



Report from the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks – 2021

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

Graham Worton – 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

Colin Jago – GeoMon UNESCO Global Geopark

Martin Schwaller – GeoMon UNESCO Global Geopark

Michelle Boyle – Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark

Darren Rice - Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark

Naomi Foster – North Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark

Fiona Saywell – North West Highlands UNESCO Global Geopark

Rory Tallack – Shetland UNESCO Global Geopark

Colin Prosser – Natural England

Jonathan Larwood – Natural England

Raymond Roberts – Natural Resources Wales

Michael Dempster – Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Colin McFadyen – Scottish Natural Heritage

Charles Kennedy – UK National Commission for UNESCO

2. Aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks

2.1 Active applications:

- Arran Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark (Scotland), application submitted in November 2023. Evaluation mission took place in July 2024 and the application was accepted by the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council in September 2024. Formal ratification by the UNESCO ExB will take place in Spring 2025.

2.2 Territories that we are advising:

- Antrim (Northern Ireland) - since 2012
- Charnwood Forest (England) – since 2020 (submission planned for 2025)
- East Yorkshire (England) – since 2019
- Jersey (Channel Islands) – since 2017

- Cross-Channel - Kent Downs / Cap Marais d'Opale (England / France) – since 2020 (submission planned for 2025)

A number of other areas have contacted the UKCUGG to explore potential UGGp status including East Ayrshire (Scotland) and Aberdeenshire (Scotland).

3.0 Committee Activities

3.1 Meetings

- The annual in-person meeting of the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks (UKCUGG) took place on 5th and 6th June, hosted by the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark. This was attended by all UKCUGG members with representatives from the aspiring UGGps attending during the open session of the meeting. An additional virtual meeting was held on 27th November.
- 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 assisting in the revalidation and evaluation assessments of a number of UK UGGps, and in preparing submissions for and attending the Open-ended Working Group on the review of the Operational Guidelines of UNESCO Global Geoparks
- A number of national initiatives have been worked on with the UKNC:
 - Development of a proposal for the assessment of UK submissions to become a UGGp in the event of there being more than the remaining slots available. This process has now been finalised after discussions with the UKNC and their experiences with other UNESCO designations in the UK.
 - Many of the UKCUGG members are part of UKNC projects including Local to Global and Climate Change and UNESCO Heritage.

3.3 Contribution to the EGN / GGN

- The UKCUGG, through the GGN AC and the Strategic Plan task force have made a significant contribution to the development of the GGN Long-Term Strategic Plan.
- A presentation was delivered at the 10th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks on 'UK UNESCO Global Geoparks delivering climate actions through the UN Sustainable Development Goals: more than just SDG 13'.
- The UKCUGG had a stand at the GeoFair exhibit for the UK UNESCO Global Geoparks at the 10th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks.
- Representation from the UKCUGG was provided for the survey for Evaluators, circulated to all UNESCO Global Geoparks evaluators in advance of the assessment period in 2024.

3.4 International Geodiversity Day

- The UKCUGG presented at UNESCO HQ on using geoscience as a catalyst for sustainable development within the UK UNESCO Global Geoparks. This was as part of a reception hosted jointly by the UK Ambassador to UNESCO, together counterparts from Kazakhstan, Poland and Portugal.

3.5 Mentoring and advice for interested areas

- Most of the territories that the UKCUGG are advising have been assigned mentors from the UKCUGG depending on their stage of development.