

Dean Parish Council

Question	Response
Letter	<p>On the 27th February 2012 Dean Parish Council held a public meeting in the Kirkstile Community Centre, Dean. The meeting was chaired by the council chairman, Tony Worsley, and the main speaker was Guy Richardson, CALC's representative on the MRWS Partnership. The DVD supplied with the consultation pack was shown to open the meeting, following which Guy Richardson addressed the meeting for approximately 45 minutes, followed by questions from the floor.</p> <p>Guy outlined the process so far, which has reached stage 3 in the process. He expressed the serious doubts that CALC has had about the process, in particular the definition of a 'Host Community' when it comes down to withdrawing from the process.</p> <p>The main issues which were raised by parishioners who attended were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have any extensive discussions taken place with other countries who are contemplating, or actually building, nuclear waste repositories (Finland in particular who are the farthest advanced), and are there any plans to visit these countries to learn about their experiences? It was pointed out that the population density of some of these other countries (Scandinavia in particular) is considerably lower than ours. 2. Why do we need to take a decision on whether to proceed with a desk-top geological study - as part of the work has already been done, and as considerable knowledge is available from the Nirex study of the Gosforth area in the 1990s, this could proceed without any commitment to go further, as no major expenditure would be incurred (such as borehole drilling). Concern was expressed that the findings of the Nirex enquiry appear to be completely excluded from the current process. 3. It was agreed that the decision to use this 'voluntarist' approach was purely political, as the Government has not received and is unlikely to receive any volunteers from the geologically suitable parts of the country, eg the south east or Norfolk. 4. Concern was expressed about the long term safety of material currently stored above ground at Sellafield. <p>At the end of the meeting, a show of hands indicated that 2/3rds of those present were in favour of proceeding to the desk top study, and 1/3rd were against.</p> <p>On the 5th March 2012, Dean Parish Council held its regular Council meeting, which was attended by 10 out of 12 councillors, plus our Allerdale Borough and Cumbria County Council representatives, and an open discussion was held on the issue of proceeding to stage 4 (desk top study).</p> <p>The main issues raised at this meeting were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concern at the democratic process involved, in particular whether decisions taken by the borough and county councils, ostensibly on behalf of the residents of Allerdale and Copeland, would be by the 'Cabinets' or the full councils, and also the effectiveness of the public consultation exercise currently taking place. Doubt was expressed on whether a vote, even if taken by the full council, would be a free one, or whether a 'party line' would

take precedence, in which case common sense may not prevail.

2. How realistic the right to withdraw which is enshrined in the consultation document would be, when hidden away in the 'small print' is the following statement (repeated): "in the event of the partnership concluding that the omission of a potential host community (parish, borough?) would create insurmountable problems for the siting process, then it could recommend the inclusion of the community concerned if this was supported by a full justification and explanation". It was felt that this statement effectively wiped out any chance of 'opting out' by any parish or group of parishes.

3. The huge impact of the construction process on host and surrounding communities was not felt to be fully grasped.

4. It was felt that the further the process moves on, the more momentum it will gain, making it more difficult to pull out at a later stage. The right to withdraw, and by who, at later stages is far from clear. There was a strong view about the difficulty of overcoming government (of any political persuasion) momentum once potential compliant communities had been identified. The original decisions by Allerdale and Copeland, both of which have vested interests arising from their nuclear- centric industry, and the complete absence of a Plan B, make it difficult to imagine that smaller communities (eg Parish Councils), would have any influence on later decisions on whether to proceed.

5. Retrievability was considered an important issue, particularly if alternative means of disposal or recycling/reprocessing are developed in the future.

A vote taken at the end of the discussion resulted in 5 votes in favour of proceeding to stage 4, 6 against proceeding, and 1 abstention.

The importance of individuals making their views known to the partnership by responding prior to the 23rd March 2012 was stressed at both meetings.