

Copeland staff help pupils with challenge

COPELAND Council staff are supporting school pupils in a science and technology challenge.

The FIRST LEGO League competition asks groups of children to develop innovative solutions to problems using science and engineering. The annual global contest is co-ordinated in Cumbria by CSTEM (Cumbria Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and supported in West Cumbria by the REACT Foundation charity.

This year's theme is the built environment and planners at Copeland were asked to provide real-life challenges for the teams to solve.

Planning Development Manager, Nick Hayhurst, said: "This is a great competition to support, and if it gets youngsters interested in buildings, planning and the challenges around our built environment, that's fantastic.

"If some of the groups choose the challenges we have set, it will be really interesting to see how they approach them and what ideas they come up with as solutions."

The challenges included:

- Whitehaven harbour is too shallow for cruise ships. What can we do to attract them to the town without having to alter the harbour?
- How can we reduce buildings' construction time and therefore minimise cost and disruption?
- Research and design your own flood prevention methods to help protect homes near rivers.
- How can we retain high street shops while internet shopping continues to grow?

The LEGO League has three sections - pupils must demonstrate they have engaged with the core values of friendly competition and teamwork; build and program a LEGO robot to complete specific tasks; and solve a challenge from their local built environment.

Peter Woolaghan, Chairman of the REACT Foundation, said: "Copeland Council have been tremendous supporters of FIRST LEGO League in previous years, helping make Cumbria the biggest region in the UK now participating in the programme. I am particularly pleased we have their direct involvement in this year's theme around the built environment.

"It is involvement from our community that makes this such a unique programme, delivering highly relevant skills for the future workplace, not only in robotics and autonomous systems, but in unconstrained problem solving and teamwork. I would encourage anyone who has not been involved to help out with a team and experience what concentrated fun looks like!"

This year's West Cumbria finals take place at Lakes College on January 28 and 29. Winners will join other Cumbrian representatives from the Barrow and Carlisle finals in the national final at Bristol in February where the winners will go on to represent the UK and Ireland at the global final in the US.



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