

# Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark

## Spring Newsletter

EXPERIENCES,  
IT'S IN OUR  
NATURE 



Lough Erne, Co Fermanagh



CUILCAGH  
LAKELANDS  
GEOPARK



Comhairle Contae  
an Chabháin  
Cavan  
County Council



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí



# Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark delighted to be included in Shared Island funding announcement

Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark is to receive €6 million from the Shared Island fund to support tourism through conservation with a focus on delivering a number of projects identified in the Cuilcagh Masterplan.

Last month Taoiseach Micheál Martin announced a Shared Destination project which included the €6m investment into Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark which will see interpretation and trail developments across Fermanagh and Cavan which will expand and connect the trail network throughout the cross-border region further elevating the area as a leading regenerative tourism destination.

Councillor Anthony Feely, Chair of the Geopark Committee, commented on the announcement:

"I welcome the funding announcement which demonstrates a commitment to Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark to deliver on the Cuilcagh Masterplan, which will further enhance the area's natural beauty and accessibility. We look forward to the positive impact this investment will have on our rural communities and the wider region for generations to come."

The funding will enable the delivery on key interventions identified in the Cuilcagh Masterplan including improvements to Cuilcagh Boardwalk Trail, interpretative signage, wayfinding infrastructure, and visitor amenities including a new community-based interpretative centre in Glangevlin all strengthening the visitor offer across Fermanagh and Cavan.



Geopark Manager, Grainne O'Connor



Denis Barrett (Cork UNESCO Learning City Co-Ordinator), Prof Mark Emmerson (Co-Director of the Co-Centre for Climate + Biodiversity + Water), Margaret Hearty (CEO InterTradelreland), Derek McLoughlin (LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature, National Parks and Wildlife Service), Gráinne O'Connor (Manager, Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark)

Councillor John Paul Feeley, Vice Chair of the Geopark Committee, remarked:

"I am thrilled to see this significant investment in the development of our recreation network which benefits our local communities as well as elevating our visitor offering. This funding will strengthen the ties between Fermanagh and Cavan and enhance the Geopark's reputation as a regenerative tourism destination and signify importance of this cross-border landscape."

With ongoing work on proposed developments at Lough Navar as well as the developments at Shannon Pot Discovery Centre and Cavan Burren Park, this investment emphasises the connectivity of this shared landscape and the positive impact of collaborative working between Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Cavan County Council to realise the full potential of the area.

Gráinne O'Connor, Manager of Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, welcomed the announcement noting;

"In 2023 we developed the Cuilcagh Masterplan, a cross-border feasibility study for the area, through Local Authority Development Shared Island Funding. I am delighted this funding announcement will now progress the proposals outlined in this plan which was developed in consultation with local communities. This investment will bring real and lasting benefits to our local communities and the environment across Fermanagh and Cavan."

Last month the Geopark was invited to take part in the Shared Island Forum in Dublin Castle as part of the Irish Government's Shared Island Initiative to engage with all communities and political traditions on a shared future on the island, underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement.

With an opening address from the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin the event hosted two panel discussions focusing on Arts and a reconciled future and Shared Island Investment.

# Bringing St. Brigid's Cloak to Life Project



We were delighted to participate in the culmination of the Bringing St. Brigid's Cloak to Life Project in Dowra Courthouse - Creative Space in March.

In the 1,500th anniversary year of St. Brigid's death, scores of craftswomen, pupils, and writers have been celebrating her legacy in Bringing St. Brigid's Cloak to Life.

The project was imagined by poet Bee Smith and artist Morag Donald (Crafting Your Soul) whom are both Geopark Ambassadors supported by Dani Thuillier another talented Geopark Ambassador alongside many other contributors. The project was inspired by the legend of St. Brigid's miraculously expanding cloak that secured the land for her monastery in Kildare. Over two hundred individual pieces of feltwork, gelli print, embroidery and crochet adorn to St. Brigid's outer cloak. The cloak's lining has over a hundred prayers, blessings and poems written by school children and adults from across Cavan and beyond.

The project was financially supported by Creative Ireland, Cavan Arts Office and the Geopark. It truly is a fantastic example of how different artistic mediums such as poetry and textile art can be used to express the intricate relationships between the unique Geopark landscapes, their legend and lore and our intimate connection to it.



## Geopark awarded INTERREG NPA funding for REGENERATE Project

We were delighted to recently attend the kick off project meeting for REGENERATE hosted by [Visit Reykjanes Iceland](#).

Kick Off Meeting of REGENERATE Project



The REGENERATE Project, funded by [Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic](#) and [Cavan County Council](#) is centred on Regenerative Tourism in the Northern Periphery and Arctic for building resilient communities and preserving unique heritage.

We look forward to working closely with all partners over the next 3 years, [Visit Reykjanes Iceland](#), [GeoCamp Iceland](#), [Gold of Lapland Sweden](#), [Karelia University of Applied Sciences](#) and [Olemisen Balanssia](#), [Fermanagh & Omagh District Council](#), [Tourism Northern Ireland](#) and [Fáilte Ireland](#).

Geopark Attending Trade Shows



## Geopark Promoted on the World Stage

The Geopark team have been representing Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark at a number of trade shows over the last few months.

We were in Athlone where officers met with over 22 Irish travel trade operators showcasing the experiences and attractions on offer across the area. We were in Limerick for ITOA (Inbound Tourism Operators Association Ireland) where we met with another 25 travel trade representatives. We were also at Meitheal in Killarney where we joined 380 local tourism businesses meeting 250 tour operators from 15+ markets to showcase what is on offer in Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark and how we are very accessible from both Belfast and Dublin.

There was great interest in the area and we look forward to building on these relationships.



# Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark explore shared learning for sustainable tourism communities with Ballyhoura Country!

During February and March, community and tourism business representatives from across Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark and Ballyhoura region in Limerick and Cork have been participating in a shared learning journey exchange with a focus on engaging sustainable tourism communities.

The learning exchange is part of a broader collaboration between Ballyhoura Development CLG, Cavan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council aimed at enhancing the tourism destinations of Ballyhoura Country and Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark. This collaboration facilitates learning exchanges between tourism and social enterprise businesses in both regions, exploring themes and best practice examples of sustainable and regenerative tourism.

The project has facilitation in place by Runda Hospitality and Tourism Solutions, who are developing a sustainable tourism communities' framework to benefit both regions and support their continued growth. As both Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark and Ballyhoura Region are located at opposite ends of Failte Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand, this collaboration strengthens the shared ethos of sustainable and regenerative tourism and fosters working relationships among businesses involved on an all-island basis.

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark would like to acknowledge the work and commitment of the local communities and businesses that played a vital role in hosting the learning exchange in the Geopark including Trivia House, Florencecourt House and Gardens, Marble Arch Caves, Tully Mill, Lough Erne Resort, Belmore Court & Motel, Erne Water Taxi, Blue Green Yonder and The Keepers Arms.

**Gráinne O'Connor, Manager of Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark** said 'The learning journey provided invaluable insights into community driven tourism initiatives. Our tourism and community representatives gained a deeper understanding of how empowering local communities can enhance the tourism experience. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the Ballyhoura region as we foster our shared learning and collaborative growth'.

**Amanda Slattery, Ballyhoura Development Manager,** states that "the Shared Island Civic Society Fund has allowed us to explore and deepen our relationship with the team at Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark and co develop a strong project for both regions, this deepens our North South links through the development of sustainable cross-border civic relationships that can enhance tourism visibility and cooperation under the Failte Irelands' Hidden Heartlands brand proposition for community and business beneficiaries."

This project is made possible by the Shared Island Civic Society Fund administered through the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark Visit Ballyhoura Country



Ballyhoura Country Visit Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark



## Thank you to our Rangers

Storm Éowyn was an exceptional storm that had an impact on many of our Geopark sites and recreational trails. Our Ranger team, Municipal District roads staff and partner agencies have been working diligently since the storm to make safe and reopen our sites impacted by the storm.

Our teams have successfully cleared thousands of fallen and leaning trees and conducted remedial work to restore trail surfaces. We would like to thank our partner agencies who have deployed significant resources to make our outdoor sites safe again. As a result of this collaborative effort, we are delighted to say that all Geopark sites, except for Belmore Forest and Lough Navar Scenic Drive now are open.

Our teams and partners continue to work to clear fallen trees, paths and access and we would ask the public to be vigilant, aware of these operations, not to visit areas that have fallen trees and where we are undertaking clearance work. We ask that you please follow any signage indicating closure or work operations located within Geopark sites.



## Be Wildfire Aware

At this time of year, we encourage you to explore and discover as many of our unique Geopark sites as possible, but please enjoy them responsibly and be wildfire aware.

We can all help to keep wildfires at bay:

- 🔥 Avoid open fires outdoors - no fire, no risk.
- 🚭 Properly dispose of cigarettes - small sparks can start big fires.
- 🍔 When barbecuing, be aware of your surroundings, and never leave it unattended. Always extinguish fully before disposing of the coals.
- 🚫 Don't litter! Glass bottles can start fires when sunlight hits them.
- 🚒 Spot a fire? Report it immediately to Fire and Rescue Service by calling 999.
- 💡 Stay safe - never tackle a fire alone.

## Improvements to Cornagee Viewpoint

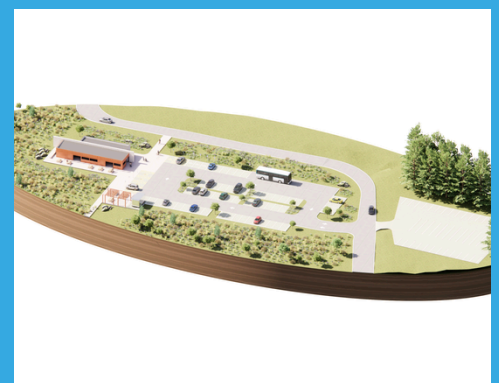
Cornagee Viewpoint is a stunning vantage point showcasing Ireland's rich geological heritage. The name "Cornagee" originates from the Irish term for "rounded windy hill," a fitting description given the frequent breezy conditions. Perched at an elevated position, the viewpoint offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

Through secured 2023 ORIS funding we recently have made improvements to the site including power washing, vegetation clearance, the addition of decorative stone, and general site clean-up. Existing benches were replaced with new accessible seating, and the stone wall and car park area underwent restoration.



## Lough Navar Forest Developments

We are delighted to report that planning has been approved for Phase 2 works of the Lough Navar Development Plan which include a new interpretation centre with toilet and car park facilities, a redevelopment of the viewpoint and new trails including an inclusive trail development. The works are now pending funding.





## Nature Makes Sense

We were delighted to recently participate in the 'Nature Makes Sense' outdoor activity and learning event, co-ordinated by Fermanagh & Omagh District Council's Climate Team. The initiative was dedicated to engaging young people and adults with a disability and offering opportunities for them to connect with nature, explore their local environment and enjoy outdoor recreation activities.

434 participants attended, two events held at Smith's Strand, Lisnaskea and Grange Park, Omagh where we were joined by staff from Conservation Volunteer's, Lough's Agency, New Leaf Compost, Ulster Wildlife, Community and Wellbeing and Climate Teams in Fermanagh & Omagh District Council. It was fantastic to be involved in this interdepartmental and multi-agency event to showcase and help educate

and spark curiosity in the unique heritage of the Geopark in an inclusive and accessible way.



## Education and Outreach

We have had a busy few weeks engaging with local schools delivering our new Fossil Science Programme in partnership with University College Cork and Research Ireland, using resources developed by Ireland's Fossil Heritage. The programme was extremely popular with 102 students from Killyhommon Primary School, Boho, Scoil Naomh Padraigm, Blacklion, Scoil Mhuire,

Lacken and Curragh National School, and Glangevlin all participating in the programme which has become a core component of our Education and Outreach offering.

To celebrate UNESCO World Poetry Day, our Geopark Ambassador, poet and creative writing facilitator, Bee Smith delivered our Poetry Workshop to Curravagh National School where students got the

opportunity to learn about different types of poetry and create their own poem inspired by the Geopark landscapes.



## Upcoming Geopark Events

### Discover Milltown Village and Drumlane Abbey (EGN Week)

24 May 2025, 2pm - 5pm  
At Drumlane Abbey, Co Cavan  
Tickets €5.50

### Children's Bushcraft at Cavan Burren Park

24 May 2025, 10am - 3pm  
At Cavan Burren Park, Co Cavan  
Tickets €8

### Haiku Walk for World Poetry Day

31 May 2025, 11am - 1pm  
At Cladagh Glen, Co Fermanagh  
Tickets €3

### Bear Essentials & Silver Bear Centre 25 Years Anniversary Celebration

21 June 2025, 2pm - 5pm  
At Bear Essentials & Silver Bear Centre, Co Cavan  
For more information, contact  
info@beaessentials.ie or call +353 (0)877610537

### Summer Solstice Sunset Paddle

21 June 2025, 7pm - 10.30pm  
At Cavan Adventure Centre, Co Cavan  
Tickets €40

For more information and booking, please visit our  
website: [here](#).