

Minutes of The South Copeland GDF Community Partnership

Muncaster Parish Hall

Tuesday 2 December 2025 at 12pm

Present:

Amy Shelton	NWS, Principal Community Engagement Manager (PCEM)
Andy Pratt	Chair
Ray Williamson	Millom Town Council
Sadie Clarke	Drigg & Carleton Parish Council
Bob Kelly	Cumberland Council
Ben Daniels	Individual

Supporting Attendees:

Jonathan Cook	Cumberland Council
Kelly Anderson	NWS, Community Engagement Manager
Anne Broome	NWS, Community Operations Manager
Lucy Clarke	NWS, Regional Communications Manager
Ruth Letourneur	NWS, Land Use Planning Manager
Katie Jackson	WSP, Major Permissions Delivery Partner

Meeting Date:		02/12/2025	Time:	12.00 – 13.15
Meeting Type:		In person		
Location:		Muncaster Parish Hall, Ravenglass		
Additional Material enclosed: No				
Agenda				
Item	Time	Papers	Description	Lead
1	12:00		Welcome, Introductions & Declarations of Interest	Chair
2			Approval of the minutes	Chair
3			Chairs Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership updates • Meeting Brief 	Chair
4			Public Forum	Chair
5			NWS Update	Amy Shelton / Ruth Letourneur
			Meeting dates 2026	Kelly Anderson
6			AOB	Chair
7	13:15		Close	Chair

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed Partnership Members and supporting attendees to the meeting. He welcomed Ray Williamson to the meeting who was attending his first meeting as the representative of Millom Town Council. Apologies had been received from Chris Gigg. Drigg & Carleton Parish Council had opted to send a deputy in his place and therefore Sadie Clarke was introduced to members and welcomed to the meeting.

No Declarations of Interest were recorded.

2. Approval of the minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 October were discussed. There was a missing action from the meeting which was for the PCEM to review the Community Partnership Agreement (CPA) against learning from other Community Partnerships and bring any proposed updates for discussion at the next meeting. The Chair agreed that the action be added to the previous minutes and they were subsequently approved.

Previous Actions: Meeting (09102025)

Action Reference:	Description:	Assigned to:
09102025.01	Chair to set up a meeting for him, Amy Shelton and prospective CP candidate	Andy Pratt ONGOING
09102025.02	Final version of Delivery Plan to be circulated to all members	Jodie Dougherty COMPLETE
09102025.03	2026 SCCP dates to be circulated to members	Jodie Dougherty COMPLETE
09102025.04	PCEM to review the CPA and provide any proposed updates for discussion at the next meeting	Amy Shelton COMPLETE
09102025.05	Lucy to circulate proposed survey publicity to members and publish on the website.	Lucy Clarke COMPLETE
09102025.06	CIF strategy to be discussed at CIF panel and take back to SCCP to discuss.	Andy Pratt ONGOING

The PCEM took members through a draft CPA document as requested under action 09102025.04

The amendments proposed covered:

- 1) Updating the document to reflect the updated Policy that was published in 2024
- 2) Minor grammar and formatting edits
- 3) Learning from other CPA's (Allerdale, Mid Copeland and Theddlethorpe)

Members thought that the proposed changes were sensible and adopted the revised CPA. A final version will be circulated to members.

ACTION: Updated CPA to be circulated to all members.

3. Chairs Update

The Chair updated that the previously scheduled Community Partnership meeting on 5 November had been cancelled due to adverse weather. This was unfortunate but safety had to come first. He confirmed that public participation in Community Partnership meetings had been reintroduced.

A number of Community Partnership drop-in sessions have been held over the last few months at the request of members of the community who were present at the September Community Partnership meeting. Turn out has been low with some events attracting no attendees. It is however important that the Community Partnership continue to provide these engagement opportunities, even if no one attends as it is important to be present and hear what people have got to say.

The Chair confirmed again that Community Partnership meetings now take place every other month. Due to the long timescales associated with the GDF siting process there isn't always enough information to make monthly meetings worthwhile.

Membership updates

The PCEM had a meeting with the Governor of HMP Haverigg. They discussed that, as a major employer in the area and because of their proximity to the Area of Focus, it would be helpful for HMP Haverigg to consider being represented on the Community Partnership. The Governor nominated a member of his staff who lives locally to the prison for consideration for membership.

An email from the proposed representative was read out to the members setting out their reasons for wanting to apply for membership and the skills they could bring to the Partnership. The Chair asked members if they were happy to accept the nomination for membership – members accepted.

The Chair has had contact from Friends of the Lake District (FLD). Their current representative is on reduced hours now and is unable to attend meetings and therefore FLD would like a conversation with Andy in the New Year regarding their ongoing representation.

Members were happy for the Chair to meet with FLD.

Meeting Brief

The Chair suggested that South Copeland Community Partnership should try sending out a meeting brief to members swiftly following the meeting. This is a similar approach to Mid Copeland and would summarise the discussions at CP meetings and aid members in reporting back to the organisations that they represent.

Members agreed and so meeting briefs will be provided from the next meeting.

CIF

The £1m Community Investment Funding (CIF) available for 2025 had now been spent which equates to £4m spent in the local community over the last 4 years. A strong pipeline of projects/expressions of interest for 2026 is already in progress which is positive.

The Chair finished his update by pointing out how far the Partnership had come since reconvening in June and commended the collaborative way that members are working together.

4. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

5. NWS Update – from Amy Shelton, PCEM

Simon Hughes

The NWS Board appointed Simon Hughes as our new GDF Executive Director, beginning 5 January 2026. Simon will lead the GDF programme at an important time – guiding the next steps of the GDF programme, reviewing our work, and ensuring we are structured in the best possible way to speed-up decision-making, strengthen accountability, and our focus on delivery.

Site Characterisation

Taking a decision on identifying a community or communities to progress to Site Characterisation including deep borehole investigations represents a significant step for the overall GDF programme. NWS is anticipating making a decision in Spring 2026. Any decision to progress a community to deep borehole investigations requires Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (SoS) approval. However, there is no prescribed timetable for this work, and we will proceed only once all relevant information is available. Information on Site Characterisation has recently been added to the NWS website and is included in the Community Partnership's upcoming newsletter, and the NWS team attended the meeting to talk about this.

Yonder survey

For the last two years, there have been 2-3 public opinion surveys per year in South Copeland. This was to gain clarity on the differences between surveys in the early years where NET support jumped between -34 and +35. The reality is that the survey results continue to fluctuate, and we would therefore propose that we move to one survey per year. We would also like take the opportunity to look at different ways of carrying out the survey to ensure we get as much diversity in the participation as possible.

There was a short discussion with members suggesting there wasn't an even comparison if one CP was doing 3 surveys and another was doing 1. It would be a truer picture if they were all equal.

Members accepted the proposal to move to 1 survey a year.

ACTION: Send questions, methodology and results of Opinion surveys to Millom Town Council representative.

Nuclear Issues Board

At the request of Cumberland Council, NWS are attending an informal online Nuclear Issues Board on Thursday where Owen, from Yonder, will present high level results of the residents' surveys in Mid and South Copeland over the years.

Community Impacts Case Studies Report

The Invitation to Tender for the Community Impact Case Studies Report was put out to the market in September. The tender period is now closed and we are working through the next stages of the procurement process (i.e. evaluation, moderation, standstill, award of contract etc). Andy Pratt is the Community Partnership representative for this project. We will provide an update when there is news to share.

A point was made regarding being clear about what the Community Impacts report is and isn't and making sure the name accurately reflects what it is.

Helpdesk/Social Media

Helpdesk enquires over the last couple of months included enquiries regarding inventory – referencing the size of a GDF and new SMRs; also excavated material; carbon footprint; costs; and safety. Social media themes included responses to Community Visioning activities, concerns around the property market and tourism, thoughts on the Community Partnership’s GDF drop-ins, the Environment Agency, community consent, the GDF process, potential positive and negative community impacts, and community surveys.

Site Characterisation Update

Amy handed over to Ruth Letourneur and Katie Jackson to update on where we are in planning for permissions for Site Characterisation.

Ruth introduced herself and Katie from the Major Permissions Delivery Partner (MPDP) which is a combination of WSP and Atkins Realis who are supporting NWS through permissions for Site Characterisation works.

Ruth explained that new Site Characterisation information had gone live on the NWS website including a short video explaining more about Site Characterisation. The video was played to members and then Ruth explained the three different aspects of Site Characterisation 1) Desk based e.g. reviewing information that already exists 2) Surface based/non-intrusive e.g. seismic surveys 3) Intrusive e.g. boreholes.

Members felt that the timelines were clear in the animation and that visuals are helpful but questioned the lead-in times before the permissioning work starts.

Members then discussed the level of knowledge and understanding within the community of Sellafield, and the associated need for progress towards a GDF.

6. Meeting dates 2026

Proposed meeting dates for 2026 were shared with the members. There was a discussion about whether we should move to quarterly meetings given the length of the project. Most members were comfortable with this but it was felt that the bimonthly meetings hadn’t been tested yet so this should be trialled for a few months. Frequency of meetings will therefore be reviewed again in six months time.

The proposed meeting dates were approved. Venues will now be arranged and the dates will be put onto the website.

The first meeting of 2026 will be on Wednesday 4 February – venue TBC.

7. AOB

ACTION: Need to set up a meeting with Ray in the NewYear to induct him on to the Partnership.

Lucy is writing a news article for the Community Partnership website on the £1m CIF funding being allocated in South Copeland. There will also be an NWS press release on £8m CIF funding received over the last four years in Copeland.

The Chair expressed a desire to get some drop ins in the diary for early 2026.

New Actions

Action Reference:	Description:	Assigned to:
02122025.01	Updated CPA to be circulated to all members.	Amy Shelton
02122025.02	Send questions, methodology and results of Opinion surveys to Millom Town Council representative.	Lucy Clarke
02122025.03	Set up a meeting with Ray in the NewYear to induct him on to the Partnership.	Kelly Anderson