

Minutes of The South Copeland GDF Community Partnership

Kirksanton Village Hall, 14th Aug 2024 at 6.30pm

Present:

Ged McGrath	Chair
David Billing	Millom Town Council
Kelly Anderson	Nuclear Waste Services (NWS)
Maggie Cumming	Whicham Parish Council
John Sutton	Sustainable Duddon
Chris Gigg	Drigg & Carleton Parish Council
Carl Carrington	Millom Without Parish Council
Kate Willshaw	Friends of the Lake District
Cllr Bob Kelly	Cumberland Council
Bill Amos	Business Sector
Andy Pratt	Millom Without (Cumberland Councillor)

Supporting Attendees:

Steve Pearce	NWS
Ruth Letourneur	NWS Communications Lead
Jason Flynn	Grants Manager
Anne Broome	Operations Manager

Apologies

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Date:	14 th Aug 2024	Time:	18.30 - 20.30
Meeting Type:	Phone Call <input type="checkbox"/>	Virtual/Conference <input type="checkbox"/>	In Person <input type="checkbox"/>
Location:	Kirksanton Village Hall		
Additional Material enclosed? <input type="checkbox"/>			
Agenda			
Item No.	Time	Description	Lead
1	18.30 - 18.40	Welcome & Introductions. Declaration of Interest.	Chair
2	18.40 - 18.45	Approval of minutes/Action Log	Chair

3	18.45 - 19.00	Chairs Update to include: Pre election period Terms of Office Feedback 24 th July Letter from Cumberland Council Letter from Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC)	Chair
4	19.00 - 19.30	Presentation from Major Permission Team on the Development Consent Order process	Steve Pearce / Ruth Letourneur
5	19.30 -19.50	Community Investment Funding update	Jason Flynn
6	19.50-20.00	Website	John Sutton
7	20.00 –20.10	Update from subgroups	KW /JS
8	20.10 –20.25	Questions from the public : Opportunity for Public attending to ask questions	Chair
9	20.25 -20.30	AOB Close	Chair
	20.30 -20.40	CIP member application	Chair

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed Partnership Members and supporting attendees to the meeting.

There were no apologies and no Declarations of Interest

2. Approval of Minutes and Review of Action Log

Bill Amos stated he had not been in attendance at the previous meeting but his name was on the minutes .

The minutes were accepted and agreed with the removal of Bill Amos name and the addition of the following text It was confirmed that visioning at this stage only needs to be high level and needs to be right for each community.

The Chair gave an example of: Sustainable Community, Protecting Rural Aspect and Respect the areas Cultural Heritage.

Actions from the previous meeting

Action Reference:	Description:	Assigned to:
17.04.24 1	Future meetings to be recorded to aid with minute taking	CEC
17.04.24 2	Contact BGS to ask for some briefing materials on the work they are carrying out for South Copeland.	CEM Complete
17.04.24 3	Invite Alison Beard to next CP meeting to discuss the National Youth Forum	CEM Ongoing
17.04.24 4	Set up a workshop/meeting between CP members and relevant members of the NWS senior team	CEM Complete
17.04.24 5	Speak to the Mid Copeland Chair to see if they will share their Withdrawal Strategy once complete.	Chair Complete
17.04.24 6	Find out how the siting process for England and Wales compares to the process in other European countries.	CEM Complete
17.04.24 7	Circulate Community Impact Report final scope to all CP members.	CEM
17.04.24 8	Share priority topics with CP members after the comms and engagement subgroup	Comms Manager Complete
17.04.24 9	Use priority topics to inform the topics of future Community Fora	All Ongoing
17.04.24 10	Initially schedule one Community Forum for Visioning	CEM Complete
17.04.24 11	Send CIP recruitment email to all CP members	CEC Complete
17.04.24 12	Add the text 'The Ops subgroup will meet to examine applications and make recommendations to the CP they will also select the interview panel and circulate via email for agreement' to the membership person spec	CEC Complete
17.04.24 13	Add Community Impacts report to Delivery Plan and add to the website.	CEC Complete
17.04.24 14	Circulate revised CPA paragraph 11.4 for approval	CEM Complete
17.04.24 15	Remove Terms of Office from the CPA and recirculate	CEC Complete
17.04.24 16	Terms of Office to be added to a future meeting for discussion	CEM Complete
17.04.24 17	Ops subgroup to make a recommendation to the Community Partnership regarding future CP meeting schedule.	Ops subgroup Complete
17.04.24 18	Send out Declarations of Interest by email	CEC Complete

Action Reference:	Description:	Assigned to:
17.04.24 19	Change date of next CP meeting from 12 th June to 19 th June on website.	CEM Complete

3. Chair's Update

The Chair provided an update on the following items:

- **Pre-Election Period** The Chair thanked everyone for being patient through the back to back pre-election periods which meant there has been no comms or engagement for 2-3 months.
- **Terms of Office** The Chair mentioned the Operations subgroup had discussed terms of office and that it would be covered further in the subgroup update, however he had proposed a subsequent approach which was that there would be no terms of office for any members of the CP.
- **Feedback from 24th July workshop.** The Chair felt the meeting had been very useful with some difficult subjects able to be discussed. Members agreed and further comments were that the actions were very worthwhile and that they were very surprised by the supportive nature of the meeting. It was acknowledged that NWS have to do things in a certain way and they do not always have the answers. It was agreed that a further meeting in or around December be actioned.

ACTION: Book meeting with NWS Senior Team in December

- **Letter from Cumberland Council** The Chair mentioned the letter from Mark Fryer at Cumberland Council which had previously been shared with the members.
- **Letter from Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC)** The letter from CALC that had previously been shared with members was discussed. It was decided that a joint letter would be issued from Millom Without Parish Council and Whicham Parish Council to CALC expressing their concerns as they felt they had not been consulted in the process. The proposed dual role of the Chair was discussed and although this was what takes place in Mid Copeland Community Partnership through the rewording of their Community Partnership Agreement (CPA), it was felt that the members did not want that to happen in South Copeland Community Partnership as it would require changes to the CPA . They would prefer a representative from one of the outlying parishes to be the CALC representative. Following more discussion, it was agreed that as well as individual parish councils writing to CALC if they so wished, the Chair would also raise the concerns of the partnership directly with CALC.

ACTION: Chair to raise CP concerns re CALC letter directly with CALC.

- **Staff recruitment update** The Chair asked Kelly Anderson to give an update on staffing within the Community Engagement Team. Kelly stated interviews had taken place and that a Community Partnership Assistant had been recruited, this was a full time post to be shared with Mid Copeland. A full time permanent Community Engagement Coordinator and a temporary Community Engagement Coordinator had also been recruited. They were all currently going through the recruitment process with no start date as yet, but it was hoped it would be within the next couple of months.

4. Presentation Steve Pearce & Ruth Letourneur (Major Permissions Team)

Development Consent Order (DCO) update:

Steve & Ruth from the Major Permissions team provided an explanation of what a DCO is and gave the Partnership members an overview of the stages of the DCO process. They explained that Development Consent (a type of planning permission) is needed for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and that the Planning Act 2008 categorises both deep boreholes (>150m deep) and a GDF as NSIPs. The National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal Infrastructure sets out national planning policy for GDF and deep borehole DCOs.

NWS must comply with a number of legislative and regulatory Major Permissions requirements and will need a number of DCO's – one for the site characterisation (boreholes) stage of works and one for later construction of a GDF. They confirmed that at each stage, it will be one DCO application and associated process for both Mid and South Copeland Partnerships. Focus will be on boreholes in the inshore region but may also include onshore boreholes and associated site characterisation works within the application. They also confirmed that all three Community Partnerships would be going through the process at the same time.

The Site Evaluation and Geosphere teams will decide the order of boreholes and identify where they could go. However, extensive environmental impact assessment work and stakeholder and public consultation will be undertaken as part of the DCO pre-application process. This includes undertaking environmental baseline studies and surveys to support environmental assessment work. Such studies cover various aspects of marine and terrestrial ecology and include things such as bird surveys and these will need to be over a number of seasons – typically over at least two years and two winters/summers.

It was also explained that NWS will also require an Environmental permit which will be approved in stages. The guidance for the Environmental permit is being developed at present, as there is no other project like this, it will include a permit for:

- Intrusive investigations (boreholes)
- constructing of accessways and a disposal system (vaults)
- placing of the materials

It was clarified that although the Community Partnership would be a helpful body to engage with throughout the DCO process, it could not be an Interested Party as NWS are a part of it.

Kate mentioned that she understood the process as she had worked on DCOs before but mentioned that we should be aware that people get consultation fatigue.

Q. When will you be doing consultation.

A. We will not be doing it this year it's more likely to be next year, we will come back to you with timings once we have them.

Q. The new government is consulting on changes to planning, will this alter the process & timescale?

A. Some types of projects may be able to be fast tracked however we don't think we will be in that category.

Q. You said you will start consultation for boreholes next year so expect to see waste deposited in 2050 does that mean u have 26 yrs of DCOs

A. This is not just one DCO, but we are a long program. A DCO is needed for boreholes when we get the information and data from the borehole investigations we get a better understanding of the geology. The data gathered can then be further analysed to provide a safety case which will enable the information for a DCO for a GDF at a later date.

Q. In preapplication phase, will that application identify where boreholes will be

A. We will likely identify the first few boreholes but build in flexibility for later boreholes which may be defined by what we discover.

5. Community Investment Funding update from Grants Manager Jason Flynn

Jason introduced himself explaining he was currently covering for Helen Conway who is on secondment within NWS.

He mentioned that the Grants team was going through a recruitment process for additional staff and hoped they would be in place within the next month.

The Grants Manager reported:

The funding commitment is currently £791,939 with twenty awards to date being given in Year 3. Nine of these being small grants up to £10,000, nine being medium grants £10,000 – £50,000 and two larger grants above £50,000. Of the £791,939, £200,00 has as yet to have full approval from the NWS GDF CIF Committee which is normal practice for grant applications over £50,000.

Jason covered all twenty awards to date and gave updates on Moore Arts, Mental Health North West CIC Ltd and Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) mentioning how the projects were progressing against their outputs and any feedback they had received into the project.

A question was raised regarding the Cumbria CVS project and how the role could be secured going forward. Jason mentioned that some projects would always be reliant on grant funding, however as this was a CVS project it would be up to them to decide whether or not they reapply for funding.

It was raised that Community Investment Funding should not be the first port of call for funding shortfalls and that applicants should always ensure they have spoken to other Funders.

Jason went on to discuss the CIF priorities and confirmed that a paper would be circulated via email after the meeting for approval by members.

A question was raised on how local businesses could be supported through CIF. It was agreed that a letter be drafted to NWS asking a question regarding procurement.

Carl Carrington offered to catch up with Bill Amos to look at the mechanics of a shopfront scheme or similar for businesses in Millom, he also extended this invitation to the Grants Manager
JS asked whether the exit strategy/sustainability had been fully considered. He was assured that the exit strategy/sustainability had been fully considered.

ACTION: KA to send out updated CIP priorities paper for approval

ACTION: Chair to draft letter to NWS to ask how local business can be supported through CIF regarding procurement.

6. Website proposal paper John Sutton

JS had circulated a proposal to members earlier in the week. He took members through his proposal paper mentioning why he felt there was a need for a local website. Benefits listed include greater authenticity for the Community Partnership, investing in local businesses and skills, demonstrating a willingness to engage openly with our community, and our community to be equal partners. Following discussion, there was broad agreement that the Community Partnership should have its own website. It was agreed that JS add to the proposal the “ask of NWS” this should be sent to NWS.

It was acknowledged that only a few members had seen the website and that John Sutton and Bill Amos had only once seen limited wireframe proposals.

ACTION: JS to add the ‘ask’ to his website proposal paper before sending to the CET team for onward distribution

7. Update from Subgroups

Comms & Engagement subgroup - Kate Willshaw

The C&E subgroup met on 7th August 2024 and discussed the following agenda items:

Visioning

The approach to visioning was discussed. A questionnaire had been drafted as a quick and easy way to collect data from the community. It will initially be trialled at Millom & Broughton show and if it is successful, the questionnaire can be used in multiple ways going forward.

An update was given on the Key Community issues / Topics work that had been undertaken. Kate Willshaw explained that a list of the top key themes has been pulled together from contact centre enquiries, community forums, CP meetings and other events and will be shared with the wider CP. This work highlighted that there was still a clear need for general information about the siting process, GDF and the Community Partnership.

Website - Discussed under earlier agenda item

The Comms & Engagement subgroup proposed that CoRWM be contacted to carry out a public seminar or workshop. This was agreed and KW was asked to invite a CoRWM rep to the next *Community Partnership meeting*.

ACTION: KW to invite a CoRWM rep to the next Community Partnership meeting to discuss the proposal of a seminar in public.

Operations subgroup update - John Sutton

The operations subgroup met on 9th May 2024 and discussed the following agenda items:

Member Recruitment

JS updated that following a new application for membership, the subgroup had reviewed the application and invited the applicant for an informal chat. After the discussion the potential member has decided to consider whether he will be best placed to contribute as an individual or as a representative of his organisation.

Member Terms of Office

There was agreement that the annual process carried out by Parish Councils was sufficient to enable them to consider their representative and whether to continue or withdraw their membership of the Community Partnership. As discussed in the Chairs update, there was a subsequent proposal that there be no terms of office for any members of the CP. This was agreed by the Partnership.

It was acknowledged that there had been no consistent CALC (Cumbria Association of local Councils) representative at the Community Partnership meetings for some time. It was agreed that a formal letter be sent to CALC asking for representation at South Copeland Community Partnership meetings going forward. (The subsequent letter received back from CALC was discussed in the Chairs update) .

Frequency of Community Partnership meetings

Some members had expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of time it took for subgroup discussions to come to the full CP meeting. This was discussed and there was a proposal to continue with the scheduled bimonthly meetings in public and on the alternate months, have online Teams meetings for CP members only. In person meetings would have Subject Matter Experts in attendance if possible and online meetings would discuss more internal matters but be minuted with the minutes shared on the website. This proposal was agreed.

Process for information requests

It was reiterated that a process was needed when there was a request for information from NWS. It was agreed that all requests / questions from the public should continue to be sent to the Contact Centre. It was also agreed that when CP members are asked questions outside of meetings they should be recorded and sent via email to the southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk email address this enables us to track the questions that are being asked and add to the Key Community issues / Topics work which would be ongoing.

JS requested that everyone in the subgroups should be contacted and asked if a meeting can be cancelled in the future.

8. Questions from the public

As a member of the public who has attended many Community Partnership meetings can I request that South Copeland Community Partnership has its own website.

A. Thank you that is recorded

I feel there were comments from Jamie Matear (NWMO) that should be made known to the local public, in particular that it would be highly unlikely that a GDF would be sited in Canada so near to a highly populated area.

A. It is in the previous minutes so already in the public domain.

One of the questions put to Jamie Matear was why would a GDF not be considered underwater and not near a town

His answer to that was “We decided to listen to the peoples’ concerns about having a repository below water and not propose any repository there. Why is that?”

At Working Group stage the members felt it would be more acceptable to look under the sea and that is why we are looking in the inshore area. The Working group felt that out underwater rather than under land would be more acceptable in the UK. In Canada it was the opposite, they said under water was not acceptable.

Acceptable what does it mean?

Jamie said the policy in Canada was not to put a GDF below water as it is not acceptable to the indigenous community.

Q. When there is a Test of Public support who does that involve

We don’t know yet. We need to know who will be impacted by this project and that will be defined once the Potential Host Community is identified. The Potential Host Community could be bigger or smaller than the Search Area. It needs to be an informed decision meaning people need to know what the scheme is, what a GDF looks like, how it all works etc before they decide.

Q. What if we do all this and the public vote against it

A. That will be a problem for the government.

As time was running out it was agreed that any further questions were submitted to the Contact Centre these included:

What is the stance of the Labour government to the proposal of a GDF in this area

Has the CP/ NWS briefed our MP in the key aspects on the impacts of the project e.g. Loss of farming, community and livelihoods, loss of tourism, job losses, potential health problems.

A Community Partnership member mentioned that a Face book post referred to in the monthly comms update appeared to show a post from the local MP. It has since been clarified that this was a post by someone else and the MP had been tagged in it rather than written it.

It was noted there were other posts that the Comms Manager referred to on Facebook where there had been no response. The CP members felt that this shouldn't be happening, KA to discuss with the Comms Manager.

ACTION: CEM to discuss responses to Facebook posts with the Comms Manager

9. AOB

There was a request for volunteers to help at Millom & Broughton Show

There was a request for volunteers to help at Thwaites Community Forum

ACTION: Send out a reminder for volunteers for Community Partnership Community Forum in Thwaites Village Hall 10th September

CIP Member application

It was proposed that Chris Gigg take up a seat on the CIF panel this was agreed.

New Actions

Action Reference:	Description:	Assigned to:
14.08.24 1	Book meeting with NWS Senior Team in December	CEM
14.08.24 2	Chair to raise CP concerns re CALC letter directly with CALC	Chair
14.08.24 3	Send out updated CIP priorities paper for approval	CEM
14.08.24 4	Chair to draft letter to NWS to ask how local business can be supported through CIF regarding procurement.	Chair
14.08.24 5	JS to add the 'ask' to his website proposal paper before sending to the CET team for onward distribution	JS
14.08.24 6	Invite a CoRWM rep to the next Community Partnership meeting regarding a seminar in public.	KW

Action Reference:	Description:	Assigned to:
14.08.24 7	Discuss responses to Facebook posts with Comms Manager	CEM
14.08.24 8	Send out a reminder for volunteers for Community Partnership Community Forum in Thwaites Village Hall 10 th September	CET

Next Meeting

The next meeting in public is October 16th at the Guide Hall Millom