

News Release – 5.12.22

**£1million awarded in Mid Copeland from GDF programme**

Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership has awarded £1million in Community Investment Funding to local projects during its first year.

In the latest two funding rounds a further 9 projects have been granted money for a variety of community facilities as the area takes part in the search for a suitable site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Partnership Chair Andy Pratt said: “We’re delighted to have been able to award the £1million allocated funding for Mid Copeland in our first year as a Community Partnership. A total of 28 awards have been made from the funding, for projects which will reach hundreds of people across our area.

“We’ve now already started considering projects for year two, so there’s more improvements to come for local people and I would urge any groups to consider applying for the funding. Please don’t forget, even if you’ve applied and successfully been awarded a grant – you can still apply again.”

The final projects to benefit from funding in year one are:

* £159,330 for iCan Health and Fitness Community Interest Company to provide a 3-year project to deliver Wheels of Wellness and Happy Healthy Neighbours
* £194,154 for the first phase of Beckermet Reading Rooms’ refurbishment, including replacing the roof, insulation and heating system
* £54,980 to Cumbria Community Foundation’s Winter Warmth Fund for grant support to people in Mid Copeland aged 60 or over to help pay for fuel, warm clothes, blankets, transport to doctors’ appointments or additional food
* £9,934 forWest Lakes U3A towards a two-year programme of activities including talks and trips
* £4,380 towards Calderbridge & Ponsonby Village Hall improvements
* £4,300 toWest Lakeland Rotary Club for improved footpath accessibility near the River Irt,Holmrook, including replacing stiles with gates
* £91,147 to Shackles Off to enable initial development activities to provide a new build youth centre and meeting rooms
* £72,837 to Gosforth Parish Council to provide a community outdoor gym for children and adults
* A total of £15,065 to Drigg and Carleton Parish Council to fund two IT projects

Formation of the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership gave access to £1million Community Investment Funding per year from the GDF programme as discussions progress around what a facility could mean locally. The Search Area includes the electoral wards of Gosforth & Seascale and Beckermet.

A GDF is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste. Community Partnerships are long-term groups made up of local people, the GDF developer and local authorities to consider the possibilities of hosting a GDF within an identified Search Area.

Gosforth Parish Council is delighted with its funding which will provide an outdoor community gym for older children and adults on the village playing field.

Vice Chair Rachel Unsworth said: “We’re over the moon. This will really benefit the community, not only providing the outdoor gym and table tennis but also maintaining it for the next five years and providing us with a defibrillator at the playing fields which is fantastic.

“We’re doing a community-led plan in Gosforth and this had highlighted that we need facilities for older children. Other suggestions from local people included an outdoor gym and table tennis so this funding will really help us start to make this happen.”

A three-year outreach programme of activities will be provided in Mid Copeland by iCan Health and Fitness which focuses on exercise, mental wellbeing and building community relationships.

Founder Lisa Bridgewater said it would also include employing two members of staff from Mid Copeland during the programme. She said: “It’s really exciting for us to focus on Mid Copeland and have the grant funding to be able to offer our Wheels of Wellness and Happy Health Neighbours programmes.

“This will bring activities such as trampolining or chair-based exercise, fun family sessions, focus on health as well as exploring being a good neighbour.”

The GDF programme requires both a suitable site and a willing community. Deep geology beyond the coast is being considered for siting the underground elements of a GDF. This means a surface facility on, or near, the coast would provide access to a disposal area deep in rock beyond the coast.

If a suitable site is found in Copeland – a process which could take 10-15 years – a decision to develop a GDF in Mid Copeland could not be taken until the community in the electoral wards directly affected has had a say and taken a positive Test of Public Support.

The Community Partnership is keen to hear from groups with projects that could be eligible for Community Investment Funding – for further information go to: <https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/community-investment-funding/>