

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2021

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark (ERUGGp), UK, (European Geoparks Network)

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2007 / 2019

Agatha Christie Sea Swim, the International Agatha Christie Festival organisation was welcomed as a new Associate Partner in 2021



2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 1 person (fulltime including the geoscientist) plus 2 part time (Senior Project Officer and Marketing and Social Media Officer). Additionally, the ERUGGp management group is made of core partner representatives and all ERUGGp partners incorporate the Geopark remit into the roles of their staff.

Number of visitors: It is estimated that the English Riviera attracted 3.4 million staying and day visitor numbers during 2021. This was an increase of around 55% on the 2.2 million in 2020. However, it should be noted that both 2020 and 2021 were both severely impacted by restrictions related to Covid 19 and whilst visitor numbers increased in 2021, they were still approximately 25% below 2019 pre-Covid levels which stood at 4.5 million. The situation is similarly reflected with visitor numbers improving on last year but still not back up to pre-Covid levels at the ERUGGp key sites with ticket control in place where numbers were as follows: Kents Cavern - 50,000, Torquay Museum - 10,788 and Torre Abbey - 10,535.

Number of Geopark events: Again, significantly affected by Covid, in total 53 events took place. As the ERUGGp works as a partnership organisation these were all run by the core and associate partners. Additionally, over 1,500 guided tours of Kents Cavern took place

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: For a large part of the

year Geopark partners were not able to operate educational visits due to Covid restrictions. Equally related to Covid, even when restrictions were lifted, it remained difficult for Schools to engage due to their own logistical and staffing issues. Despite this, as an example of what was possible, Kents Cavern still welcomed 2,800 school students on educational trips and Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust ran educational visits for 11 classes of school children (approx. 330 children).

Number of Geopark press release: Two key press releases covered the Geopark Festival however the ERUGGp now predominantly uses social media to share information and news.

Social Media figures:

Facebook: Posts - 497, Reach - 151,1K

Twitter: Posts – 401, Reach 4,8 million

Instagram: Posts - 267, Reach - 21.5K

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2021

- Titled the 'Mini Geopark Festival 2021', the real highlight was that it took place at all! With Covid restrictions at their height in the UK, and the path forward unclear, it was not possible until just two weeks before to even begin to think about the festival this year. Yet, as soon as partners realised there was a window of opportunity their efforts made the mini festival possible at extremely short notice. Of particular interest this year were the geology events run by new Associate Partner Taleblazers, a company that combines storytelling with environmental education and new Associate Partner, Vigilance, a local heritage boat of national importance (and last of a long line beam trawlers built in Brixham in 1926), organised an Open Day and completed twenty guided tours of the boat
- Core partner Torquay Museum, originally set up by the Torquay History Society to house the artifacts excavated from Kents Cavern, celebrated its 175th anniversary. A series of dedicated events and an exhibition of 175 items from the museum's collection, curated by the local community, was on display from the museums extensive collection. In many cases the individuals choosing objects had researched these items or written interpretation based on what their choice meant to them
- Since inception, the management of the Geopark has been reviewed every 5 years to ensure greater effectiveness at the operational level. A review took place in 2021 and based on feedback, and in line with the Core Partner Terms of Reference and the Associate Partner Agreement, a set of criteria for both Core and Associate Partners was developed alongside new application forms for both. The review will also inform further work in 2022

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Melanie Border participated in all GGN ExB meetings and was re-elected for a further term as a member of the GGN ExB, presented during some of EGN and GGN digital meetings/forums/conferences, attended the UKCUGGp digital meetings and presented during the Lesvos intensive course.
- Nick Powe participated in all EGN, GGN and UKCUGGp digital meetings/forums/conferences and carried out two revalidation missions to Gea-Norvegica and Katla

Management and Financial Status

- Regular management meetings have been held and the financial status is stable and secure

Geoconservation

- Throughout 2021 ERUGGp provided recommendations to Torbay Council planning department. Additionally, through close collaboration with the Planning department a specific draft Geopark Briefing Document for Planning related to both designated and non-designated sites geological sites was developed. The document will be adopted after a wider Torbay Council consultation has been completed
- The Geopark assisted Natural England to ensure the required condition assessments of the Sites of Scientific Interest across partner sites were completed
- ERUGGp has been working with a range of national level partners and research is ongoing re a potentially highly significant fossil find. Details are currently having to remain confidential

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- In line with the 17 SDG's the ERUGGp ethos has always been aligned to support environmental practice and caring for our community and our incredible green and blue spaces. However, with the climate and ecological emergencies now so high on the agenda for us all it was felt time to officially firm up our approach. As a result, considerable time was committed to develop an ERUGGp Environmental Policy and Marine User Policy for the Geopark and its partners. This involved close collaboration and consultation on the drafts with the partners and wide range of organisations during 2021. It is planned to officially introduce the policies on Earth Day in 2022
- Core partner Torbay Council has formed a Climate Partnership for the territory of which the Geopark is a key partner
- Although significantly slowed by Covid, work has been ongoing with Plymouth University Impact Lab to develop a 3D fly-over map of the ERUGGp area. The map will feature layers of info including attractions, things to do, places to eat will contain a geology layer The Geo-Impact Map will be a free online resource for the public to use and will be launched during the Geopark Festival in 2022

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- In response to the World After paper and considering SDG 14 the ERUGGp initiated area wide discussions with relevant organisations on the need to create a Marine Forum for the Geopark area. Bringing together a wide range of partners and meeting monthly the new forum had its first meeting in July 2021
- Through collaboration with core partner South Devon College a funding bid was developed and submitted to the Turing Scheme (new UK equivalent of Erasmus) during the summer and was successful. The funding will enable two cohorts of students from the college to visit Ngorongoro Geopark, Nigeria and Rokua Geopark, Finland (COVID allowing). This life changing opportunity for the students will take place in 2022 and the students will be supported to learn about the ERUGGp before the visits and will then be off to join the Ngorongoro and Rokua Geopark teams to take part in a variety of trips and activities, including a conservation project in each Geopark. It is hoped this will be the start of long-term relationships and that future Turing Scheme funding will be accessed to enable trips to other Geoparks around the world in future years

Strategic partnership

- Six new partners joined the Geopark Associate Partner Scheme namely the International Agatha Christie Festival, Groundwork, 365 Sea Swim, Taleblazers, and English Riviera Walking Tours. This brought the total number of ERUGGp Associate Partners to 24 members including cafes, activity providers, arts organisations, and conservation organisations by the end of 2021

Promotional activities

- During 2021 ERUGGp has very much focused activity online through social media accounts. The normal tourism fairs and events where the Geopark would have had a presence did not take place due to Covid

4. CONTACTS

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