



Report from the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks – 2022

Chair: Kirstin Lemon (klem@bgs.ac.uk)

Geological Survey of Northern Ireland / British Geological Survey

1. Members

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

Raymond Roberts (Vice-Chair) – Countryside 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

Rory Tallack – Shetland UNESCO Global Geopark

Margaret Woods – GeoMon UNESCO Global Geopark

Cynthia Burek – GeoMon UNESCO Global Geopark

Graham Worton – Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark

Colin Prosser – Natural England

Colin McFadyen – Scottish Natural Heritage

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), submitted their progress report to the IGGP Secretariat in November 2021 after being deferred in 2019. The UGGp Council accepted Mourne Gullion Strangford UGGp and they are awaiting ratification by the UNESCO ExB in Spring 2022.

2.2 Territories that we are advising:

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

- East Yorkshire – since 2018
- Jersey (Channel Islands) – since 2017
- Cross-Channel - Kent Downs / Cap Marais d'Opale (England / France) – since 2020

3. Committee Activities

3.1 Meetings

- The annual meeting of the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks (UKCUGG) took place in the Black Country UGGp on 16th and 17th June. 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 2022.

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 assisting in the revalidation and evaluation assessments of a number of UK UGGps, and working with the UKNC in the initiation of the Global to Local Project in association with a number of UNESCO designations.

3.3 Engagement with the wider GGN

a) The Chair presented at the International Intensive Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks hosted virtually by the Lesvos Island UGGp, In November 2022. The presentation focused on tourism within the UK UNESCO Global Geoparks with examples provided by each UGGp in the UK as well as some from the Aspiring UGGps.

b) The Chair presented at the recent UGGp Evaluator Training course hosted by the GGN and UNESCO. This was done at the invitation from UNESCO to provide some insight into specific topics relevant to UGGps in the UK. This included UK UGGps in a post-Brexit world, the legislative structure of the UK, the use of languages in the UK, and styles of interpretation used in UK UGGps.

c) The Chair submitted a response to the GGN on behalf of the UK UGGps summarising the extreme weather events that have been experienced in the UK from May to August 2022. In a year that saw extreme heat in the whole of the UK and drought conditions in some parts, this was a useful exercise and helps raise the awareness of such events.

d) The Chair assisted the Vice-Chair in delivering a workshop to discuss the functioning of the EGN and how this could be improved. This was attended by the UK and the Irish UGGps with feedback provided by the Vice-Chair to the EGN AC after the event.

3.4 Mentoring and advice for interested areas

The UKCUGG is working with a number of Aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks. Those that have had direct assistance from the UKCUGG have been listed 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 aside from regular contact with the Chair through the Geological Survey.

b) Arran Geopark – A pre-submission visit was carried out which was very useful, and demonstrated the huge amount of work carried out by the Arran Geopark team. It was advised that Arran Geopark postpone their submission until 2023 with a number of

recommendations being provided during the visit and a report issued summarising the conclusions of the visit.

c) Charnwood Forest Geopark – There has been no direct contact with Charnwood Forest Geopark during 2022 with the exception of their attendance at the annual UKCUGG meeting.

d) Cross-Channel Geopark – This is a transnational UGGp project together with a protected area in northern France. A number of meetings have taken place this year (15/9, 5/12 and 12/12) that discussed boundary issues and forthcoming events. Further meetings need to take place to confirm boundaries and to align submission with the French UGGp Committee.

e) East Yorkshire Geopark – One meeting has been held with the East Yorkshire Team who are continuing to gather support for the Geopark but this is still at a very early stage and is being developed at the same time as a nomination for an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They were unable to attend the UKCUGG meeting in June.

f) Jersey Geopark – A number of meetings have been held with Jersey Geopark who now have a number of staff as well as a small interpretative centre and a series of events delivered by Geopark staff. They have developed promotional material and are working with the committee to ensure effective Governance is in place with a bid to submit their application in 2024.

g) Mourne Gullion Strangford aUGGp – The aUGGp submitted their progress report to UNESCO in November 2022 to fulfil the recommendations provided as a result of their deferred application. The UGGp Council approved the application and this and is waiting for ratification by the UNESCO ExB in May 2023, at which point it will become the 9th UGGp in the UK.

4. International Geodiversity Day

The majority of the UKCUGGs delivered events as part of International Geodiversity Day. These included, but were not limited to:

Cuilcagh Lakelands UGGp: The Rock Detectives Workshop provided a jam-packed hour of activities with Geopark staff. Children had the opportunity to participate in interactive hands-on fun learning, where they discovered more about the rocks and landscape of the Geopark

Fforest Fawr UGGp: A number of events were delivered included Geopark Learning Lab Open Day, the Henllys Vale ‘Sound Walk’ and the launch of the short film on the Waterfall Project on the Geopark website.

Mourne Gullion Strangford aUGGp: Delivered an event in conjunction with the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland of how geodiversity can help us to understand past climate change.

North Pennines UGGp: The Geopark launched a social media campaign celebrating the geodiversity of the North Pennines geodiversity and why it matters to everyone that lives in, works in and visits the area.