

EXPERIENCES, IT'S IN OUR NATURE

Spring Newsletter



Forest Eco Spa at Corralea Activity Centre

Spring into Action in the Geopark

Get outdoors this Spring, come rain, hail or shine (hopefully the later). With the clocks springing forward we now have more daylight hours to get out, explore and make memories in Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark. As the Bank Holidays eagerly approach, now is the time to get planning to make the most of your well-deserved break.

For those seeking adventure-based activities this Spring, then the Geopark has many fantastic options to choose from, offering action packed adventure both on land and water in spectacular landscapes with amazing views. From electric bike hire, mountain biking, and forest eco spa with [Corralea Activity Centre](#), standup paddle boarding, canoeing, and archery with [Blue Green Yonder](#), and swan pedalos, kayaking hire to Clough Oughter Castle, and water park with [Cavan Adventure Centre](#) there is something for all adventure seekers to do.

An activity for everyone to choose from, as the count down to the Bank Holidays is on. Pack your sunscreen and your coat, remember there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing, and explore what is on your door step this Spring.

Business Sustainability Training Programme

We recently launched the roll out of our third Business Sustainability Training Programme with the aim of supporting businesses across the Geopark to adapt to and mitigate the challenges presented by climate change.

The programme provides a framework that allows businesses located within the Geopark to come together to build a sustainable tourism offering, achieve cost savings through reductions in waste, water and energy consumption, benefit from becoming a member of the Geopark Business Sustainability Network and demonstrate a real commitment to sustainable business practises setting them apart as exemplar businesses.

We were delighted to welcome Belmore Court & Motel, Dowra Courthouse, Drummany Spirit, Drumrush B&B, Farnham Estate Spa & Golf Resort, Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism, Keenaghan Cottage, Killinagh House, Lough Erne Resort, National Trust Fermanagh, Trinity Island Yoga Retreat, and Trivia House Accommodation on to the programme.



Having successfully completed the programme, businesses will have the opportunity to join the Business Sustainability Network made up of those businesses who completed the programme in 2020 and 2022. They will be in good company joining the likes of Arch House B&B, Blaney Caravan Park, Blue Green Yonder, Corralea Activity Centre, Dulrush Lodge, Erne Water Taxi, Marble Arch Caves, Rushin House Carvan Park and Tullymill Restaurant & Cottages in Co Fermanagh, as well as Carafin Lodge, Cavan Adventure Centre, Drummully Boxy, Hawthorn Lodge, Into the Wild, Jampa Ling, Noeleen Shannon Yoga, The Anglers Rest, Slieve Russell Hotel, The Keepers Arms and the XL Blacklion & Route 16 Café in Co Cavan.

The programme is funded by Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark with support from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Cavan County Council, and Fáilte Ireland.



Giant's Leap at Cavan Burren Park

Shannon Pot and Cavan Burren Park Project

The multi-million Shannon Pot and Cavan Burren Park Project has moved a step closer with work expected to get underway shortly. Detailed design has been completed, and funding is almost fully approved. The arrival of the money will clear the way for us to begin work at the two locations.

The plan is to build a single-storey, high-tech visitor centre at the Shannon Pot, as well as a high-level timber walkway connecting to low-level boardwalks and gravel pathways. It's envisaged that elements such as augmented reality will be incorporated to provide a full and immersive experience of the history and heritage of the area. Once complete, the centre will stand as a flagship attraction in Fáilte Ireland's Hidden Heartlands initiative.



Lough Navar Forest – Phase 1 Developments

A Development Plan for Lough Navar Forest has been developed in partnership with a multiagency external stakeholder working group. The Development Plan provides the framework for a cohesive approach to sustainable development. It outlines a phased costed approach to achieving sustainable inclusive recreation and regenerative tourism experiences which deliver for the needs of local communities and businesses.

In 2022, the Geopark secured funding of £172,592 from the DAERA TRIPSE Fund, match funded by Fermanagh & Omagh District Council to complete a portfolio of Phase 1 works aligned to the Development Plan, totalling £216,115 to implement the following developments:

- Recreational Trails Hub creation x 3 – Welcome, directional, and interpretative signage at vehicle and pedestrian access points.
- Blackslee Waterfall Trail – Creation of new recreational trail hub, reconfiguration of existing trail, interpretation, and site works.
- Lough Meenameen & Lough Achork – Augmentation and new trail development to include recreational trail hub development, sensory trail development, landscape monitoring and trail car park extension.

- Heritage based trail development at Carrick Lough, Lough Slawn, and White Rocks.
- Installation of people counters at new locations within the forest.

Planning and action relating to proposed Phase 2 & 3 developments are well underway, with the Geopark working with the Council's Capital Team.

WDR & RT Taggarts were appointed in June 2023 as an Integrated Consultancy Team to lead on behalf of the Council, on a portfolio of developments totalling approximately £2.3 million of which it is envisaged will include the development of an unstaffed interpretation centre including toilet, shelter and storage facilities and associated parking, bespoke viewpoint look out feature and associated landscaping, recreational hub development throughout the forest, development of new (approx. 10km) trail network including fully inclusive trails and innovative immersive heritage focused interpretation throughout the forest.



Upgrade Works at Geopark Sites

Works are progressing at the Lough MacNeen Amenity Area with the construction of a new feature sign and changing room almost complete. New boundary hedging and additional picnic benches are being installed to improve the quality of the facilities for all users.

Works have commenced at Brackley Lake with a feature sign and new changing room currently under construction. It is intended under the scope of works to upgrade existing seating and to add additional picnic benches to the very popular swimming destination.

A contractor has been secured to carry out remedial works on the existing loop walking trail in Bawnboy which provides a view of the old Workhouse. The main scope of works is to improve the existing surface of the trail and make it more accessible. It is expected that these works will commence in the coming weeks and all works will be completed by early Summer 2024.



Felting the Landscape – Connecting the Landscape and the Arts

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark received funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's National Lottery Rural Engagement Arts Programme Fund to deliver a 12 week Felting the Landscape course. The project aimed to bring together local people living in rural areas to create an artistic response to the Geopark landscape through the medium of wet needle felting. Local artist and Geopark Guide, Morag Donald facilitated the project, assisted by Geopark staff. 8 participants were brought to three of the Geopark's most stunning locations – Tully Castle, Killykeegan Nature Reserve and Cavan Burren Park – to gain inspiration for their artwork. On location the participants had the opportunity to practice basic photography and sketching techniques, along with learning about the history, geology, and biodiversity of the site.

The participants each created several individual felting projects, along with a contribution to a collaborative piece, which will be displayed in the Geopark office in Blacklion. The project culminated with an exhibition launch in the Market House in Blacklion on Friday 13 October 2023. Due to the success of the project a further 2 felting workshops were hosted by the Geopark in November 2023, which were oversubscribed.

Details of this project, including a tutorial video on how to create your own felting artwork can be found on our website: [here](#), and exhibition catalogues can be collected from the Market House, Blacklion.

What's On?

Spring Into Beekeeping - World Bee Day (EGN Week)

Saturday 25 May 2024
11.30am - 1pm

Join Geopark Guide, Kevin for a more in depth look at the world of Beekeeping. This course will teach you where to purchase your bees, what is a healthy Nuclei of bees, how to put them into your hive, how to look after your bees and the diseases/pests, a method of swarm control, and development of the colony and honey production.

Practical Guide to Beekeeping

Sunday 26 May 2024
1pm-3pm

Get hands on with the hive and learn what it takes to keep bees sweet. This practical course will be an introduction to the basic techniques and skills that every aspiring apiarist needs. Learn from expert Beekeeper, Aidan Brady at our Geopark hives in Ballyconnell.

Family Fun Day

Saturday 1 June 2024
12 noon – 4pm

A variety of fun activities have been organised to take place at Killykeegan Forest Park to celebrate European Geoparks Network Week. From orienteering, slime workshops, foraging walks, kayaking taster sessions, stand up paddle boarding taster sessions, rocket launch workshops, and much more, there is something for everyone to get involved.

For more information, booking, and a full list of our events please visit our website: [here](#).