2021 to continue the conversation with local people about hosting a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for higher activity radioactive waste.



The UK has been accumulating this waste for more than 70 years from a range of activities including power generation, medicine, industry and defence.

Most of this waste is being stored at temporary, purpose-built, above ground sites across the UK, which need to be continually monitored and refurbished to keep the waste secure.

It is the role of Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) to support the clean-up of the legacy of past nuclear operations and deliver a permanent, safe disposal solution, which is why they are engaging with a number of communities, including South Copeland, about a GDF across England and Wales.



One of the most interesting things about this siting process is that UK Government policy states that any proposed site for a GDF must be both technically suitable and have a local community that has given explicit support before a GDF can be built.

Since this Community Partnership formed, we have made notable progress on the journey towards understanding whether South Copeland is a suitable location to build a GDF and whether it is right for local people. This has been made possible through the collaboration and engagement of the public with the Community Partnership and NWS.

A number of new members have joined so that we now have a team of locally informed and connected members willing to embrace the role and provide the information local people need.

As a Partnership, our main goal is to ensure that our community understand the GDF project and its potential impacts. This year, we have attended 63 engagement events talking to 906 people, including Community Partnership meetings in public, drop-in sessions, larger scale showcase events, and joining community meetings, shows and openings.



This has been crucial in understanding the information needs of our community, and we are pleased that we have seen an increase in people that have heard about GDF from 57% in June 2023 to 77% in November 2023.

In the first year of the Partnership (2022), we were able to allocate £1 million of Community Investment Funding (CIF) – a fund that NWS has made available to communities simply for engaging in the conversation about GDF. I am delighted that, following on from this, we have allocated all of the second year's funding in 2023, bringing the total invested locally to £2 million, so far.

This money is making a real difference to local people, fuelling projects that provide economic opportunities, enhance the natural and built environment, and improve community wellbeing, leaving a lasting legacy for the community, regardless of the GDF outcome.

As Chair, I would like to genuinely thank everyone who has engaged with us on the GDF project this year, and we look forward to continuing the conversation in the year ahead.

Ged McGrath

Chair of the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership

2023 timeline

January

Outline Delivery Plan made publicly available highlighting the Community Partnership's key goals for 2023/24 (see page 12).

March

Ged McGrath, Chair of the Community Partnership, elected for a further two years providing stability to the Community Partnership.

Two Community Partnership sub-groups established: Communications & Engagement, and Operations.

May

Engagement Plan and Communications Plan for 2023/24 published online.

February

Two new members welcomed, giving a voice to the environment and community groups: Kate Willshaw, representing Friends of the Lake District, and John Sutton, representing Sustainable Duddon.

April

The South Copeland Search Area changed due to Local Government Reorganisation; it now covers two electoral wards: Millom and Millom Without.

June

Programme of events launched, including drop-ins at local village halls, attending community groups' meetings, and participating in local Fairs.

September

First Community Forum with round-table public discussions; local people shared their views on what a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) could mean for the area, found out more about it, and helped influence the work of the Community Partnership.

November

The Film Talks: Exploring GDF events were an opportunity to view short films and hear different perspectives. CoRWM, independent academics, Nuclear Waste Services, Environment Agency and ONR took part in Q&A talks with the public.

July

Community Partnership website updated reflecting feedback from the public.

October

New member Bill Amos, from the Business Sector, joined the Community Partnership.

December

Community Partnership workshop held reflecting on 2023 and forward-planning for 2024.



Our Membership

Our Community Partnership is made up of the local authority (Cumberland Council), NWS, and members who are reflective of the community in the Search Area. We want to ensure an active discussion with the community and identify relevant information that people need about the siting process.



The members' personal views on GDF do not impact the membership, but members must take a neutral stance and work for the community – it is about ensuring that all voices are heard, and that factual information is shared.

Earlier this year, the Community Partnership members agreed to set a Members' Approach and Mission Statement for our role on the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership.

Our current membership

- Ged McGrath, Chair
- Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), represented by Kelly Anderson
- Bill Amos, individual representing the business sector
- Cumberland Council, Local Authority representative Bob Kelly
- Cumbria Association of Local Councils, represented by Andrew Pratt
- Drigg and Carleton Parish Council, represented by Chris Gigg
- Friends of the Lake District, represented by Kate Willshaw
- Whicham Parish Council, represented by Maggie Cumming
- Millom Without Parish Council, represented by Carl Carrington
- Millom Town Council, represented by Dave Billing

Mission Statement

The South Copeland GDF Community Partnership aims to assist everyone in the local community through the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) process, whatever their views.

We will seek out and share relevant information, discuss concerns and find answers to questions the community has about all aspects of the siting process, including what hosting a GDF could mean.

We will work to ensure that whether a GDF is delivered in South Copeland or elsewhere, there will be benefits and a positive legacy for our communities.

If you are interested in joining the Community Partnership, taking a key role in facilitating discussions with the community on this significant programme, you can find out more and how to apply on our website.





Nuclear Waste Services





Headline Numbers



Engagements

Number of local events attended: **63**
 Number of people spoken to individually: **906**

Newsletter subscribers

3 newsletters and **4** information leaflets delivered to

5,478
 households



Number of e-bulletins:

4

422
 social media posts



108
 Contact Centre enquiries

Three-in-five,

60%

of people attributed their awareness of GDF to a newsletter or leaflet in the post (November 2023)



38,246

Door drops



Number of e-bulletin subscribers:

644

Number of **times social posts** have been seen

1,051,628

Community Investment Funding

51

enquiries

23

awards



12 small grants below **£10,000**

6 medium grants between **£10,001 and £50,000**

5 large grants above **£50,000**

9,268

Web page views

1,909

Website users



Our Delivery Plan for 2023-24

| Activity/ Workstream | Delivery Plan, Q1 – Q2 | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| | Q1 (Apr – Jun) | Progress Update | Q2 (Jul – Sep) | Progress Update |
| (1) Communications and Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate new communities into South Copeland Community Partnership Examine the feasibility of a local community engagement hub in South Copeland Community Partnership Conduct public opinion survey Refresh website and redesign newsletter Commission report on the impact of a GDF for South Cumberland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed; Drigg & Carleton representative joined the Community Partnership; meetings and events taking place in Drigg Local community engagement hub feasibility ongoing Completed; surveys now taking place every 4 months Website refreshed; after seeking public opinion, newsletter design left as is Delay to this action due to information being sought from the Community Forum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility report on a community hub delivered Implement a Pilot Community Forum Develop arrangements for Annual Community Partnership Report Launch refreshed newsletter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change to the Search Area made single local community engagement hub less feasible: Millom and Drigg far apart. Drop-in events suggested a community hub would not be well attended. Open to re-assessment Completed; Communications & Engagement subgroup leading N/A – see earlier point |
| (2) Community Vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission review of existing local/regional plans in support of community and economic development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced Q3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with key stakeholders to agree approach to a community vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial conversation at Community Forum |
| (3) Community Partnership Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Community Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference to ensure suitability for 2023 Agree Terms of Reference for subgroups Develop and publish Community Partnership Delivery Plan for 2023/4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and published on the website Complete and published on the website Complete and published on the website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Community Partnership Delivery Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed at Community Partnership meeting, 13/09/23 |
| (4) Community Investment Funding (CIF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Community Investment Panel membership to support implementation of Cumberland Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed; Cllr Bob Kelly inducted as new Cumberland Council representative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present mid-year performance review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed at Community Partnership meeting 14/06/23 |
| Interface with NWS Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NWS to present key updates to Community Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seismic Data Site evaluation roadmap Development Consent Order Property Value Protection scheme | Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16/05/23 Community Partnership meeting 16/05/23 Community Partnership meeting 16/05/23 Community Partnership meeting 19/04/23 Community Partnership meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NWS to present key updates to Community Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Consent Order | Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16/08/23 Community Partnership meeting |

| Activity/ Workstream | Delivery Plan, Q3 – Q4 | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | Q3 (Oct – Dec) | Progress Update | Q4 (Jan – Mar) |
| (1) Communications and Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish public opinion survey results • Identify lessons learnt from Pilot Community Forum prior to rollout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Opinion results published September 2023; November survey results due to be published Q4 • Completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the Community Impacts Report • Community Engagement Plan for 2024/5 agreed • Publish Annual Community Partnership Report |
| (2) Community Vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the community to initiate the process to develop a vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visioning work to commence 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of year review with a look ahead to 2024 |
| (3) Community Partnership Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review issues around Community Withdrawal, including the accuracy of our communication, potential risks and opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback given re: Allerdale withdrawal at Community Partnership meeting 8/11/23 and report issued – this work will continue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Community Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference to ensure suitability for 2024 • Prepare Community Partnership Delivery Plan for 2024/5 |
| (4) Community Investment Funding (CIF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Community Investment Funding priorities for 2024 • Review Community Investment Panel membership in readiness for 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed at Community Partnership meeting 08/11/23 • Completed 13/12/23 workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present end of year performance review |
| Interface with NWS Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWS to present key updates to Community Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Priority Site Evaluation study outputs (earliest) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was the earliest date, now expected 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWS to present key updates to Community Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Interpretation of Marine Geophysical Survey data (earliest) |

Understanding our community's views



The Community Partnership is very keen to hear from the public, so that we can understand their questions and concerns, and fulfil their expectations of us as a Partnership.

We are continuing this conversation and gaining understanding in many ways, from in-person talks, to answering enquiries.

We have also been working with independent research consultant Yonder who have interviewed people across the Search Area as part of a programme of continued surveys looking at local people's awareness, understanding and support of a GDF, and this helps to inform the Community Partnership's approach and activities.

During 2023, we interviewed local people in June 2023 and November 2023. The main results were as follows:

- Media Recall (*% residents stated that they were able to recall seeing or reading or hearing something about radioactive waste or geological disposal*): 57% in June 2023; 77% in November 2023

- Engaged Recall (*% residents that recalled something about radioactive waste or geological disposal and then followed up with an activity*): 15% in June 2023; 33% in November 2023
- Awareness (*% residents aware of how the UK's higher activity radioactive waste was stored*): 37% in June 2023; 53% in November 2023
- Understanding (*% residents able to identify the accurate description of a GDF*): 19% in June 2023; 50% in November 2023

Respondents most often requested general information about:

- The approach/geological disposal
- Location of the Search Area and the potential site
- Safety

We are listening to our community and are committed to addressing questions and concerns.





£2 million Community Investment Funding awarded

The Community Partnership has assisted with the award of a further £1million in Community Investment Funding (CIF) to local projects during its second year.

The funding is provided by NWS as South Copeland takes part in the nationwide search for a suitable site to build a GDF.

Grants can be used to fund projects, schemes or initiatives that:

- Provide economic opportunities;
- Enhance the natural and built environment;
- Improve community wellbeing within the Search Area.

Within these themes, the Community Investment Funding Panel are prioritising projects that are sustainable and leave a lasting legacy in the community.

- 23 successful grant applications in 2023
- Grants ranged from £650 to £225,000
- 12 small grants below £10,000
- 6 medium grants between £10,001 and £50,000
- 5 large grants above £50,000



Cumbria Community Foundation Winter Warmth Fund - £60,000



“This funding from South Copeland GDF Community Partnership to the Winter Warmth Fund will make a great difference to the vulnerable older people in South Copeland.

“Each year, the Winter Warmth Fund plays a vital role in helping to support older people in Cumbria to stay warm during the

winter. Many of these vulnerable people choose between eating and heating and this funding has come at a crucial time when people are really starting to struggle to find the funds to keep warm. This funding will literally save lives.”

Muncaster Castle Parkrun - £4,000



“Muncaster parkrun is already reaping dividends from the very generous support funding provided by the Community Investment Fund to get it up and running. It is fabulous to see so many locals young and old engaging with this new event and improving their fitness levels whether running or walking.

“The parkrun community from far and wide is also flocking to support it and we are amazed to see how many people are travelling to experience a parkrun in such a beautiful setting. It is wonderful to us to see the local community coming together in such a positive way in Muncaster’s gardens on Saturday mornings.”

Millom STEM Club - £2,000



“The funding will change a neglected wild area into a valuable environmental education resource, giving access to a wild wood and pond for use by all local primary school children.

“The purpose of the project is to encourage youngsters to learn about the natural flora and fauna and appreciate the diversity and

value of nature. We are very grateful for the funding and the positive impact this project will have for young people in South Copeland”.

Friends of Eskdale School - £31,849



“This project has realised one of the long term aims of the school; to install a biodome in order to provide an inspiring, exciting, multi-purpose and tranquil working space.

“FOES was delighted to make this project happen as it will support the development of our children, and hence our

community, for many years to come in a wide variety of subjects, such as art, science, maths, economics and English.

“It is such an amazing resource for the children that will also foster closer relationships between the school and its local community. We are really grateful to the South Copeland GDF Community Investment Funding for providing us with support for this amazing project.”

Millom Baptist Church - £40,000



“Funding for our new floor has enabled us to replace the old damaged and unsafe wooden floor in our church hall with a well insulated new sprung dance floor, better toilet facilities and improved storage.

“The dancing school using our building for their classes are already

benefiting from the new surface, the toddler group are making excellent use of the extra space to play, and it is easier to heat the building and so our Warm Space and weekly coffee morning are warmer and more comfortable. It also looks fantastic, welcoming and cosy! We are delighted to have already received some room bookings for meetings and training events as well as our regular weekly events, and are so pleased to be able to offer use of this building as an asset to the local community.”

Bootle and District First Responders - £8,982



“Funding has allowed us to replace our ageing defibrillators and other equipment that is essential for us to provide emergency support to our local community. Our defibrillators are expensive pieces of equipment and without CIF support it would have been impossible to re-equip the entire team.

“Being in remote, rural, west Cumbria, it might take some time for an ambulance to attend a medical emergency such as a cardiac arrest or heart attack, which is when local resident First Responders can be alerted by the 999 call handler and be on scene in minutes.

“Trained by the North West Ambulance Service and carrying essential equipment we are able to provide immediate life-saving support prior to the ambulance or medi-helicopter arriving. Having our new kit secures our future for the coming years for which we are extremely grateful.”

To find out more about CIF and apply, please visit the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership website, or contact communityinvestment-southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk



Get in touch with NWS who can help you if you have any questions

Email: gdfinfo-southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk

Community Investment Funding email:
communityinvestment-southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk

Telephone: 0300 369 0000

Write: Freepost SOUTH COPELAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Or follow us on social media:

Facebook: [SouthCopelandGDFCommunityPartnership](#)

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**South Copeland
GDF Community Partnership**