



ANNUAL REVIEW

Looking back on 2024

**South Copeland
GDF Community
Partnership**

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Chair's Update – Where we are now

As we look back on the past year, I am pleased to share this Annual Review which looks at the steps we've taken as a community to understand what a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) could mean for South Copeland.

Through community surveys and looking at your questions, we've gained a deeper understanding of your thoughts and concerns, ensuring they remain central to our work (page 7).



Our geology event in February provided a platform to explore the science behind the GDF and answer important questions, and our Community Forums also served as vital spaces for discussion, where viewpoints are exchanged, and voices are heard.



I am pleased that since the Community Partnership formed three years ago, £3 million Community Investment Funding (CIF) has been awarded to meaningful projects that benefit local people in South Copeland (page 15).

Whether a GDF is located here or not, it is great to see this funding being made available to

so many worthwhile causes and making a positive difference to our area.

Another of 2024's highlights was starting our work to develop a Community Vision, which has provided valuable insights into the aspirations and priorities of local people (page 14).

However, this year has not been without its setbacks. From March-July 2024 the Community Partnership's activities were limited due to the local and general pre-election periods, and in late 2024, internal challenges within the Community Partnership resulted in Millom Town Council making the decision to withdraw. A review is taking place to ensure that their views are addressed, and we will continue to engage with Millom Town Council and residents in Millom.

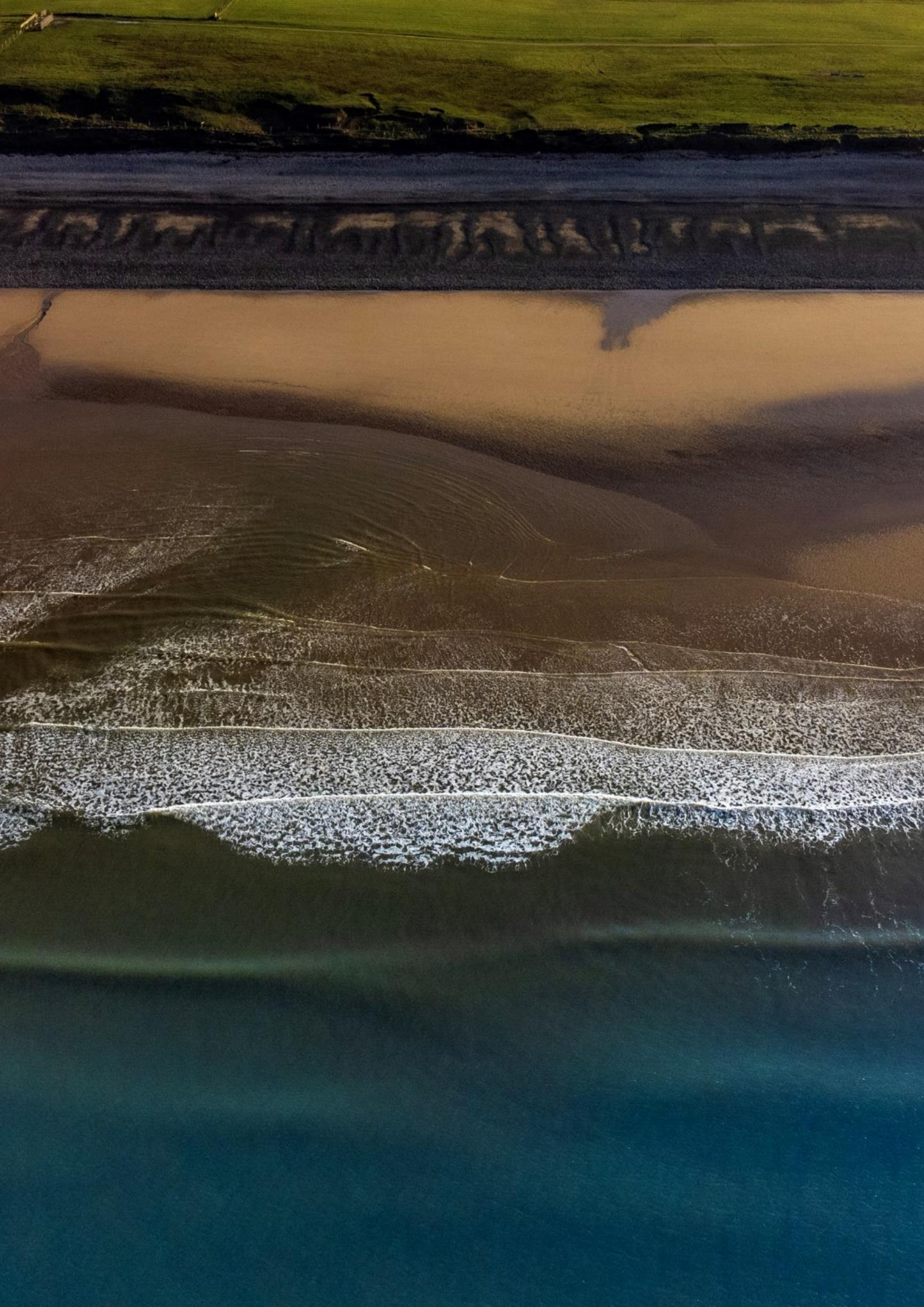
Despite the differences in opinion that such a subject matter can bring, our aim is to assist everyone in the local community through the GDF process, whatever their views, and we will continue to seek out and share information, discuss concerns and find answers to questions the community has about all aspects of geological disposal.



Thank you for your participation, curiosity, and input throughout 2024.

Ged McGrath

Chair, South Copeland GDF Community Partnership





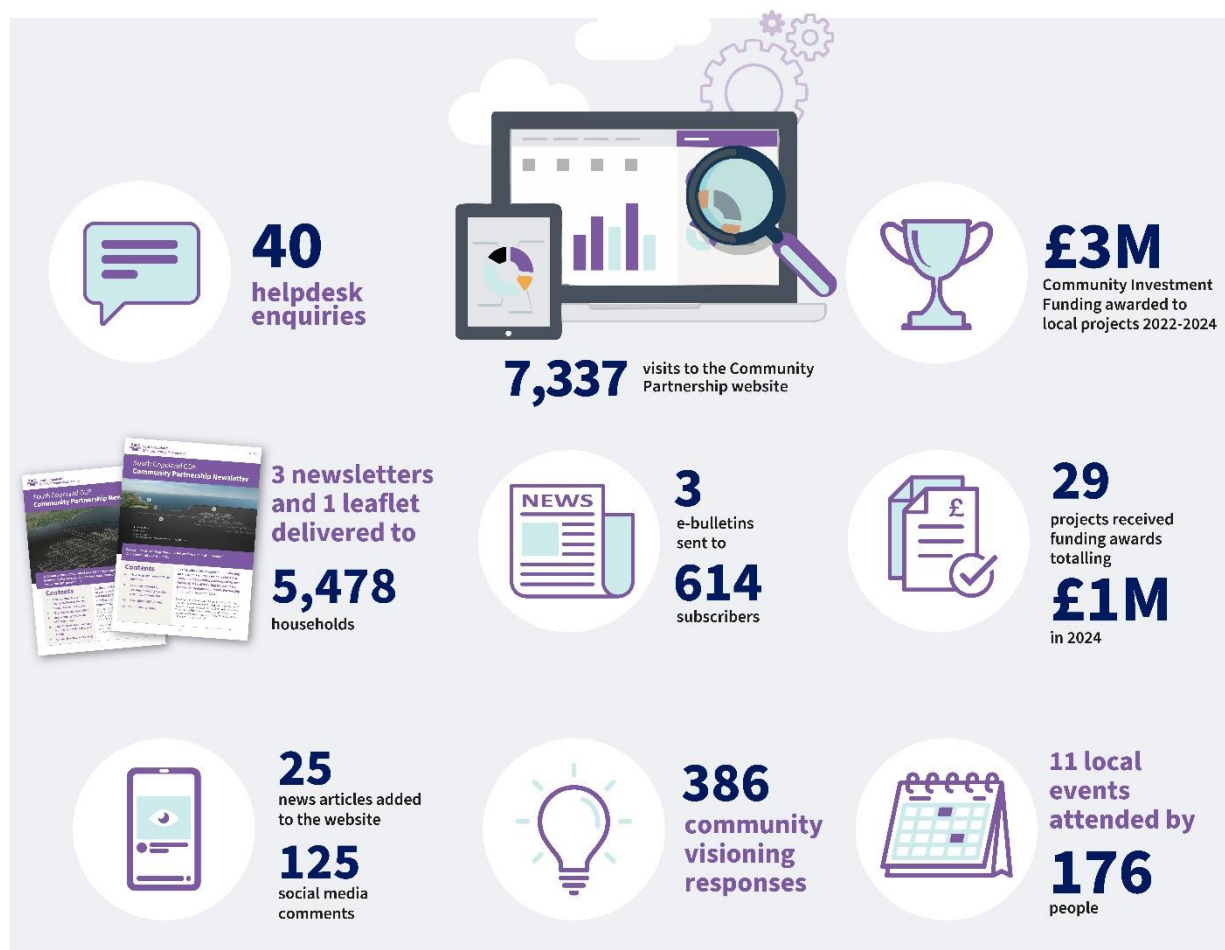
Our Mission Statement

The South Copeland GDF Community Partnership aims to assist everyone in the local community through the 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.

The year in numbers



Understanding your views and information needs

In March and October 2024, independent research consultant Yonder completed two surveys, speaking to 401 people in South Copeland. This was to help us gain a better understanding of the current awareness, understanding and information needs of the community on the geological disposal of the UK's most hazardous nuclear waste.

By gathering feedback through these surveys, we aim to identify knowledge gaps, address misconceptions, and provide tailored information that helps the community to engage in discussions about a potential GDF.

Media recall (% residents that recalled something about radioactive waste/geological disposal):



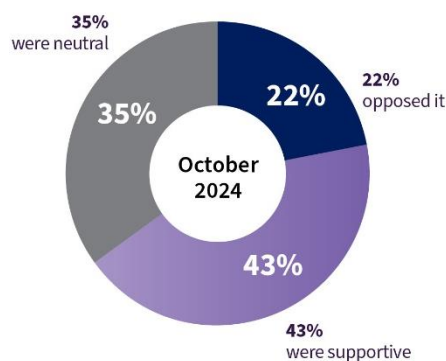
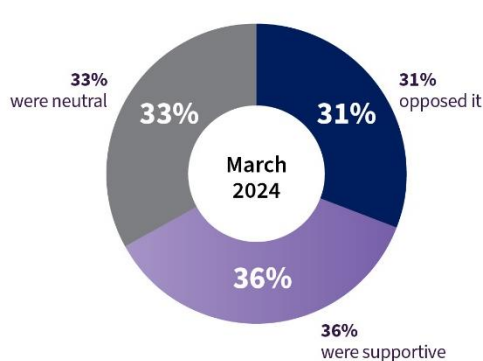
Awareness (% residents that were aware of how the UK's most hazardous radioactive waste was stored):



Understanding (% residents that were able to identify the accurate description of a GDF):



When considering a GDF in the Search Area:



The surveys also revealed that:

- Awareness and understanding continued to be lower among women than men (particularly younger women).

We will continue to seek to build understanding generally – and particularly among women – to ensure the population at large is fully informed.

- Recall of the South Copeland GDF newsletter was high. However, readership of this – as well as spontaneous media recall more generally – was significantly lower amongst younger women.

We will consider how we might engage with women, who are the least likely group to be reached by post.

- Those who did want to learn more about a GDF most commonly requested information associated with the reasoning for South Copeland's involvement ('Why here?')

We will seek to ensure that residents across the Search Area understand why South Copeland is under consideration to host a GDF – as well as what this could mean for the area.

- Concerns often related to disruption (for men in particular) or safety (for women in particular).

Working with NWS and trusted sources, we will communicate on both safety issues (particularly for the female audience) but also on what disruption a GDF will cause and how this will be mitigated (particularly for the male audience).

- A GDF was not commonly understood to protect the environment in the long-term.

Working with NWS and trusted sources, we will seek to explain why a GDF is needed and the environmental benefit that a GDF could have for the UK.

The above actions will be included in the Community Partnership's Communications and Engagement Plan for 2025/26.

Engaging, listening and responding



As a Community Partnership, we want to work closely with local people to truly understand their information needs.

By engaging with you we can identify gaps in information and work with NWS and trusted sources to tailor resources and events to meet your interests and specific needs.

Earlier in 2024, we reviewed all the information available to us to date from community surveys, Helpdesk enquiries, and questions at events, and looked at patterns over time.

This research showed us that people would like information across five core areas:

1. Policy and process, including the role and activities of the Community Partnership
2. Engineering feasibility, the construction phase, infrastructure and transport
3. Safety and security

4. Environmental protection
5. Local economy, jobs and skills

2024 was a difficult year for the Community Partnership; our work was limited by a number of factors, including local and national elections and a pause for the Community Partnership Review. This meant that the Community Partnership met less regularly than it intended to.

Moving forward, we will continue to monitor and review identified themes and ensure that they are included in our communications and engagement activities set out in the Community Partnership's Communications and Engagement Plan 2025/26. Our goal is to develop trust and empower the community with the tools and knowledge they need to make an informed decision on whether a GDF is right for this area.



Our Delivery Plan for 2024/25

**The Delivery Plan follows the financial year April 2024 – March 2025, whilst this Annual Review is for the calendar year of 2024.*

Activity/ Workstream	Delivery Plan	
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun
(1) Communications and Engagement	Publish the Community Impacts Report Community Engagement Plan for 2024/5 agreed ✓ Publish Annual Community Partnership Report ✓	Development of new Community Partnership website Send introductory letter to open dialogue with neighbouring Parishes and the Lake District National Park as well as Westmorland Council ✓ Publish Public Opinion Survey results from March 2024 ✓ Agree scope of Community Impacts Report and understand procurement options ✓
(2) Community Vision	End-of-year review with a look-ahead to 2024 ✓	Understand what the Visioning 'ask' is ✓ Establish a Visioning Subgroup ✓ Draft version 0 of a Community Vision – what already exists ✓ Consider different techniques to get community input into Community Vision ✓
(3) Community Partnership Operations	Review Community Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference to ensure suitability for 2024 ✓ Prepare Community Partnership Delivery Plan for 2024/5 ✓	Publish Community Partnership Delivery Plan for 2024/5 ✓ Publish revised Community Partnership Agreement ✓ Publish revised Declarations of Interest Publish Community Partnership membership role description and recruitment process ✓ Understand Canadian approach to community withdrawal and Test of Public Support ✓
(4) Community Investment Funding (CIF)	Present end-of-year performance review ✓	Recruit and onboard new members of Community Investment Funding panel ✓
Interface with NWS Activities	NWS to present key updates to Community Partnership: Interpretation of Marine Geophysical Survey data (earliest) ✓	Report back on Community Partnership visit to British Geological Survey ✓



Activity/ Workstream	Delivery Plan	
	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec
(1) Communications and Engagement	Begin to understand the seldom heard in the Search Area ✓ Conduct Public Opinion Survey ✓ Development of new Community Partnership website Procure support to carry out Community Impacts Report Request Community Partnership's own website ✓	Publish Public Opinion Survey results ✓ Pilot live broadcast of Community Partnership meeting Launch of new Community Partnership website (timescales TBC) Community Forum 1 (Drigg and Millom) ✓ Share draft Community Impacts Report
(2) Community Vision	Develop Community Partnership's understanding of the Visioning process ✓ Start to get community input into the Vision ✓	Understand the community's wants and needs to inform the Community Vision ✓ Draft version 1 of Community Vision ✓
(3) Community Partnership Operations	Begin to develop withdrawal strategy ✓	Preparations for recruitment of Chair Review Community Partnership membership in preparation for end of tenure Mid-year review of Community Partnership Delivery Plan ✓
(4) Community Investment Funding (CIF)	Present mid-year performance review ✓	Review Community Investment Funding priorities in preparation for 2025 ✓
Interface with NWS Activities		Potential visit to Chiltern Tunnels

At the time of this Annual Review being produced, the Community Partnership has successfully completed most of the 2024/25 Delivery Plan tasks. There are three key activities that have not been completed:

- Community Impacts Report – this has proven more complex than anticipated, including understanding procurement routes and setting the scope of the task.
- Live broadcast of a Community Partnership meeting – due to the limited opportunities to trial this approach, we will add to next year's Delivery Plan.
- Launch of new Community Partnership website – work continues to redevelop the Community Partnership website; NWS will engage with members in 2025.



Community Visioning

The Community Partnership's role includes working directly with local people to create a Community Vision. This means actively involving the community in how they would like their community to evolve and to consider the part that a GDF may play in that Vision becoming a reality.

We have been gathering the views of local people to understand how people feel about the South Copeland area, what they most value and what they might want to improve.

We have held events and Community Forums to understand views, and many people completed a questionnaire (online and postal), resulting in almost 400 individual responses.

Emerging themes include transport infrastructure (road and rail), local economy and employment opportunities, and health and social care services.

In 2025, the Community Partnership will be continuing this work with local residents to explore the emerging themes in more detail.

Learn more about the Community Vision and Significant Additional Investment:



£3 million Community Investment Funding awarded so far in South Copeland

A total of £3 million of Community Investment Funding (CIF) has now been awarded to local projects in South Copeland since the formation of the Community Partnership.

CIF grants can be used for projects that benefit the communities within the South Copeland Community Partnership Search Area.

79 projects have benefited from the support so far – 27 initiatives in 2022, 23 in 2023 and a further 29 in 2024.

Up to £1 million of CIF is made available each year for local communities engaging in the GDF siting process.

The Community Investment Panel is now into its fourth year of providing the funding and the grants team is supporting interested groups and organisations on their applications.

CIF offers an opportunity to secure funding for projects, big or small, that:

- Create economic opportunities
- Enhance the natural or built environment
- Improve community wellbeing

The Community Investment Panel may also consider funding for projects that are delivered outside of the Search Area; however, the applicant would be required to demonstrate and evidence the benefit to the community in the South Copeland Search Area.

Projects benefitting from the funding in year 3 include:

A Skye Full of Stars: £1,100 – The grant will provide a personalised marquee, which the charity can use for outreach events. The Charity awards grants to children/young people aged 25 and under in the Millom area to help them fulfil their dreams, including education, sports, dance and music.

Bootle & District Bowling Club: £26,467 – To purchase new equipment to maintain the Bowling Green. This new machinery will enable the greens man to produce a better playing surface for the members, local community and

visitors to enjoy the game of Bowls. The equipment covered includes a Mower, Spiker, Scarifier and Sprayer.

Bootle Village Hall: £50,000 – Towards the replacement of the play park equipment area next to Bootle Village Hall.

Cumberland Council: £200,000 – Contribution towards Activating Community Health, a project in Millom will provide a new Health Hub facility for the community. The money provided will fund an upgraded surface (3G) to the existing artificial pitch; and a further £150k from both the 2025 and 2026 budget will be provided for the outfitting of the building stage of the full Activating Community Health project.

Cumberland & Westmorland Archaeological & Antiquarian Society: £1,020 – In addition to £3,627 allocated in 2023, to fund a local excavation searching for evidence of and activities relating to a medieval settlement and the history of Irton.

Duddon & Furness Mountain Rescue: £57,500 – To contribute towards costs for a new purpose-built centre providing a control room, secure storage for three vehicles and a wide range of medical, rope access and water rescue equipment; space for maintenance, training, briefing and the welfare of members, relatives and the public on operations; and drying facilities.

Eskdale Mill Heritage Trust: £4,000 – Funding towards volunteer training, and the related PPE, tools and materials costs involved at Eskdale Mill.

Haverigg Nursery & The Clubbers: £20,225 – Towards the replacement of existing old equipment and the purchase of new equipment to enhance both the internal and external play areas nursery resources.



Howgill Family Centre: £59,894 – Has received a total of £190,935 over three years to the Good Enough Start programme. Good Enough Start contributes to parents understanding of how they develop their baby's lifelong mental health, shaped by the parent-infant relationship.

Millom Amateur Operatic Society: £4,871 – Funding to enable a series of surveys to be completed in relation to the building.

Millom Baptist Church: £46,089 – New audio-visual conference facilities will be installed to two areas of the Church building; the Sanctuary and the Main Hall. This will enhance the overall use of the hall for all users of the building.



Millom Bowling Club: £14,547 – To purchase a new lawn mower with interchangeable cassettes to enable the upkeep of the local bowling green for the local community.

Millom National Children's Choir: £5,000 – Funding for seven children to attend two week-long courses with the National Children's Choir of Great Britain. This gave the children the

opportunity to work with the very best choral and vocal coaches alongside children from all over the country who share their love of music and singing.

Millom Rugby League Football Club: £45,739 – For the installation of a Solar Panel System which will allow them to reduce utility costs and contribute towards the sustainability of the Club.



Millom Recreation Centre Limited: £3,912 – The project will provide surveys for Millom Recreation Centre (MRC) which are aimed at assessing the feasibility of installing solar panels to reduce energy costs, promote sustainability and increase the centre's eco-friendly agenda, efficiency, and annual users.



Millom Striders Running Club: £2,536 – To provide funding for the Run the Edge 2024 event, which is a running event from Millom along the West Coast.

Millom Town Council: Awarded £4,083 to replace six public seats in Millom and £4,764 for the provision of seven new seats at points around the lagoon.

Millom Velo Club: £10,000 – For the purchase of training equipment to enable them to create an inclusive and safe environment for cyclists of all ages to learn, develop and improve their bike handling skills for both on and off-road disciplines.

Mind in Furness: £36,617 – ‘Safe Space Millom’ will provide a weekly mental health drop in/support service with a full range of targeted mental health and wellbeing opportunities. All sessions and courses delivered as part of this project are free to attendees.

Muncaster Microbus: £30,000 – This grant is to provide funding towards a replacement vehicle of a similar type and specification to the current disabled accessible minibus used by the Muncaster Microbus Ltd, allowing them to continue with their current services.

Norman Nicholson House: £63,741 – The project aims to rescue the lifelong home of the 20th century Cumbrian poet Norman Nicholson from a state of increasing disrepair and transform it into a place that people will want to visit. The grant award is to contribute to external renovation costs.

Silecroft Village Hall Committee: £27,963 – For the supply and installation of audio-visual equipment. It will enable the hall to offer conference facilities, film nights, children’s entertainment and family parties.

Slag Bank Play Area Association: £29,723 – To replace the current play area flooring, which will provide a safe all-weather, all-season surface for the children’s play area.

South Cumbria Sea Sports Association: £21,560 – This grant application is for Phase 2 of the project to erect a tractor facility which will enable the members to carry out repairs whilst at the site rather than the tractors being moved to members’ homes for any repair and maintenance works. The extra facility will be energy efficient, enable repair works to be carried out in a safe manner, and reduce the carbon footprint of their operations.

St Paul's Irton Parochial Church Council: £400 – Towards obtaining an expert’s report on the conservation and display of two medieval objects: The 9th century Anglian cross, a scheduled monument of national importance, currently in poor condition; and the 13th century Irton crusader’s grave slab, currently in storage beneath the Abbey Church at St Bees.

The Eskdale Centre CIC: £8,385 (with an additional £7,257 taken from 2025’s budget) – The project is to provide feasibility studies and an energy efficiency assessment in regard to the Eskdale Bunkhouse.

West Lakeland Rotary Club: £4,295 – To install interpretation boards for St Paul's Church to Irton Hall walk. The first being a natural history information board located at Holmrook Hall Bridge and the second detailing the history of the footpath is adjacent to St Paul's Church.

Whicham Parish Council: £10,000 – The project will update and provide additional play equipment for children under 7 years-of-age in the Parish Council owned play areas in Silecroft and Kirksanton.

Waberthwaite & Corney District Village Hall: £93,069 – For the installation of audio-visual equipment which will attract more hall users and expand the types of events they may offer to the community. The project will also provide a heating upgrade and installation of CCTV.

For more information about the funding and how you can apply online, please visit our Community Investment Funding webpage. You can also contact the grants team by email at 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

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