



## Report from the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks – 2021

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Geological Survey of Northern Ireland / British Geological Survey

### 1. Members

Chris Woodley-Stewart (Vice-Chair) – North Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark

Raymond Roberts (Vice-Chair) – Natural Resources Wales

Laura Hamlet (Vice-Chair) – North West Highlands UNESCO Global Geopark

Graham Worton – Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark

Jane Lamine – Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark

Grainne O'Connor – Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark

Martina O'Neill – Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark

Melanie Border – English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

Nick Powe – English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

Alan Bowring – Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark

Tony Ramsay – Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark

Naomi Foster – North Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark

Sandy Middleton – Shetland UNESCO Global Geopark

Margaret Wood – GeoMôn UNESCO Global Geopark

Cynthia Burek – GeoMôn UNESCO Global Geopark

Graham Worton – Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark

Colin Prosser – Natural England

Colin McFadyen – NatureScot

Michael Dempster – Northern Ireland Environment Agency

David Drewry – UK National Commission for UNESCO

Matt Rabagliati – UK National Commission for UNESCO

### 2. Aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks

#### 2.1 Active applications:

- Mourne Gullion Strangford Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark (Northern Ireland), application submitted in November 2019. Evaluation mission took place in October 2021 and the application has been deferred for 2 years.

#### 2.2 Territories that we are advising:

- Antrim (Northern Ireland) - since 2012
- Arran (Scotland) – since 2018
- Charnwood Forest (England) – since 2020

- Jersey (Channel Islands) – since 2017
- Isle of Wight (England) – since 2021
- Cross-Channel - Kent Downs / Cap Marais d'Opale (England / France) – since 2020

### **3.0 Committee Activities**

#### **3.1 Meetings**

- The annual meeting of the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks (UKCUGG) took place virtually on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May. This was attended by all UKCUGG members with representatives from the aspiring UGGps attending during the open session of the meeting.
- The UKCUGG continues to be actively engaged with the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) and has attended several meetings throughout 2021.

#### **3.2 Collaboration with UNESCO and the UKNC**

- The UKCUGG continued to work closely with the UKNC on a number of items. Most notably these included the delivery of a climate change workshop (see section), assisting in the revalidation and evaluation assessments of a number of UK UGGps, and assisting UNESCO in the collection of images for publicity of the Scottish UNESCO trail.

#### **3.3 COP26 activities**

- In response to the call for information on climate change related activities within UGGps in the run up to COP26, a workshop was organised and delivered on climate change for all of the existing and aspiring UGGps in both the UK and Ireland. The workshop was introduced by Prof. David Drewry, the Director of Natural Sciences for the UKNC, and included information on climate change adaptation and mitigation and provided an opportunity for all of those in attendance to discuss what climate change activities they were delivering.
- The main output of the workshop was a briefing note, produced with the UKNC that has since been circulated to UNESCO and to the UKNC, highlighting the many activities being delivered across the UK by all of the existing UGGps.

#### **3.4 Public engagement**

- Presentation at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks, hosted by Jeju UGGp, based on the outputs of the climate change workshop and highlighted what the UK UGGps are doing to mitigate for and adapt to climate change. This was included within the 'Geoparks, climate change and natural hazards' session and the talk was attended by over 150 people.
- Webinar for the Institution of Environmental Sciences as part of their Cultural Heritage and Climate Change series. This talk built upon that given in Jeju, but highlighted the importance of considering all aspects of heritage when it comes to looking at the impacts of climate change.

#### **3.5 Joint projects**

- Collaborative project proposal led by the University of Glasgow to use arts and creative practices to reflect on the remit of UGGps and their potential for re-engaging people with the local and global challenges of the Anthropocene; a role made all the more pressing as we move to a new 'normal' in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Proposal will be submitted in 2022.

#### **3.4 Mentoring and advice for interested areas**

- The UKCUGG is working with the Mourne Gullion Strangford Aspiring UGGp to address the recommendations provided during their recent evaluation visit. The majority of the

territories that we are advising have been assigned mentors from the UKCUGG depending on their stage of development. An update on progress is provided below:

- a) **Antrim Geopark** – Progress has been very slow due to resource constraints. As a result, there has been little contact in the past year. A website has been established and there are plans for public engagement events in the coming year.
- b) **Arran Geopark** – Progress is steady and a pre-submission visit is planned for summer 2022 with a view to submitted in November 2022 should all of the elements be ready.
- c) **Charnwood Forest** – One meeting has taken place with Geopark staff. There are two members of staff working on the project and good progress has been made with development of a Geopark road map.
- d) **Isle of Wight** – A meeting took place on 17/11 to discuss the potential of becoming a UGGp. A number of supplementary documents were provided but no further contact has been made.
- e) **Jersey Geopark** – Progress has been steady with a meeting taking place on 7/12 to discuss work to date. An official announcement was made stating the plan to submit in 2022. This has now been revised to 2023 to allow for consolidation of the Geopark further.
- f) **Kent Downs AONB** – This is a transnational UGGp project together with a protected area in northern France. Progress is going well with four meetings attended (12/8, 8/9, 13/10 and 17/11) to discuss Geopark boundaries, site identification and governance structures. Plans are underway to submit in 2024.

#### **4. International Geodiversity Day**

- The UKCUGG has worked with the UKNC and representatives from the International Geodiversity Day Committee to support this initiative. Initial meetings have taken place with the UKNC, the UK Delegation, Natural England, Natural History Museum and representatives from the UK International Geodiversity Day submission group. The overarching aim is to try and organise a UK-wide series of events within UNESCO-designated sites to promote this initiative. This will be discussed further during the course of the meeting.