

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark

Spring Newsletter 2026

EXPERIENCES,
IT'S IN OUR
NATURE 

 Castle Caldwell Forest, Co Fermanagh



CUILCAGH
LAKELANDS
GEOPARK



Comhairle Contae
an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council



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

Community Drop-In Sessions Across Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark

The Community Drop-in Sessions hosted by Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark were warmly received and created a friendly, informal space for people to meet, chat, and share their views. The Community Team greatly valued the opportunity to meet residents face-to-face, listen to local stories, and begin building meaningful, lasting relationships.

The ideas and insights shared during these sessions will play an important role in helping inform and shape the Geopark's Community Plan, ensuring it grows from genuine conversations and reflects the voices of the communities at the heart of the Geopark.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to join us. We're truly grateful for the conversations, the

welcomes, and the connections made and look forward to continuing to create more face-to-face opportunities to engage with the wider Geopark community.



Community Drop-In Session in
The Market House, Ballyconnell

Sharing Cross-Border Insights Internationally

Transmanche Geopark Shaping Sustainable Tourism Conference

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark recently took part in the Shaping Sustainable Tourism Conference hosted by Cross-Channel Geopark Transmanche. The conference welcomed more than 100 participants including tourism businesses, accommodation providers, transport partners, local authorities, and heritage organisations.

Speakers included Nick Crane (President of the Cross-Channel Geopark) and John Keefe (Eurotunnel); Philippe Duquesnoy (Pas-de-Calais

Tourisme) and Alex Riley (Kent Council/Visit Kent), as well as Gráinne O'Connor from Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark.

The Geopark shared best practices from the Cuilcagh Lakelands journey as the world's first cross-border UNESCO Global Geopark. Her presentation demonstrated how sustainable tourism can evolve from early-stage collaboration and strong community engagement to the development of recognised visitor experiences and international visibility. The session concluded with a lively Q&A exploring lessons relevant to the emerging Cross-Channel Geopark.

In addition, the Geopark participated in a series of interactive workshops focused on strategic tourism vision, product and experience development, target markets and audiences, sustainability and infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration.

The day highlighted strong Cross-Channel enthusiasm for shaping a shared visitor economy rooted in outstanding landscapes, collaboration, and sustainable tourism principles.



Regenerative Tourism on the Agenda with Global Markets

Our Tourism & Business Development Team along with Members of Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark's Regenerative Tourism Business Network have been actively showcasing the region's progressive tourism offering at key national and international trade events, including Inbound Tourism Operators Association of Ireland (ITOA), Méitheal and Meet the Buyer.

Representing a growing collective of tourism businesses committed to regenerative principles, attendees engaged directly with international tour operators and buyers, highlighting the Geopark as a destination where tourism actively contributes to landscape protection, community wellbeing and sustainable tourism.

Participation at ITOA provided valuable opportunities to strengthen links with Irish operators, particularly those seeking authentic, experience-led destinations grounded in sustainability.

At Méitheal, Ireland's premier tourism trade event, we showcased high-quality visitor experiences rooted in local heritage, culture and nature, reinforcing the Geopark's reputation as a leader in responsible tourism development. Meanwhile, engagement at Meet the Buyer enabled businesses to build meaningful commercial relationships with international buyers, supporting long-term, low-impact growth for the destination.

Together, these engagements demonstrate how collaboration through the Regenerative Tourism Business Network strengthens the Geopark's international profile, supports sustainable economic development and positions Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark as a compelling example of regenerative tourism in action.



Karan McLernon (Development Officer - Tourism & Business) attending ITOA



Lorraine Sheenan (Failte Ireland), Tony Walker (Slieve Russell Hotel and Chair of Regenerative Tourism Business Network), and Karan McLernon (Development Officer - Tourism & Business) attending Meitheal



Clarissa Beacom (Assistant Development Officer - Tourism & Business) with Members of the Regenerative Tourism Business Network to include, Belleek Pottery, The Boatyard Distillery, Enniskillen Castle, Westville Hotel, Erne Water Taxi, Finn Lough, Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism, Marble Arch Caves, Lusty Beg, Lough Erne Resort, as well as other Fermanagh businesses attending Meet the Buyer

European Geoparks Network Meets in Karawanken-Karavanke

The Transnational Karawanken–Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark hosted the 53rd European Geopark Network Coordination Committee Meeting from 23–27 March 2026, across Slovenia and Austria. The cross-border Geopark spans alpine peaks over 2,000 metres and is renowned for its lead and zinc mining heritage and rich biodiversity.

The meeting brought together Geopark Managers, Geologists, tourism professionals, and UNESCO representatives to share best practice, strengthen cooperation, and discuss governance and evaluations. Geopark Scientific Advisor, Dr Kirstin Lemon and Gráinne O'Connor, Manager coordinated working groups on Climate Change and Transnational Geoparks. Dr Kirstin Lemon was also successfully elected to the European Geoparks Network Advisory Committee.

Congratulations Kirstin!



Inspiring Regenerative Tourism Leaders

Members of the Regenerative Tourism Business Network in Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark continue to invest in their collective learning and shared vision for a truly regenerative destination. We were delighted to support the Network during a recent two-day Leadership Retreat, designed to strengthen skills, build connections, and plan next steps for the future.

The retreat brought together both longstanding and new members for workshops on Regenerative Tourism Leadership, facilitated by The Tourism Space, alongside a team-building session at Lough Key Forest Park. Together, the Network is fostering a strong community of tourism leaders committed to putting place, people, and planet first, continuing to inspire collaboration, innovation, and meaningful action across the Geopark.



Regenerative Tourism Business Network Members with the Tourism & Business Team, and Tina O'Dwyer from The Tourism Space on the Leadership Retreat



Regenerative Tourism Business Network Members, Shiela McKiernan (The Keepers Arms), and Samantha & Pauline Rodgers (Hawthorn Lodge B&B)

Geopark Experience Development Programme

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark's Experience Development Programme has commenced, offering an exciting opportunity for Regenerative Tourism Business Network Members and Geopark Ambassadors to develop new or enhanced visitor experiences.

This programme is designed to support participants to turn ideas into authentic, bookable, and saleable experiences that reflect the UNESCO Global Geopark ethos of conservation, education, sustainability, and community engagement. It will focus on experiences that are place-based, inclusive, and regenerative, helping visitors connect more deeply with the landscapes, heritage, culture, and people of the Geopark.

We are excited to support participants to develop ideas into strong visitor-ready offerings that enhance the overall Geopark experience.



INTERREG NPA REGENERATE Project Learning Journey in Ireland

We recently hosted partners from Finland, Iceland and Sweden for an intensive learning journey focused on Regenerative Tourism practices and specifically the work of the Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark Regenerative Tourism Business Network.

The NPA REGENERATE Project is looking at how regenerative tourism can build resilient communities and preserve the unique heritage of our Northern Periphery and Arctic region.

Throughout the learning journey, partners met with numerous tourism providers who are committed to a community-led, regenerative approach to tourism. Visiting partners were amazed at the level of collaborative working and partnership evident here, a strong focus on accessibility, inclusion and conservation, and gained insights into the power of the public-private partnership approach across the Geopark.

It was a pleasure to welcome our partners in what proved to be an excellent opportunity for shared learning for all of us.

