

Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO do cheantar Dhúiche Sheoigheach i nGaillimh agus Maigh Eo: na féidearthachtaí, na dúshláin agus an bealach chun cinn



A UNESCO Global Geopark for the Joyce Country area of Galway and Mayo: the possibilities, challenges and way forward



Tuairisc leis an Roinn Domhaneolaíochta agus Aigéan, OÉ Gaillimh, tiomsaithe agus scríofa ag Siobhán Power do Chomharchumann Dhúiche Sheoigheach Teoranta. Maoinithe ag Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta Éireann.

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1. Achoimre

Tá iarthar na hÉireann cairbreach agus galánta de bharr an cnuasach carraigeacha éagsúla, an tírdhreach dealbhaithe ag oighir agus an cósta muir-it. Tá sé ar imeall mór-roinn agus de bharr stair na hÉireann, chomh maith le tíreolaíocht pholaitiúil agus fhisiciúil, d'éirigh leis pearsa ar leith a choinneáil agus an teanga dúchasach, na traidisiúin agus na ceirdeanna a chaomhnú. Tá na daoine oilte, cruthaitheach, forchéimnitheach, le mórtas féin-chinntitheach acu agus bródúlacht as a ndúchas agus a n-áit dhúchais.

Tá stair turasóireachta ann ach níl sé ag fás go cothrom i ngach ceantar, b'fhéidir mar gheall ar shaibhreas áiseanna turasóireachta nó easpa cumas Forbartha. Thosaigh an smaoineamh do Gheopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach sa bhliain 2008 leis an aidhm tuilleadh ioncam turasóireachta a thabhairt isteach san áit seo a bhíonn dearmad déanta air i dtuaisceart Chonamara agus i ndeisceart Mhaigh Eo.

D'éascair an tuairisc seo as athbhreithniú ar an ndul chun cinn go data agus trí phróiseas comhairliúcháin leis an bpobal agus le páirtithe leasmhara idir dheireadh 2016 agus luath 2017 ar na céimeanna atá ag teastáil chun stádas Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO a bhaint amach.

Ardaíodh stádas Geopháirceanna, a bhfuil breis is 120 acu timpeall na cruinne, go stádas iomlán UNESCO i 2015. Tá an stádas céanna acu anois is atá ag Ionaid Oidhreacht Domhanda ach amháin nach bhfuil aon chumhacht reachtaíochta acu agus nach gcuireann siad aon theorannú ar na ndaoine, na húinéirí talún ná ar thionscail i Geopháirc. Is uirlisí iad Geopháirceanna do fhorbairt inbhuanaithe.

1. Outline

The west of Ireland is rugged and beautiful due to its assemblage of diverse rocks and its ice-sculpted landscape and ocean-sculpted coastline. It is on the edge of a continent and due to Irish history and both political and physical geography, it has been able to retain an unique character, and preserve the native language, traditions and crafts. The people are educated, creative, progressive, have a sense of self-determination, and have a pride their origin and place.

There is a history of tourism but not all places are growing equally, possibly due to the wealth of tourism riches, or possibly due to access and a lack of capacity for growth. The idea for Joyce Country Geopark was born in 2008 with the aim to bring additional tourism revenue to this often over-looked area in north Connemara and south Mayo.

A detailed review of their progress and a public and stakeholder consultation process in late 2016 - early 2017 led to this report on the steps needed to progress the Geopark idea to achieving UNESCO Global Geopark status.

Geoparks, of which there are over 120 across the globe, were elevated to full UNESCO status in 2015. They are now equal in status to World Heritage Sites but they do not carry any legislative weight and do not impose restrictions on people, landowners or industry in a Geopark. Geoparks are tools for sustainable development.

Cé go dtógann sé roinnt blianta stádas UNESCO a bhaint amach, tá an próiseas ag oibriú i dtreo an iarratais tábhachtach do fhorbairt an táirge turasóireachta, na gréasáin ghnó agus ar ndóigh an Geopháirc *de facto*. Tá Geopháirceanna ann ‘don phobal, ón bpobal’ agus is ceiliúradh iad de gheolaíocht agus geomoirfeolaíocht (tírdhreach) a bhfuil tábhacht idirnáisiúnta leis, chomh maith leis an slí bheatha, na traidisiúin, na cleachtais fheirmeoireachta agus an bia a d’fhabhraigh mar gheall ar an dtimpeallacht.

Thaispeáin an próiseas comhairliúcháin poiblí go raibh díograis don smaoineamh sa réigiún chomh maith le toilteanas a bheith páirteach in aon obair amach anseo. Tá roinnt míthuiscintí ann fós faoi theorannú agus ceisteanna faoin achar limistéarach agus ainm na Geopháirce Ardmhéine seo.

Tá trí rogha don achar agus don ainm tugtha sa tuairisc seo. Ba chóir d’aon phlé orthu breathnú ar an scéal geolaíochta, iniatacht nó eisiatacht na bpáirtithe leasmhara, agus féidearthachtaí maoinithe.

Go fadtéarmach, ní mór don réigiún táirge geoturasóireachta uathíúil agus tréan le torthaí intomhaiste a fhorbairt a thagann leis na tionscnaimh turasóireachta réigiúnacha agus náisiúnta chun é fhéin a thaispeáint mar chuid luachmhar den ngeilleagar náisiúnta. Caithfear é seo a dhéanamh chun maoiniú a mhealladh agus chun dul chun cinn inbhuanaithe agus soiléir a thaispeáint in iarratas na Geopháirce.

Sa todhchaí láithreach, tá trí gníomhaíochtaí ag teastáil ón Geopháirc Ardmhéine seo:

- 1) Struchtúr láidir bainistíochta a bhunú le Comhlacht Geopháirce chomh maith le Grúpa Stiúrtha le hionadaithe áitiúla agus ionadaithe os na páirtithe leasmhara, le bunreacht scríofa agus struchtúr le cathaoirleach a thogha.

Gaining UNESCO status takes many years but the process of working towards the application is important for the development of the tourism product, the business networks and above all, the *de facto* Geopark. Geoparks are ‘for the people, by the people’, and are a celebration of internationally important geology and geomorphology (landscape) and of the way of life, traditions, farming practices and food that have evolved in response to the environment.

The public consultation process revealed enthusiasm for the idea in the region and a willingness to engage with any future work. There are still misunderstandings over restrictions and questions over the areal extent and name of the Aspiring Geopark.

Three options for the area and name are given in this report. Discussions on them should consider the geological story, inclusion or exclusion of stakeholders, and funding possibilities.

In the long-term, this region will need to nurture an unique and robust geotourism product with measurable results which aligns with regional and national tourism initiatives in order to show itself as a valuable part of the national product. It will need to do this both to attract funding and to show clear and sustainable development progress for the Geopark application.

In the immediate future, the Aspiring Geopark needs to take three actions:

- 1) Commence a strong management structure with a Geopark Company and Steering Group of local and stakeholder representatives, with a written constitution and method of electing a chairperson.

- 2) Maoiniú a aimsiú chun cur leis an €20,000 ó Shuirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta na hÉireann. Ba chóir go mbeadh buiséad €100,000 ag Geopháirc is í ag lánfheidhmiú.
- 3) Beirt lánaimseartha a fhostú – bainisteoir feidhme agus geolaí.

- 2) Secure funding in addition to the €20,000 from Geological Survey Ireland. A fully functioning Geopark should have an annual budget of €100,000.
- 3) Employ two full-time staff - an operations manager and a geologist.



Abhainn Bhéal Átha na mBreac ag Droichead an Mháma le Leic Aímhréidh sa chúlra. Tá an sliabh seo déanta as Grianchloichít na mBeanna Beola Dálriadach agus Eibhear Uachtar Ard.

Bealanabrack river at Maam Bridge with Lackavrea in the background. The mountain is composed of Dalradian Bannabeola Quartzite and Oughterard Granite.

2. An tAm Atá Caite & An Láithreach

2.1. Cuspóir na Tuairisce Seo

Sé aidhm na tuairisce seo ná treoir a thabhairt do:

1. Forbairt Geopháirc *de facto* agus
2. Iarratas rathúil le haghaidh stádas Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO.

2. Past & Present

2.1. The Objectives of this Report

The objective of this report is to provide direction for:

1. *The development of a de facto Geopark and*
2. *The eventual successful application for UNESCO Global Geopark status.*

Chuir Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta Éireann (SGÉ) an maoiniú ar fáil atá faoi bhainistíocht Chomharchumann Dhúiche Sheoigheach Teo. (C.D.S. Teo.). Bronnadh an conradh ar an Roinn Domhaneolaíochta agus Aigéan de chuid OÉ Gaillimh trí phróiseas iomaíoch, agus sí Dr. Siobhán Power a rinne an obair. Bhí uirthi breathnú ar an obair a rinne an grúpa *ad hoc* Geopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach go dáta, measúnú a dhéanamh ar na féidearthachtaí a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ann do Gheopháirc sa réigiún, agus ansin plean creatlach 5 bliana (2017 – 2021) a leagan amach don ghrúpa. Tá PhD ag Siobhán Power ó OÉ Gaillimh ar gheolaíocht Chonamara agus d'oibrigh sí ó Eanáir 2013 – Samhain 2015 mar gheolaí ar an dtogra Geoturasóireacht Mourne Cooley Gullion in Éirinn/Tuaisceart na hÉireann a bhí maoinithe ag INTERREG IVA. Ba chomhúdar í ar iarratas láidir Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO chomh maith le h-oideachas, ateangaireacht agus ábhair mhargaíochta don togra sin. Is bailiúchán de dhaoine áitiúla atá ionadaíoch ar ghnóanna agus spéiseanna cultúrtha sa phobal iad an grúpa *ad hoc* a bhfuil tagairt déanta orthu sa tuairisc seo. Is grúpa deonach iad a thug Geopháirc Dhúiche Sheoighach chuig an staid seo agus a d'aimsigh roinnt maoiniú, maoiniú SGÉ san áireamh.

2.2. Ionchur i bhForbairt na Tuairisce seo

Is toradh í an tuairisc seo ar chúig gníomhaíochtaí:

- Athbhreithniú ar obair atá déanta go dtí seo ar an dtogra Geopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach. Chuir an grúpa *ad hoc* tuairiscí chuimsitheacha ar fáil ag cur síos an obair déanta ó 2008 agus cuspóirí reatha an ghrúpa chun an togra a chur chun cinn. Bhí na príomh-pháirtithe leasmhara, an ceantar agus an t-ainm aimsithe acu cheana féin.

Funding was provided by the Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) and managed by Comharchumann Dhúiche Sheoigheach Teo. (C.D.S. Teo.). The contract was awarded to Earth and Ocean Sciences at NUI Galway, through a competitive process, and the work was carried out by Dr Siobhán Power. She was required to look at the work already carried out by the *ad hoc* Joyce Country Geopark group, look at the potential for developing a geopark in the region, and then provide an outline 5-year plan (2017 - 2021) for the group. Siobhán Power has a PhD from NUI Galway on the geology of Connemara and worked from January 2013 - November 2015 as geologist on the INTERREG IVA funded Mourne Cooley Gullion Geotourism project in Ireland/Northern Ireland. She was co-author of a strong UNESCO Global Geopark application as well as providing education, interpretation, and marketing materials for that project. The *ad hoc* group referred to in this report comprises a small number of local people representing business and cultural interests in the community. They are part of the group in a volunteer capacity and have advanced the Joyce Country Geopark to this stage and have been successful in securing some funds, including the GSI funds.

2.2. Input to the Development of this Report

This report is as a result of the following five actions:

- A review of previous work carried out on the Joyce Country Geopark project. Comprehensive reports of previous work were supplied by the *ad hoc* group outlining the work carried out since 2008 and the current ambitions of the group to advance the project. They had already identified the main potential project stakeholders, the area, and the name.

- Iniúchadh simplí ar na scéalta geolaíochta, geomoirfeolaíochta (tírdhreach), cultúrtha agus daonna sa réigiún chun insint geoturasóireachta feiliúnach a fhorbairt.
- Cruinnithe duine le duine leis na príomh-pháirtithe leasmhara, Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe, Comhairle Chontae Mhaigh Eo, Fáilte Éireann agus Údarás na Gaeltachta san áireamh.
- Trí cruinnithe eagraithe i gCorr na Móna, An Teach Dóite agus Tuar Mhic Éadaigh chun muintir an réigiúin a thabhairt suas go dáta maidir leis an ndul chun cinn san obair a bhaineann leis an nGeopháirc agus deis a thabhairt dóibh na féidearthachtaí a bhaineann le bheith mar chuid de Gheopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO a phlé. D'éagraigh agus reachtaigh C.D.S. Teo. na cruinnithe agus chuir Siobhán Power i láthair iad. Fógraíodh na cruinnithe ar fad go háitiúil agus tugadh cuireadh pearsanta d'ionadaithe poiblí. Is i stíl 'halla baile' a bhí na cruinnithe le cur i láthair gairid déanta agus ansin deis tugtha don lucht féachana ceisteanna a chur agus an smaoineamh a phlé. Lean na cruinnithe ar fad ar feadh breis is 2.5 uair a chloig mar go raibh leibhéal an phlé an-díograiseach. Rinneadh taifead ar na ceisteanna agus úsáideadh na ceisteanna agus freagraí chun tuairisc a scríobh d'fhaomhadh an lucht freastail.
- Athbhreithniú ar chur ar fáil oideachas geolaíochta ag gach leibhéal ó naíonra go foghlaim fad-saoil.
- Simple audit of the geological, geomorphological (landscape), cultural and human stories in the region for the development of a suitable geotourism narrative.
- One-to-one meetings with representatives of the main stakeholders, including Galway County Council, Mayo County Council, Fáilte Ireland, and Údarás na Gaeltachta.
- Three public meetings held in Cornamona, Maam Cross and Tourmakeady to update the people who live in the region on the progress of the Geopark work and to allow them to discuss what it means to be part of a UNESCO Global Geopark. The meetings were organised and run by C.D.S. Teo and hosted by Siobhan Power. All meetings were advertised locally and public representatives were personally invited. They were 'town hall' in style, where a very short presentation was given and then the audience was invited to ask questions and discuss the idea. Each meeting lasted over 2.5 hours such was the enthusiastic level of the discussion. Questions were recorded and the questions and answers were used to compile a report for the approval by the attendees.
- Review of geoscience education provision for all levels from pre-school to life-long learning.

2.3. Geopháirc – Sainmhíniú

Déanann UNESCO sainmhíniú ar Gheopháirc mar cheantair tíreolaíochta aontaithe amháin le suíomhanna agus tírdhreacha a bhfuil tábhacht idirnáisiúnta leo atá bainistithe le coincheap iomlánaíoch de chosaint, oideachas agus forbairt inbhuanaithe. Úsáideann Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO a n-oidhreacht gheolaíochta, chomh maith le gach gné eile d'oidhreacht chultúrtha agus nádúrtha an cheantair, chun feasacht agus tuiscint na bpríomhfhadhbanna sa tsochaí a fheabhsú, ar nós acmhainní ár ndomhan a úsáid i mbealach inbhuanaithe, éifeachtaí athrú aeráide a mhaolú agus rioscaí bainteach le tubaistí nádúrtha a laghdú. Trí fheasacht a ardú ar thábhacht oidhreacht gheolaíochta an cheantair i stair agus sochaí an lae inniu, tugann Geopháirceanna Domhanda UNESCO bród do dhaoine áitiúla as a réigiún agus a n-aitheantas leis an gceantar a láidriú. Spreagtar fiontair nuálacha áitiúla, poist nua agus cúrsaí oiliúna ar ardchaighdeán a chruthú fad is atá foinsí maoinithe nua cruthaithe trí gheoturasóireacht chomh maith le cosaint ar acmhainní geolaíochta sa cheantar.

Cruthaíodh Geopháirceanna thart ar 20 bliain ó shin trí dhaoine ag lorg bealaí éagsúla leis an dtalamh agus a stair a cheiliuradh chomh maith le spreagadh a dhéanamh ar fhorbairt inbhuanaithe ar mhaithe le ceantair thuaithe a fheabhsú. Bunaíodh an Gréasán Geopháirceanna Domhanda i 1998 agus an Gréasán Geopháirceanna Eorpaigh i 2000. Tá breis i 120 Geopháirceanna ar fud an domhain faoi láthair. I 2015, ardaíodh Geopháirceanna chuig stádas UNESCO iomlán.

Is é UNESCO Eagrais Cultúrtha, Eolaíochtúil agus Oideachasúil na Náisiúin Aontaithe agus bunaíodh i 1945 é. Tá 195 baill stáit aige agus sé an aidhm atá aige ná Síochán a thógaint in intinn fhir agus mhná.

2.3. Geopark – a Definition

UNESCO defines a Geopark as, “... *single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. A UNESCO Global Geopark uses its geological heritage, in connection with all other aspects of the area’s natural and cultural heritage, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using our earth’s resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing natural disasters-related risks. By raising awareness of the importance of the area’s geological heritage in history and society today, UNESCO Global Geoparks give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen their identification with the area. The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high quality training courses is stimulated as new sources of revenue are generated through geotourism, while the geological resources of the area are protected.*”

Geoparks have come into existence in the last 20 years as people looked for ways to celebrate the earth and its history and to encourage sustainable development for the improvement of rural areas. The Global Geoparks Network was formed in 1998 and the European Geoparks Network was formed in 2000. There are currently over 120 Geoparks across the globe. In 2015, Geoparks were elevated to full UNESCO status.

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation and was formed in 1945. It has 195 member states and its aim is “*Building peace in the minds of men and women.*”

Is iad na gnéithe bhunúsacha atá ag gach Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO ná go bhfuil siad in áiteanna le h-oidhreacht gheolaíochta a bhfuil tábhacht idirnáisiúnta bainteach leo, struchtúr bainistíochta inbhuanaithe agus láidir ann, féidearthacht agus cumas do líonrú agus léargas ann.

Bíonn forbairt ar Gheopháirceanna ón mbun aníos agus mar sin, déanta ag an bpobal, don phobal. Níl aon chumhacht reachtaíochta ná teorannú acu sa bhreis ar na cinn atá ann cheana féin faoi dhlí áitiúil, náisiúnta nó AE. Ba chóir do Gheopháirceanna forbairt áitiúil a chur chun cinn agus a bheith ann ar leasa cultúrtha, oideachasúil agus airgeadais na ndaoine a bhfuil cónaí orthu laistigh den Gheopháirc.

Tá 10 eochar-ghnéithe de Gheopháirceanna, mar atá aitheanta ag UNESCO, atá ann ar leasa na ndaoine ina gcónaí i ngeopháirc; acmhainní nádúrtha, contúirtí gheolaíochta, athrú aeráide, oideachas, eolaíocht, cultúr, mná (cearta comhionanna agus cumhachtú), forbairt inbhuanaithe, eolas áitiúil agus dúchasach, geochoimhín.

I láthair na huaire, tá trí Geopháirceanna ar oileán na hÉireann le stádas Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO; An Cósta Copair i gCo. Phort Láirge; An Boireann agus Aillte an Mhothair i gCo. an Chláir; agus go tras-teorannach Uaimheanna Áirse Marmar sna contaetha Fear Manach agus Cabhán. Tá na trí cinn mar bhaill den bhFóram Geopháirceanna Éireannach, an Gréasán Geopháirceanna Eorpaigh agus an Gréasán Geopháirceanna Domhanda. Tá breis is 120 Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO ar fud an domhain.

The fundamental features of all UNESCO Global Geoparks are that they are areas with geological heritage of international importance, a robust and sustainable management structure, visibility and networking capabilities and potential.

Geoparks are developed with a 'bottom-up' approach and therefore are by the people, for the people. They have no legislative powers and carry no restrictions in addition to those already in place by local, national or EU law. Geoparks should promote local development and be for the cultural, educational and financial benefit of the people living within the Geopark.

There are 10 key aspects of Geoparks, as identified by UNESCO, which benefit geopark inhabitants; natural resources, geological hazards, climate change, education, science, culture, woman (equal rights and empowerment), sustainable development, local and indigenous knowledge, geoconservation.

There are currently three UNESCO Global Geoparks on the island of Ireland; Copper Coast in Co. Waterford; the Burren and the Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare; and cross-border Marble Arch Caves in counties Fermanagh and Cavan. All three are members of the Irish Geoparks Forum, the European Geopark Network and the Global Geopark Network. There are over 120 UNESCO Global Geoparks across the world.



Comhartha do Cheantar Dhúiche Sheoigheach ar an Mám. Is bealach sean-bhunaithe a bhfuil comharthaíocht mhaith air sa cheantar.

The Joyce Country Drive sign at Maam. The drive is a well-established and well sign-posted driving route in the area.

2.4. Stair Gheopháirc Ardmhéine Dhúiche Sheoigheach

Thosaigh an smaoineamh ar Gheopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach siar i 2008 nuair a d'aithin baill Choiste Turasóireachta Dhúiche Sheoigheach (TDS) go bhféadfadh geoidhreacht shaibhir an cheantair tuilleadh cuairteoirí a mhealladh agus an eacnamaíocht áitiúil a fheabhsú. Sé TDS an Coiste Forbartha do Thurasóireacht Dhúiche Sheoigheach sa cheantar. Rinneadh an chéad teagmháil le Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta na hÉireann agus tugadh cuireadh do TDS cur i láthair a dhéanamh ag cruinniú bliantúil de chuid Fóram Geopháirc na hÉireann i 2009. Reachtáladh an cruinniú san Fháirche i 2010 agus tá ionadaí ó Geopháirc Ardmhéine Dhúiche Sheoigheach ag déanamh cur i láthair ag an gcruinniú bliantúil ó shin i leith. Meastar gur Geopháirc ardmhéine í mar go bhfuil suim sa cheantar go mbeadh Geopháirc ann agus is fiú an gheolaíocht an stádas. Chomh maith leis na trí Geopháirceanna atá in Éirinn, tá roinnt Geopháirceanna ardmhéine ann: Corcaigh, Ciarraí, Cósta Chlochán an Aifir agus Gleannta in Aontroim; agus Múrna & Gullion i nDún agus Aontroim.

2.4. The History of Joyce Country Aspiring Geopark

The origin of the idea of a Joyce Country Geopark dates back to 2008 when it was identified by members of Coiste Turasóireachta Dhúiche Sheoigheach (TDS) that the rich geoheritage of the region could potentially attract more visitors and enhance the local economy. TDS is the Joyce Country Tourism Development group in the area. First contact was made with the Geological Survey Ireland and TDS were invited to make a presentation to the annual meeting of the Irish Geopark Forum in 2009. The meeting was held in Clonbur in 2010 and a representative of Joyce Country Aspiring Geopark has been presenting at the annual meeting since then. It is considered an aspiring Geopark as there is interest in the area to have a Geopark and it is geology worthy of the status. Along with the three existing Geoparks in Ireland there are a number of aspiring Geoparks; Cork; Kerry; The Causeway Coast and Glens in Antrim; and Mourne & Gullion in Down and Antrim.

Rinne grúpaí éagsúla ar an Fháirche agus i gCorr na Móna obair ar thograí ar leasa na Geopháirce ardmhéine, forbairt agus cur chun cinn bealach siúlóide an Seanbhóthair idir an dhá shráidbhaile, seoladh na siúlóide ó Chonga Feichín go dtí an Fháirche, athchóiriú iontach ar Shéipéal na Naomh ar an Fháirche (le féidearthacht ann mar ionad Geopháirce, áit thaispeántais, nó oifig), an scéim phíolótach ar obair rochtana sléibhe ar Bhinn Shléibhe (sampla tábhachtach de chomhoibriú idir úinéir talún agus úsáideoir sléibhe caitheamh aimsire), agus an togra Saol i gConga Feichín san áireamh. Samplaí eile d'imeachtaí rathúla a reachtáladh ar mhaithe le cur chun cinn an choincheapa Geopháirce ná feachtas bailiúchán le suipéar sceanra chomh maith le siúlóidí gheo-oidhreacht agus féile léachta ('Geofeis') san áireamh. Is bealaí mhaith iad seo chun tacaíocht áitiúil a fháil don smaoineamh agus chun na línte teagmhála a choinneáil oscailte. Chun tacaíocht ó pháirtithe leasmhara móra a fháil, bunaíodh grúpa d'arb ainm 'Cairde Gheopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach' agus tugadh cuireadh do lucht acadúla bheith san áireamh agus comhairle ón dtaobh oideachasúil den nGeopháirc a thabhairt. Reachtáladh cruinnithe rialta den ghrúpa *ad hoc* chun an togra a chur chun cinn agus breathnú ar roghanna maoinithe. D'fhreastal ionadaithe áitiúla ar na cruinnithe seo chomh maith le baill ó Shuirbhéireacht Gheolaíocht na hÉireann, Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe, Comhairle Chontae Mhaigh Eo, Fáilte Éireann agus Údarás na Gaeltachta a fuair cuireadh le freastal. Le blianta beaga anuas, ceadaíodh maoiniú don ghrúpa *ad hoc* ó Chomhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe agus Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta Éireann.

Various groups in Clonbur and Cornamona have worked on projects of benefit to the aspiring Geopark including the development and promotion of the Seanbhóthar walking route between the two villages, the launch of the Cong to Clonbur walk, the impressive restoration of the All Saints church in Clonbur (with potential use as a Geopark centre, exhibition area, or office), the pilot mountain access work on Mount Gable (an important example of landowner and recreational mountain user cooperation), and the Coillte Life Project in Cong. Other successful community events in promotion of the Geopark concept have been run including a fund-raising 'fork-supper' as well as a geoheritage walks and lecture festival ('Geofeis'). All of these are great ways of getting local support for the idea and keeping open the established lines of communication. For support from the larger stakeholders, a group called 'Friends of Joyce Country Geopark' was set up and academics were invited to join and give advice on the educational side of the Geopark, and regular meetings of the ad hoc group were held to advance the project and look at funding options. These meetings were attended by local representatives and invited members from Geological Survey Ireland, Galway County Council, Mayo County Council, Fáilte Ireland, and Údarás na Gaeltachta. In the last few years, funds were awarded to the *ad hoc* group by Galway County Council and Geological Survey Ireland.

Meallann an ceantar grúpaí ollscoile ó ollscoileanna Éireannacha agus idirnáisiúnta i gcónaí mar gur áit fhoirfe í do scoláirí ag foghlaim cén chaoi le mapáil agus is bunáit fhoirfe í le taisteal chuig áiteanna eile i gConnamara chun codanna eile den scéal geolaíochta a fheiceáil. Bíonn a chéad thuras allamuigh ag James Madison University ó Virginia sna Stáit Aontaithe i nDúiche Sheoigheach gach bliain (Sé 2017 a gcomóradh 20 bliain ag tabhairt cuairt ar an gceantar seo), agus bíonn turais allamuigh bliantúla ag Coláiste na hOllscoile Bhaile Átha Cliath, Ollscoile na hÉireann, Corcaigh agus Leeds University chuig an ceantar seo chomh maith. Úsáidtear an ceantar seo do mhodhanna oibre gheolaíochta allamuigh éagsúla eile ar chúrsaí oiliúna cosúil le traenáil i modhanna geofhisciúla a bhíonn reachtáilte ag an 'Irish Association for Economic Geology'. Is féidir le scoláirí fanacht in Ionad Oideachais Cheapach na gCapall, reachtáilte ag Bord Oiliúna agus Oideachais Gaillimh agus Ros Comáin (BOOGR), agus cuireann a láithreacht le h-eacnamaíocht na Fáirche agus an ceantar mórthimpeall. Is margadh tábhachtach é an t-oideachas don cheantar agus d'aon fhorbairt Gheopháirce a d'fhéadfadh tarlú. Gaolta leis seo, d'eagraigh An tOll. Bernard Elgey Leake *"A new map and interpretation of the geology of part of Joyces Country, Counties Galway and Mayo"*. Foilsíodh é i 2014 mar imleabhar de *The Journal of Earth Sciences* agus beidh sé mar acmhainn fíorluachmhar do gheolaithe ag leanacht ar aghaidh ag obair agus ag déanamh taighde sa réigiún.

Is ualach oibre é seo ach tá cuid mhaith dó tiomanta ar bhonn deonach agus tá sé deacair díograis chuig togra mar seo a choinneáil ar feadh blianta fada. Ní mór do na chéad chéimeanna eile bheith tógtha ag fostaithe íoctha ach beidh an cúnamh pobail agus deonach leanúnach riachtanach.

The region has always attracted university groups from Irish and international universities as it is a perfect place for students to learn how to map and it is a perfect base from which to travel to other parts of Connemara to see other parts of the geological story. James Madison University in Virginia, USA, hold their field camp in Joyce Country every year (2017 is their 20th anniversary for visiting this region), and UCD, UCC and Leeds University have annual field trips to this region. The area is also used for various other geological field methods training courses such as geophysical methods training run by the Irish Association for Economic Geology. Students often stay in Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre, run by Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETb), and their presence adds to the economy of Clonbur and surrounds. The education market is an important one for the area and for any potential Geopark development. Related to this, the geologist Prof Bernard Elgey Leake compiled "A new map and interpretation of the geology of part of Joyces Country, Counties Galway and Mayo". It was published in 2014 as a volume of *The Irish Journal of Earth Sciences* and will be an invaluable resource for geologists who continue to work in and research the region.

This is a considerable amount of work but much of it is driven on a voluntary basis and it is difficult to sustain commitment to a project like this for many years. The next steps will have to be undertaken by paid staff but the continuing community and voluntary assistance will be essential.

3. Carraigeacha – Ithir – Daoine

3.1. Geolaíocht

Tá geolaíocht Chonamara agus Mhaigh Eo saibhir agus éagsúil. Tá an éagsúlacht de chineálacha carraigeacha in Éirinn is mó in iarthar na hÉireann. Is féidir na carraigeacha agus tírghnéithe an lae inniu sa réigiún seo a úsáid chun an stair gheolaíochta a rianú ó thart ar 700 milliún bliain ó shin go dtí deireadh an oighrithe deiridh 13,000 bliain ó shin, chomh maith le gluaiseacht na hÉireann ó dheas den mheánchiorcal go dtí an suíomh ina bhfuil sí anois 53 céim ó thuaidh den mheánchiorcal. Braitheann fairsinge an scéala geolaíochta ar achar na Geopháirce agus cuirfear trí rogha dó seo i láthair i roinn 5 (leathanach 30) den dtuairisc seo. Tá an achoimre ar scéal geolaíochta thíos bunaithe ar achar ó Chuan Mó ó thuaidh, Cuan na Gaillimhe ó dheas, Loch Coirib, Loch Measca, agus Loch Ceara thoir agus Aigéan an Atlantaigh thiar. Ba chóir stair gheolaíochta níos sonraithe le n-úsáid i leith na Geopháirce a chur le chéile mar chuid de Gheopháirc fheidhmiúil.

Nóta – tá an gheolaíocht ilchasta agus bhítí mar chuid de staidéar fad-saoil ag riar mhaith geolaithe in Éirinn, sa Bhreatain agus níos faide ó bhaile. Ciallaíonn a h-ilchastacht agus a thionchar ar ár dtuiscint in áiteanna eile de gheolaíocht, go háirithe i dteicteoinic phlátaí, go bhfuil tábhacht idirnáisiúnta bainteach leis.

Bhíodh aigéan ann tráth ag scarúint an chuid theas agus thuaidh den tír a bhfuil aithne againn uirthi mar Éireann. Bhíodh carraigeacha dríodair ar imeall an aigéin agus nuair a dhún an t-aigéan bhuail na codanna ó thuaidh agus ó dheas a chéile, dhíchumadh na carraigeacha seo agus athraíodh go carraigeacha difriúla iad. De réir mar a bhuail a dhá chuid a chéile, tharla gníomhaíocht bholcánach agus sháigh carraig leáite isteach sa screamh. Faoi dheireadh, bhí

3. Rocks - Soil - People

3.1. Geology

The geology of Connemara and south Mayo is rich and varied. The west of Ireland has the greatest diversity of rock types in Ireland. The rocks and landforms present today in this region can be used to track the geological history from approximately 700 million years ago to the end of the last glaciation 13,000 years ago, and Ireland's movement from south of the equator to its current position 53 degrees north of the equator. The breadth of the geological story depends on the area covered by the Geopark and three options for this will be presented in section 5 (page 30) of this report. The summary geological story presented below is for the area from Clew Bay in the north, Galway Bay in the south, Lough Corrib, Lough Mask, and Lough Carra to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. A more detailed geological history specifically for use in relation to the Geopark should be compiled as part of a functioning Geopark.

Note - the geology is complex and has been the lifelong study of many geologists in Ireland, Britain and further afield. Its complexity and its contribution to our understanding of other areas of geology, in particular plate tectonics, means it is of international importance. It also means that the full geological history, as we know it, cannot be confined to a page or two. The simplest version of the region is as follows:

There once was an ocean separating the northern and the southern parts of what we now know as Ireland. The margins of the ocean had sedimentary rocks and when the ocean closed and the northern and southern parts crashed into each other, these rocks were deformed and changed into different rocks. As the two parts collided, there was volcanic activity and the intrusion of melted rock into

an t-aigéan imithe, cruthaíodh sléibhte arda agus líonadh abhantracha le dríodair. Shéalaigh an carraig nua faoin ndromchla na plátaí le chéile. Tharla sé seo ar fad níos giorra don Phol Theas. Thart ar 200 milliún bliain ina dhiaidh sin, bhog Éireann ó thuaidh chuig Na Trópaicí agus clúdaíodh í le h-aigéin te, soiléir agus sceir choiréil, áit a thosaigh aolchloch á mhúnlú. Lean Éireann ar aghaidh ar a turas ó thuaidh chuig a suíomh reatha, áit a thosaigh an tAtlantach ag oscailt.

Tá níos mó ilchastacht curtha leis an gcuid seo a leanas agus tá léiriú breise sa mhapa geolaíochta ar leathanch 20.

Neoprótarasóch - 700 bliain ó shin (Mbós) Tháinig scoilt in ilchríoch nó forilchríoch agus rugadh aigéan. Glaonn muid lapetus ar an aigéan sin mar gurb é an t-aigéan a tháinig roimh an aigéan Atlantach agus b'é lapetus athair Atlais (Atlantach a chiallaíonn Muir Atlais) i miotaseolaíocht Ghréigeach. Thug an ilchríoch scoilte dríodair cosúil le láib, gaineamh agus gairbhéal leis agus cuireadh isteach san aigéan nua iad agus cruthaíodh aolchloch san uisce éadomhain. Tharla ionsá agus easbhrú de bhruthcharraigeacha mar thoradh ar scoilteadh gníomhach. Seo é tús an phróisis a chríochnódh ina Dhálriadach Chonamara sa deireadh. Ceaptar go dtagann an nathairínít atá ar fáil ar fhánaí thuaidh Chruach Phádraig ón ré seo agus go léiríonn sé urlár an Aigéin lapetus.

Ordaiviseach - thart ar 490 go 440 Mbós. Bhí an tAigéan lapetus ag dúnadh leis an bhfodhuchtú de theicteonaic phlata faoin cheann eile, le fás stuanna oileáin bholcánacha, agus le meiteamorfacht charraigeacha réamhbheitheacha mar thoradh ar theas agus brú. Siad an aimsir agus creimeadh ba chúis le bogadh na ndríodair agus an bailiúchán na ndríodair seo in abhantracha agus i gceantair íseal.

the crust. Finally the ocean was gone, high mountains had formed and basins were filled with sediment. New rock beneath the surface sealed the plates together. All this happened closer to the South Pole. Around 200 million years later, Ireland had moved north to the tropics and was covered by warm, clear seas and coral reefs where limestone began to form. Ireland continued on its journey north to its present location where the Atlantic began to open.

The following has a little more complexity added and is further illustrated by the geology map on page 20.

Neoproterozoic - 700 million years ago (Ma). A rift formed in a continent or supercontinent and an ocean was born. We refer to that ocean as lapetus, because it was the ocean preceding the Atlantic ocean and lapetus was the father of Atlas (Atlantic meaning Sea of Atlas) in Greek mythology. Sediments such as mud, sand and gravel were carried off the separating continent and deposited into the new ocean, and limestone formed in the shallow waters. There was intrusion and extrusion of igneous rocks due to the active rifting. This was the start of what would eventually become the Dalradian of Connemara. The serpentinite to be found on the northern slopes of Croagh Patrick is also thought to be from this period and represents the lapetus Ocean floor.

Ordovician - approximately 490 to 440 Ma. The lapetus Ocean was closing with the subduction of one tectonic plate beneath another, the growth of volcanic island arcs, and the metamorphism of pre-existing rocks due to the increase of heat and pressure. Weathering and erosion caused the movement of sediments and the accumulation of these sediments in basins or low-lying areas. Rocks of Ordovician age

Déanann Carraigeacha Ordaiviseacha suas an chuid is mó de na carraigeacha sa réigiún seo. Is féidir iad a roinnt i 5 ceantair ar a laghad trí gníomhach theicteonaic. Níl siad liostáilte san ord a tharla siad.

1. Dálriadach Chonamara - Seo hiad na driodair a bhí ann ón Neoprótarasóch ach chuaigh siad trí thréimhsí fillteacha agus meiteamorfachta san Ordaiviseach nuair a bhuail an dhá chuid d'Éireann a chéile ag dúnadh an tAigéan Iapetus. Tá an Dálriadach, atá mar chuid de ghrúpa mór carraigeacha a fhaightear in áiteanna eile in Éirinn agus Albain, le feiceáil i gConamara ó Uachtar Ard go dtí an cósta thiar. Déanann sé suas na sléibhte charraigeacha ar na nglaothar na Mám Toirc agus na Beanna Beola. Faightear ón Mám go Corr na Móna é chomh maith.
2. Stua Loch na Fuaiche - sraith carraigeacha ar bhonn bolcánach timpeall ar Loch na Fuaiche ón Ordaiviseach Luath. Ceaptar go léiríonn siad gníomhaíocht fodhuchtú-gaolta ón uair a dhún an tAigéan Iapetus. Tá nochtadh bhasailt adhartach mórthaibhseach le fáil iontu i bhFionnaithe. Tá carraigeacha cosúil leo ar fáil i gConamara theas.

make up the majority of the rocks in this region. They can be divided into at least 5 areas by tectonic activity. They are not necessarily listed in the order of their occurrence.

1. Connemara Dalradian - these were sediments that were present since the Neoproterozoic but underwent many phases of folding and metamorphism in the Ordovician as the two parts of Ireland collided at the closure of the Iapetus Ocean. The Dalradian, which is part of a large group of rocks found in other parts of Ireland and Scotland, is exposed in Connemara from Oughterard to the west coast. It forms the rocky mountains of the Maamturks and the Twelve Bens. It is also found from Maam to Cornamona.
2. Lough Nafooney Arc - a series of rocks of volcanic origin around Lough Nafooney from the Early Ordovician. They are thought to represent subduction-related activity at the closure of the Iapetus Ocean. They include a spectacular exposure of pillow basalts in Finny. Similar rocks are found in south Connemara.



Ar Chlé: Miogmaitít ó theas den Teach Dóite
Left: Migmatite from south of Maam Cross.



Ar Dheis: Marmar Chonamra ó Loch Dhoire an Chláir
Right: Connemara marble from Derryclare Lough.

3. Bruthghníomhaíocht i gConamara - trí sraith ar leith: 1) lonsánna gabró gar do Leitir Fraic agus sa cheantar thart ar Bhaile Conaola. 2) Eibhear Uachtar Ard - nochtaithe neamhleanúnacha ó Uachtar Ard go Gleann an Mháma. Tá dátú déanta ar na sraitheanna seo agus tá mapáil chúramach déanta ar a ngaol leis na carraigeacha timpeall orthu. Tá siad suntasach go heolaíoch mar go bhfuil an t-eibhear sáite i ngíomhaíochtaí fillteacha den nDálriadach Chonamara agus mar sin chuir sé srianta ama ar an ngíomhaíocht fhillteach. Chuir sé seo le dul chun cinn ár dtuisceana ar stair gheolaíochta an réigiúin. 3) Riailít na bhFoirmíocht Chruinneacháin Uí Dhubhshláine idir Baile Conaola agus Cloch na Rón.

4. Umar Mhaigh Eo Theas - deascáin dhriodair i dtimpeallachta abhann, mara éadomhain agus mara domhain. Tá an méid mór dríodair ann mar thoradh ar rátaí creimeadh níos airde ó na sléibhte

3. Igneous activity in Connemara - three distinct phases: 1) Intrusions of gabbro close to Letterfrack and in the area around Ballyconneely. 2) Oughterard Granite - discontinuous exposures from Oughterard to the Maam Valley. Both of these phases have been dated and their relationship with the surrounding rocks have been mapped carefully. They are significant scientifically as the granite is intruded into particular folding events of the Connemara Dalradian and therefore put time constraints on the folding activity. This advanced our understanding of the geological history of the region. 3) Rhyolite of the Delany Dome Formation between Ballyconneely and Roundstone.

4. South Mayo Trough - sediments deposited in river, shallow marine and deep marine environments. The large amount of sediment is due to increased erosion rates from the newly formed

airde nua chruthaithe. Faightear toradh an sraithe seo ó Chruach Phádraig go Sléibhte Phartaí agus An Caoláire Rua.

5. Mélange ag Leic Ainimhe, gar do Mhuraisc - bailiúchán dríodair scríobtha ón bpláta ar an mbealach síos fad a bhfodhuchtaíodh agus buaileadh iad anuas ar a chéile ag teacht le chéile an dhá phláta.

Siolúrach - thart ar 440 go 420 Mbós. Dúnadh críochnúil an Aigéin Iapetus. Bhí gníomhaíocht theicteonaic íslithe go mór faoin am seo agus bhí an dhá chuid a bhfuil aithne againn uirthi mar Éireann le chéile. Bhí tréimhse d'ardú agus ísliú leibhéil na mara nuair a bhí an talamh clúdaithe ag an muir go tréimhsiúil. Faightear gaineamhchloch, comhcheirtleán, láibhchloch agus méideanna beaga luaithreamhán bolcánach (tuff) ar theorainn Ghaillimh-Mhaigh Eo thiar os na locha, cladach Loch Measca, agus idir Loch Measca agus Loch Coirib i nDúiche Sheoigheach go príomha. Go hiondúil, déanann siad suas sléibhte féar-chlúdaithe Chonamara i gcodarsnacht leis na sléibhte carraig lom Chonamara. Chomh maith leis sin, faightear grianchloichítí, gaineamhchlocha, agus comhcheirtleáin ó dheas de Chuan Mór, thart ar Chluain Cearbán agus Cruach Phádraig. Tá an dhá shuíomh Siolúrach mar chuid de na géaga thuaidh agus theas de chuid Umar Mhaigh Eo Theas.

high mountains. This resulting sequence of rocks is found from Croagh Patrick to the Partry Mountains and Killary Harbour.

5. Melange at Leckanvy, close to Murrisk - a collection of sediments scraped off the down-going plate as it was subducted and piled together at the meeting of the two plates.

Silurian - approximately 440 to 420 Ma. Final closure of the Iapetus Ocean. Tectonic activity was much reduced by this time and the two parts of what we now know as Ireland were together. There was a period of sea-level rise and fall when the land was covered by sea periodically. Silurian sandstone, conglomerate, mudstone and minor amounts of volcanic ash (tuff) are found mainly along the Galway-Mayo border west of the lakes, on the western shore of Lough Mask, and between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib in Joyce Country. They tend to form grass-covered mountains in contrast to the bare-rock mountains of Connemara. Quartzites, sandstones, and conglomerates are also found south of Clew Bay around Louisburg and Croagh Patrick. The two Silurian locations are part of the northern and southern limbs of the South Mayo Trough.



C: Comhcheirtleán Ordaiviseach thiar ó Loch na Fuaiche
L: *Ordovician conglomerate east of Lough Nafooe.*



D: Coiréileach Rocach Carbónmhar taobh amuigh de Chonga
R: *Carboniferous Rugose coral from outside Cong.*

Deavónach - thart ar 420 go 360 Mbós. Leis an dúnadh críochnúil den Aigéan Iapetus agus an giniúint de chrios sléibhe ollmhór, tharla leá i screamh an Domhain. Déanann an próiseas fuairithe den leá nó magma seo bruthcharraig an-chrua. Tá roinnt bruthchoirp ón ré Deavónach in iarthar na hÉireann. Glaotar Eibhear Bhatailite na Gaillimhe ar an mbailiúchán is mó (bailiúchán de bruthchoirp seachas corp aonarach amháin). Tá sé thart ar 400 milliún bliain d'aois agus síneann sé ó Bhóthar na Trá chomh fada leis na háiteanna is faide siar i gContae na Gaillimhe. Faightear corp mór ar an aois céanna, gurb ainm eibhear Crovock, i Maigh eo, thoir theas de Chluain Cearbán. Tá ionsánna bruth-Dheavónacha beaga den saghas carraig céanna ó thuaidh thiar de Loch Measca, gar do Thuar Mhic Éadaigh agus thoir thiar de Loch Measca, gar do Fhionnaithe.

Devonian - approximately 420 to 360 Ma. With the final closure of the Iapetus Ocean and the generation of a huge mountain belt, melting occurred in the Earth's crust. The cooling of this melt or magma forms a very hard igneous rock. There are a number of igneous bodies of Devonian age in the west of Ireland. The largest (a collection of igneous bodies rather than one single body) is what is known as the Galway Granite Batholith. It is approximately 400 million years old and stretches from Salthill to the westernmost parts of County Galway. A large body of the same age, known as the Crovock granite is found in Mayo, southeast of Louisburgh. There are other minor Devonian igneous intrusions of similar rock to the northwest of Lough Mask, close to Tourmakeady, and southwest of Lough Mask, close to Finny.

Carbónmhar - thart ar 360 go 300 Mbós. Bhí Éireann tar éis taisteal ó thuaidh chuig Na Trópaicí faoin am seo agus bhí sí clúdaithe ag uisce te a bhí feiliúnach d'fhás córais sceir choiréil. Tá buncharraig Charbónmhar ag cuid mhaith den taobh istigh d'oileán na hÉireann agus sa réigiún seo tagann sé leis na ceantair thoir ó Uachtar Ard agus na locha. Tá sé clúdaithe ag ábhar oighreach agus ithir go príomha. Tugann an ithir aol-shaibhir tacaíocht do fheirmeoireacht churaíochta agus déiríochta. I gceantair gar do na locha, níl ach beagán clúdach ag an ithir agus tá gnéithe carstacha den aolchloch nochtaithe. Cuid de na gnáth gnéithe ná síonchaitheamh 'craiceann-eilifinte' de na cisil chothrománacha, go leor iontaisí sceire, clinteanna agus gríoga, poill shlogaidí nó gnéithe inititime, agus uaimheanna. Tá codanna de shraith íochtair Chuan na Gaillimhe agus Cuan Bó ina aolchloch agus cruthaíodh iad trí shíonchaitheamh agus creimeadh na chloiche sách bog seo ag an Aigéan Atlantach. Áit neamh-ghnách le teacht ar ghaineamhchlocha Carbónmhara agus comhcheirtleáin ná an t-ardchlár de chuid Shléibhte Phartaí, áit a luíonn sé go neamh-inchomhfhoirmithe ar barr na gcloch Ordaivíseacha. Tá sé seo suntasach mar go léiríonn sé bun an Charbónmhara sa cheantar seo.

Peirmiach, Triasach, Iúrasach, Cailceach - thart ar 300 go 66 Mbós. Tá na carraigeacha ón ré seo caomhnaithe in iarthar na hÉireann agus gan ach mórán fiú ar oileán na hÉireann. Bhí gníomhaíocht ag an am fad a bhí na hilchríocha ar fad le chéile ina fhorilchríoch ar a nglaonn muid Pangaea. Bhí rath agus meath ag dineasáir, agus d'fhabhraigh mamaigh, éin agus plandaí bláthanna.

Carboniferous - approximately 360 to 300 Ma. Ireland had moved north to the tropics by this time and was covered by warm waters suitable for the growth of coral reef systems. Much of the interior of the island of Ireland has Carboniferous bedrock and in this region it accounts for the areas east of Oughterard and the lakes. It is mainly covered in glacial material and soil. The lime-rich soil supports tillage and dairy farming. In areas close to the lakes, there is very little soil cover and karstic features of the limestone are exposed. Typical features include 'elephant-skin' weathering of the horizontal beds, an abundance of reef fossils, clints and grikes, sink holes or collapse features, and caves. Parts of Galway Bay and Clew Bay are both underlain by limestone and were formed by the weathering and erosion of this relatively soft rock by the Atlantic Ocean. An unusual place to find Carboniferous sandstones and conglomerates is at the plateau of the Partry Mountains, where it lies unconformably on top of Ordovician rocks. This is significant as it demonstrates the base of the Carboniferous in this area.

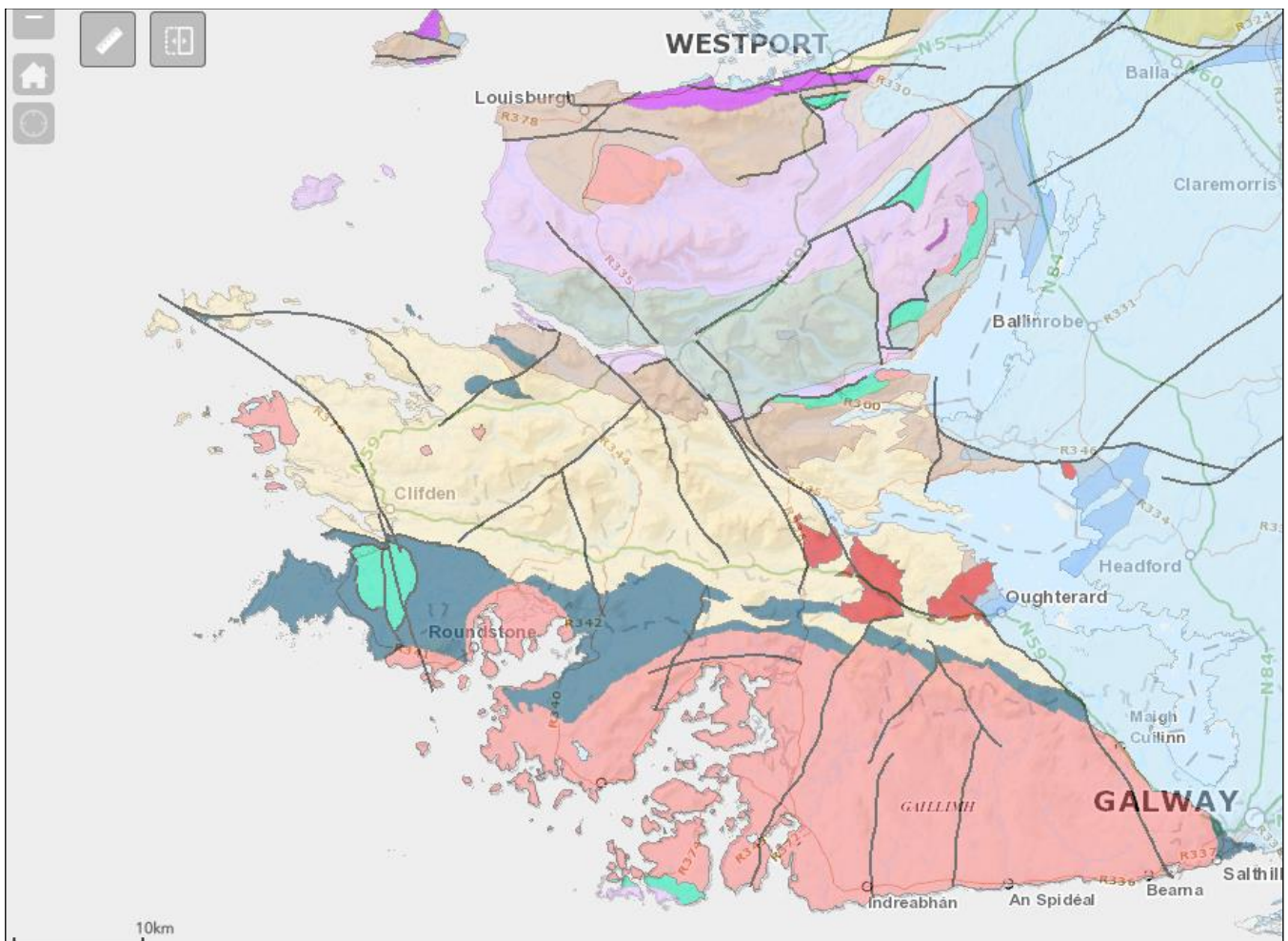
Permian, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous - approximately 300 to 66 Ma. No rocks from these periods are preserved in the west of Ireland and very few even on the island of Ireland. There was activity at the time as all the continents were together in a super-continent we call Pangaea. Dinosaurs flourished and declined, and mammals, birds and flowering plants evolved.

Pailéigín - thart ar 66 go 23 Mbós. Bhí an tAigéan Atlantach Thuaidh ag oscailt ag an am agus feiceann muid ionsánna beaga dhingeáin ón ré seo in iarthar na hÉireann. Lean an Neoigineach an Pailéigin ach níl aon charraigeacha ón ré sin anseo.

Ceathartha - Ár dtréimhse geolaíochta reatha. Tá ár dtírdhreach, ár gcultúr agus ár saolta múnlaith ag an ré agus ag múnlaigh an ré go leanúnach.

Palaeogene - approximately 66 to 23 Ma. The North Atlantic Ocean was opening at this time and we see small intrusions of dykes of this age in the west of Ireland. The Palaeocene was followed by the Neogene but we have no rocks of this age here.

Quaternary - our current Geological Period. The landscape, our culture and our lives are shaped by and continue to shape this period



Mapa geolaíochta (1:1 milliún) ar iarthar na Gaillimhe agus deisceart Mhaigh Eo (Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta na hÉireann). Soir sa ghorm tá aolchloch Charbónmhar. Ón deisceart ó thuaidh luíonn Batailit Eibhear na Gaillimhe Deavónach i ndearg geal, ionsánna Ordaiviseacha i ngorm/glas agus dearg, Dálriadach Chonamara i mbuí, agus Umar Mhaigh Eo Theas Ordaiviseach/Siolúrach i ndonn, glas agus bándearg geal. Tá corcora ar na carraigeacha Ordaiviseacha fodhuchtú-gaolta i Muraisc/Cluain Cearbán.

Geology (1:1 million) map of west Galway and south Mayo (Geological Survey Ireland). To the east in blue is the Carboniferous limestone and from south to north lie the Devonian Galway Granite Batholith in faded red, Ordovician intrusions in blue/green and red, the Connemara Dalradian in yellow, and the Ordovician/Silurian South Mayo Trough in pale brown, green and pink. The Ordovician subduction related rocks of Murrisk/Louisburgh are in purple.

3.2. Tírdhreach

B'fhéidir gurb é an cur síos is fearr ar tírdhreach na hÉireann ná ceann oighreach. Tá cruthanna na sléibhte agus gleannta mar a fheiceann muid inniu ann mar tháirgí de na hoighearshruthanna agus oighearchlúideacha ollmhóra a ghearr tríd an tuath ag fáil réidh nó ag creimeadh an charraig bhog, a mhúnlaigh an charraig chrua agus a dheascadh a n-ualach dríodair fad a leá siad. Tá na sléibhte sa réigiún déanta go príomha as grianchloichít chrua (gaineamhchloch meiteamorfachta), gaineamhchloch nó bruthcharraigeacha cosúil le h-eibhear nó gabró. Tá siad ar fad beagnach ar an airde céanna, ag cur tírdhreach oighrithe le déanaí in iúl, agus go ginearálta ritheann siad soir-siar. Tá sraith íochtair na ngleannta ina gcarraigeacha boga cosúil le marmar (aolchloch mheiteamorfachta) agus tá droimníní agus tírghnéithe oighreacha creimthe ann. Sé An Caoláire Rua ar theorainn Ghaillimh Mhaigh Eo an t-aon fhiord in Éirinn agus tá an ceantar ar fad seo faoi cheangal san tuaisceart agus deisceart ag na h-ionbhánna aolchloch-chreimthe de chuid Chuan Bó agus Cuan na Gaillimhe. Mar thoradh ar an athrú aeráide sa Chré-umhaois, d'fhabhraigh portaigh mhóna, a bhí mar ghné tábhachtach i saol eacnamaíochta agus i saol teaghlaigh na hÉireann. Tá sé fós mar ghné suntasach i dtírdhreach an réigiúin seo.

3.3. Cultúr

Téann plé sonrach ar chultúr an réigiúin taobh amuigh de scóip agus riachtanas na hoibre seo. Ach dhéanfaí droch-chomaoin don réigiún muna ndéanfaí ach tagairt dhromhchlach don chultúr. Tá Conamara agus Maigh Eo theas in iarthar na hÉireann, ar an áit is faide siar san Eoraip. Tá an tírdhreach cairbreach agus tá tionchar ag an Aigéan Atlantach ar an aimsir, na bealaí agus an saol ann. Go traidisiúnta, dhéanfadh na daoine a slí bheatha ón

3.2. Landscape

The Irish landscape can perhaps best be described as a glacial one. The shapes of the mountains and valleys we see today are the products of vast glaciers and ice sheets that cut through the countryside and eroded or removed the relatively softer rock, shaped the harder rock and then deposited its sediment load as it melted. The mountains in the region are mainly composed of hard quartzite (metamorphosed sandstone), sandstone or igneous rocks such as granite or gabbro. They are all of a similar height, indicating a recently glaciated landscape, and they generally run east-west. The valleys are underlain by softer rocks such as marble (metamorphosed limestone) and play host to drumlins and other glacial depositional landforms. Killary Harbour on the border between Galway and Mayo is Ireland's only fjord and the whole area is bounded to the north and south by the limestone-eroded embayments of Clew Bay and Galway Bay. Climate change in the Bronze Age led to the development of peat bogs, which later became an important feature of Irish family and economic life. It remains a significant feature of the landscape in this region.

3.3. Culture

A detailed discussion on the culture of the region is beyond the scope and necessity of this work. However a superficial treatment of culture could do the region a disservice. The Connemara and south Mayo region is in the west of Ireland, on the most westerly part of Europe. Its landscape is rugged and its weather, ways and life are influenced by the Atlantic Ocean. Traditionally, people earned their livings from subsistence farming and fishing. In the most recent generations, there has been a move towards manufacturing, and tertiary industries, in particular tourism. The region is served by Galway city, and the larger towns of

bhfeirmeoireacht leorchothaitheach agus ón iascaireacht. Sna glúinte is déanaí, tá bogadh i dtreo na déantúsaíochta, agus tionscail threasacha, go háirithe turasóireacht. Tá an réigiún á fhreastal ag cathair na Gaillimhe, agus na bailte móra ar nós An Clochán i gConamara, Caisleán an Bharraigh agus Cathair na Mart i gCo. Mhaigh Eo. Cuireann soláthar oideachas dara agus tríú leibhéal den scoth daonra an-oilte ar fáil. Tá cleachtadh agus caomhnú ar cheirdeanna dúchais sa chuid seo d'Éireann fós chomh maith le stíleanna áitiúla damhsa, ceol, agus spóirt.

Tá an réigiún seo saibhir sa gheolaíocht, ní hamháin in éagsúlacht na gcarraigeacha ach san tionchar atá aige ar thuiscint chriosanna oraigineacha (sléibhte) agus bunús eibhir, a chuid mianraí eacnamaíochta agus a stair in eastóscadh áitiúil mianraí ar scála beag. Tá fianaise de mhianraíocht i Maigh Eo theas, deascáin aitheanta tháirmhiotail, luaidhe, sinc, copar agus tungsten ar chladaigh Loch Coirib sna meitidhríodair Dhálriadach, agus molaibdéineam san Eibhear Bhatailt na Gaillimhe. Is féidir iarsmaí ó na oibreacha mianaigh darb ainm Mianach Mhic Laighmainn a fheiceáil ar thaobh an chnoic agus ar chladach soir ó Dhroichead an Mháma, agus is áit choitianta do gheothurasóirí é mianach Ghleann Gabhla atá siar ó Uachtar Ard. Tá cáil ar Chonamara timpeall na cruinne ar a marmar neamh-ghnách glas, Marmar Chonamara, a n-úsáidtear idir gheamchloch agus chloch órnáideach.

Toisc gur gnéithe tábhachta iad cultúr agus go háirithe cultúr dúchais i nGeopháirceanna UNESCO, ba chóir é seo a fhorbairt agus a cheangailt le geo-oidhreacht mar chuid den obair atá le déanamh amach anseo leis an ngeopháirc seo atá á mholadh.

Clifden in Connemara, and Castlebar and Westport in Co. Mayo. An excellent provision of secondary and tertiary education provides a well-educated population. Crafts indigenous to this part of Ireland are still practiced and preserved, as are local styles of dancing, music, and sports.

This region is rich in geoheritage, not just in the diversity of the rock types but also in its contribution to the understanding of orogenic (mountain) belts and the origin of granite, its economic minerals and history of small-scale localised extraction of these minerals. There is evidence of gold mineralisation in south Mayo, known deposits of base metals, lead, zinc and copper, and tungsten on the shores of Lough Corrib in the Dalradian metasediments, and molybdenum in the Galway Granite Batholith. The remains of mine workings known as Clements Mine are visible on the hillside and lake shore east of Maam Bridge, and the restored Glengowla mine west of Oughterard is now a popular geotourism stop. Connemara is known throughout the world for its unusual green marble, Connemara Marble, which is used both as a gemstone and ornamental stone.

As culture and in particular indigenous culture are important aspects of UNESCO Geoparks, this should be developed and connected to geoheritage in the future work of this proposed Geopark.



Eas Liath, Abhainn Oirimh, Contea Mhaigh Eo. Assleigh Falls, Erriff River, County Mayo.

3.4. Teanga

Is ceantair in Éirinn iad ceantair Ghaeltachta a bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar theanga ceannasach sa bhaile, san oideachas, i ngnó agus in imeachtaí shóisialta. Tá an Ghaeilge mar ghnáth theanga saoil agus oibre ag an-chuid daoine agus is páirt dúchasach den chultúr agus traidisiún í. Níl aon cheann de na Geopháirceanna eile in Éirinn i gceantar Gaeltachta. Chomh maith leis sin, chuidigh an Ghaeilge leis an dteanga eolaíochta oigheareolaíocht. De bharr gur tírdhreach oighrithe le déanaí a bhfuil rochtain éasca chuige é Éireann, rinneadh obair luath ar thírghnéithe oighreacha anseo agus tugadh ainm de bhunús Gaeilge do roinnt tírghnéithe. Tá aithne ar chnoic oighear-mhaolaithe mar dhroimníní agus tá riar mhaith acu sa réigiún a chiallaíonn droim beag.

3.4. Language

Gaeltacht areas in Ireland are areas where the Irish language is the dominant language for home, education, business and social activities. Irish is the living and working language for many and is an intrinsic part of the culture and tradition. None of the other three Geoparks in Ireland are in Gaeltacht areas. In addition the Irish language has contributed to the scientific language of glaciology. As Ireland is an easily accessible recently glaciated landscape, early work on glacial landforms was carried out here and some of the landforms were given names derived from Irish. Glacier rounded hills are known internationally as drumlins and there are many of them in this region, but the name comes from the Irish word “droimnín” meaning small ridge.

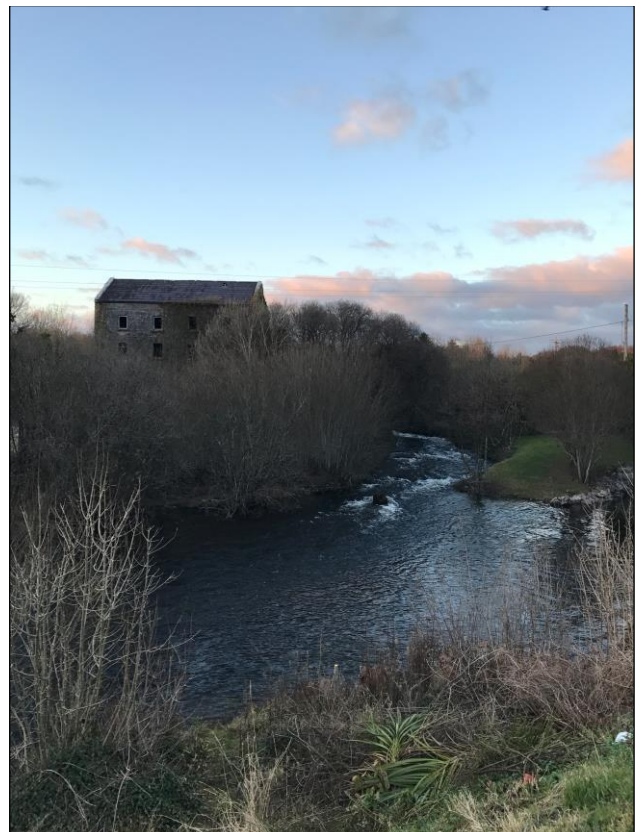
Is dromanna fada eisrithe iad eascracha agus is gné comónta de thírdhreach na hÉireann iad. Tagann an focal ón bhfocal Gaeilge “eiscir” a chiallaíonn droim roinnte.

Tagann an-chuid ainmneacha bhailte fearainn ó bhunús Gaeilge iad agus déanann an t-ainm cur síos álainn ar ghnéithe fhisiciúla thíreolaíochta na háite sin. Tá obair ar siúl in áiteanna áirithe sa réigiún ar stair agus an brí atá le hainmneacha bhailte fearainn agus d’fhéadfaí an Gheopháirc seo atá molta cur leis an obair sin.



Eskers are long winding ridges of gravel and are a common feature of the Irish landscape. The word comes from the Irish word “eiscir” meaning a dividing ridge.

Townland names, most of which are derived from Irish, are usually beautiful descriptives of physical features of the geography. Work is ongoing in some places in the the region on the history and meaning of local townland names and this could be furthered by the proposed Geopark.



Conga. Cong.

4. An Taighde Seo

4.1. Comhairliúchán Poiblí

De bharr go bhfuil Geopháirceanna ann “don phobal, ón bpobal”, tá comhairliúchán poiblí riachtanach do bhunú Geopháirc *de facto* agus faoi dheireadh Geopháirc UNESCO. Tá go leor míthuiscintí faoi chéard atá i gceist le Geopháirc i dtéarmaí rialacháin, feirmeoireacht, rochtain agus forbairt agus tá sé i gcónaí níos fearr deileáil leis na míthuiscintí seo in intinn an oiread daoine is gur féidir sula dtosaíonn an próiseas. Ag tús an phróisis seo, agus i gcomhairliúchán leis an ngrúpa *ad hoc*, déanadh cinneadh trí cruinnithe phoiblí a reáchtail thar tréimhse an phróiseas chomhairliúcháin. Bhí an teorann ama laistigh de shaolré an chonartha (ó thús mhí na Samhna 2016 go lár-feabhra 2017). Sé an scaipeadh tíreolaíochta agus poiblíocht fhorleathan déanta orthu roimhré a bhí mar phríomhchúiseanna le rathúlacht na cruinnithe. D’aontaigh an grúpa *ad hoc* na cruinnithe a eagrú ina áiteanna scaipthe óna chéile chun an freastal ar na cruinnithe is airde a fháil. D’úsáid C.D.S. Teo. a mbunachar sonraí chun teagmháil a dhéanamh le daoine áitiúla, ionadaithe áitiúla agus na meáin chumarsáide. Tháirg siad postaeirí agus dháil siad go háitiúil iad agus sheol siad amach preas ráiteas. Rinneadh teagmháil le go leor daoine go pearsanta, buaileadh le agus iarradh ar dhaoine freastal, go háirithe dá gceapfaí nach mbeadh a ndóthain ionadaíocht ag ceantair nó earnálacha ar leith ag na cruinnithe.

Reáchtáladh na cruinnithe seo a leanas:

19 Nollaig – Oifigí C.D.S. Teo., Corr na Móna

31 Eanáir – An Teach Dóite

16 Feabhra – Tuar Mhic Éadaigh

D’fhreastal 84 duine in iomlán ar na cruinnithe agus i ngach cás, bhí plé cuimsitheach agus leathan tar éis an cur i láthair. Bhí toradh sách dearfach ar na cruinnithe faoin gcoincheap ag

4. This Study

4.1. Public Consultation

As Geoparks are ‘for the people, by the people’, public consultation is essential for the establishment of a *de facto* and eventually UNESCO Geopark. There are often misconceptions about what a Geopark is in terms of regulations, farming, access and development and it is always better to have all of these possible misconceptions settled in the minds of as many people as possible before the process is underway. At the start of this process and in consultation with the *ad hoc* group, it was decided that three public meetings should be held over the course of the consultation process. The timing was limited to within the lifetime of the contract (from the start of November 2016 to mid-February 2017). A geographical spread in the meetings and that they were well advertised in advance was critical to their success. The *ad hoc* group agreed to hold the meetings in a spread of locations to get maximum attendance. C.D.S. Teo used their database to contact individuals, local representatives and media outlets. They produced posters and distributed them locally and sent out a press release. Many people were also contacted personally, met with and encouraged to attend, particularly if it was felt certain areas or sectors might be under represented at the meeting.

The following meetings were held:

19 December – C.D.S. Teo. offices, Cornamona.

31 January - Maam Cross.

16 February - Tourmakeady.

A total of 84 people attended the meetings and in each case, there were extensive and wide-ranging discussions after the initial presentation. The response of the meetings was generally positive about the idea of working towards becoming a UNESCO Global Geopark.

obair i dtreo Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO. Tá na ceisteanna agus freagraí ar fad ó na cruinnithe ceangailte leis an dtuairisc seo sna hagusíní.

Siad na cúiseanna inní is mó a bhí ann ná i leith rialacháin bhreise, cearta úinéirí, achar agus ainm na Geopháirce agus faoi thodhchaí an phróiseas cinnteoireachta. Fiú nach dtagann rialacháin bhreise le Geopháirceanna UNESCO anuas ar na cinn atá i bhfeidhm cheana féin, bhí faitíos ann go n-úsaidfeadh údaráis áitiúla stádas Geopháirc UNESCO chun rialacháin nua a thabhairt isteach agus gá le scagadh geolaíochta a chur le h-iarraitais phleanála amach anseo. Rinneadh cinneadh ag cruinniú amháin gur chóir moladh a chur faoi bhráid na n-údaráis áitiúla go mbeadh tagairt éigin don Geopháirc i bPleananna Forbartha Chontae amach anseo agus go mbeadh geallúint tugtha nach n-úsaidfear é chun cur le teorannaithe. Tá an inní seo intuigthe i réigiún a bhfuil líon ard rialacháin i bhfeidhm mar gheall go bhfuil an réigiún ainmnithe mar Limistéar Oidhreacht Náisiúnta (LON), Limistéar faoi Chaomhnú Speisialta agus Limistéar faoi Chosaint Speisialta. Ní hé seo an cás do Gheopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO. Ar dtús, tá an t-ullmhúchán agus próiseas iarratais fada agus ní mór Geopháirc *de facto* a bhúnu mar an chéad chéim agus mar sin beidh a fhios ag daoine cén sórt saol a mbeidís in ndán dó i Geopháirc sula bhfaigheann sé stádas oifigiúil. Is faoi fhorbairt inbhuanaithe agus leanacht le cleachtais fheirmeoireachta dhúchais iad Geopháirceanna UNESCO. Ní bheidh ar dhaoine aonaracha scagadh geolaíochta a dhéanamh d'iarraitais nua mar go bhfuil an-eolas go deo ar gheolaíocht na hÉireann de bharr obair Shuirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta na hÉireann ó 1845. Tá clár leanúnach d'inúchtaí ar Shuíomhanna Geolaíochta Chontae ar siúl ar ag an SGÉ i gcomhar leis an gComhairle Oidhreacht agus údaráis áitiúla. Tá iniúchadh Mhaigh Eo críochnaithe agus tá sé i gceist go mbeidh Conamara críochnaithe i 2017. Siad

All of the questions and answers from the meetings are attached to this report in the appendices.

The greatest concerns were about additional regulations, landowner rights, the area and name of the Geopark, and about the future of the decision making process. Although UNESCO Geoparks do not carry additional regulations to those already in place by local, national or EU law, there was a fear that local authorities would use the UNESCO Geopark status to attach new regulations and add a requirement to have geology screening in future planning applications. It was decided at one meeting that a recommendation should be submitted to the local authorities that there should be some reference to the Geopark in future County Development Plans and there would be a commitment not to use this to add restrictions. This concern is understandable in a region that is so highly regulated due to designations such as National Heritage Area (NHA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). This is not the case for a UNESCO Global Geopark. Firstly, the application preparation and process is long and a *de facto* Geopark needs to be established first and therefore people will know what it is like to experience life in a Geopark before it gets the official status. UNESCO Geoparks are about sustainable development and the continuity of indigenous farming practices. Individuals will not need to carry out geology screening for new applications because the geology of the Ireland is well known to a high resolution due to the work of the GSI since 1845. The GSI in association with The Heritage Council and local authorities have an ongoing programme of County Geological Site audits. Mayo is complete and Connemara is due to be completed in 2017. The results of this audit is that sites are designated as County Geological Sites and some are recommended for NHA status as geoheritage as part of the heritage of the country and is protected by law.

torthaí an iniúchta ná go n-ainmneofar suíomhanna mar Shuíomhanna Gheolaíochta Chontae agus moltar cuid acu le haghaidh stádas LON mar gheo-oidhreacht mar chuid d'oidhreacht na tíre agus tá sé cosainte faoin dlí. Tá sé seo ag tarlú ar fud na tíre agus tá sé ag tarlú fiú má tá ceantar mar Gheopháirc nó muna bhfuil. Ní thugann siad seo rialacháin bhreise leo ach an oiread ach d'fhéadfadh sé moladh a thabhairt leis (m.sh. go gcuirfí suíomh ar leith ar shárthaispeántas nó go dtabharfaí cead isteach leanúnach d'eolaithe le cead an úinéara)

Eagraíodh roinnt imeachtaí bainteach le Geopháirc ar an Fháirche le blianta beaga anuas mar a léiríodh níos túisce agus fabhraíodh smaoineamh earráideach sa cheantar forleathan gur rud í an Gheopháirc a bhíodh muintir na Fáirche á dhéanamh agus nach raibh baint ar bith aici le h-áiteanna eile. Bhí sé spreagúil ag na cruinnithe phoiblí go raibh díograis don smaoineamh in áiteanna eile, go háirithe An Líonáin agus Tuar Mhic Éadaigh. Thuig siad láithreach agus ghlac siad leis an gcoincheap agus chonaic siad go bhféadfadh tairbhe a bheith an dá gceantair, d'fhórás agus mar fhéidearthacht amháin le moill a chur ar bhánú na tuaithe. Bhí dearfach ó gach áit ach tá tagairt speisialta ag dul don dhá cheantar sin mar bhí siad tuillteanach cúnamh a thabhairt agus oibriú i dtreo toradh dearfach dóibh fhéin.

Fuair na cruinnithe go leor aird ar na meáin, go háirithe ar Raidió na Gaeltachta agus TG4, chomh maith le stáisiún raidió áitiúla agus nuachtáin áitiúla. Arís, bhí an dearcadh sách dearfach agus ba dheis é a mhíniú arís nár chuir Geopháirc teorannaithe bhreise ar fheirmeoirí ná pleanálaithe.

Marie Ní Chríodáin, Bainisteoir C.D.S. Teo. ag taifead do TG4.

This is happening throughout the country and is happening regardless of whether an area is a Geopark or not. These do not bring additional restrictions either but it could bring a recommendation (e.g. that a particular site is showcased or that access for scientists is maintained with the permission of the owner).

Some Geopark related activities have taken place in the Clonbur area over the last few years as outlined earlier and an erroneous idea had developed in the wider area that the Geopark was something the Clonbur people were doing and it was nothing to do with other areas. It was encouraging at the public meetings that there was an enthusiasm for the idea in other areas, particularly in Leenane and Tourmakeady. They immediately understood and embraced the concept and could see how it might be of benefit to their areas, for growth and as one potential method of slowing depopulation. There was positivity from all areas but these two deserve special mention as they were willing to engage and work towards a positive outcome themselves.

The meetings also attracted good media coverage, particularly on Raidió na Gaeltachta and on TG4, as well as on local radio stations and local papers. Again, the view was generally positive, and it was an opportunity to explain again that Geoparks carried no additional restrictions to farmers or planners.



4.2. Comhairliúchán Páirtithe Leasmhara

Cé gur páirtithe leasmhara chuile dhuine a chónaíonn agus a n-oibríonn i Geopháirc, aithníodh páirtithe leasmhara ríthábhachtacha roimh an próiseas comhairliúcháin seo. San áireamh sna páirtithe leasmhara ríthábhachtacha tá; Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta na hÉireann, Fáilte Éireann, Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe, Comhairle Chontae Mhaigh Eo, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Coillte, OÉ Gaillimh, Fóram Chonamara, IFA. Eagraíodh cruinnithe le h-ionadaithe ó na heagrais thuas chomh maith le h-ionadaithe phobail agus earnála ón réigiún.

I ngach cás, bhí na cruinnithe an-oscailte agus réadúil, agus tá buíochas le gabháil leis na páirtithe leasmhara as a sástacht dul i ngleic leis an smaoineamh agus as a gcuid ama a thabhairt. Bhí eolas ag na páirtithe leasmhara ar fad faoi choincheap Gheopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach agus bhídís bainteach leis na córais fheidhmithe thar na mblianta. D'fhreastal cuid acu ar chruinnithe de chuid an grúpa stiúrtha *ad hoc* agus bhí siad ar an eolas faoin ndul chun cinn a bhí ar siúl

Go ginearálta, bhí siad dearfach faoin smaoineamh agus thuig siad a luach ach de bharr go bhfuil siad ionadaíoch ar eagrais mhóra le freagracht do phobal leathan, ní mór dóibh bheith forchoimeáda ar aon ghealltanais go dtí go bhfeiceann siad cén bealach a ngabhfaidh an smaoineamh uaidh seo.

Tá freagrachtaí ag an dhá chomhairle chontae do chontaetha móra, éagsúla agus teastaíonn an toradh is mó ar infheistíocht dá ndaoine, tá ceangaltas acu le tograí agus pleananna acu do na blianta atá amach romhainn bunaithe ar a gcuid Pleananna Forbartha Chontae agus Pleananna Forbartha Oidhreachta féin. Tá siad ag obair ar thograí bheaga eile sa cheantar ach feiceann siad an bealach gur féidir leis na tograí bheaga cur leis an dtogra Geopháirc.

4.2. Stakeholder Consultation

Although everyone who lives and works in a Geopark is a stakeholder, key stakeholders had been identified prior to this consultation process. The key stakeholders include; Geological Survey Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Galway County Council, Mayo County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Coillte, NUI Galway, Forum Connemara, IFA. Meetings were arranged with representatives of the above as well with community and sector representatives from the region.

In all cases, the meetings were very open and realistic, and the stakeholders are thanked for their willingness to engage and give their time. All stakeholders had known about the idea of a Joyce Country Geopark and had been involved with the workings of it over the years. Many had attended meetings of the ad hoc steering group and were aware of the progress being made.

In general, they are positive about the idea and understand its value but as they represent large organisations with responsibilities to a wider community, they must be reserved on commitments until they see how the idea progresses from here.

Both county councils have responsibilities for large and diverse counties and they need to have maximum return on investment for their people, they are also committed to projects and have plans for the coming years based on their respective County Development Plans and County Heritage Plans. They are already working on smaller projects in the area but they can see how the smaller projects will feed into the Geopark project. There is a better prospect of collaboration if the Geopark is bigger in area as it would then cover more of the respective counties and align with other tourism and heritage plans.

Tá ionchas níos fearr do chomhoibriú má tá ceantar na Geopháirce níos mó mar go gclúdódh sé níos mó dá gcuid chontae féin agus thiocfadh sé le pleananna turasóireachta agus oidhreacht eile. Mar chuid den obair seo, bhí deis ann freastal ar lá comhairliúcháin ar Phlean Turasóireachta Chomhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe agus aiseolas a thabhairt ar na smaointí a pléadh ann. Bhí Geopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach mar cheann de na smaointí agus ba rud dearfach é ag an gComhairle go mbeadh sé san áireamh ina bPlean Turasóireachta do 2020 – 2025. Thairg siad maoinithe bheaga (€5,000 in aghaidh na bliana) le dhá bhliain anuas agus labhair siad faoin gceantar agus an smaoineamh a úsáid do mhaoiniú REDZ (Crios Forbartha Geilleagraí Tuaithe) sa chéad bhabhta mhaoinithe eile. Is céimeanna praiticiúla ar fad iad seo a bhrathanna ar an dtogra Geopháirc ag bogadh ar aghaidh. Tá saineolas i bhforbairt tuaithe agus bainistiú tograí ag na comhairlí agus d'fhéadfadh siad ról ceannasúil a thógáil, ach tar éis an coincheap a bheith forbartha in iomlán agus go bhféadfadh sé bheith inmharthana amháin.

Tá freagracht ag Fóram Chonamara maoinithe LEADER a riaradh i réigiún Chonamara sna blianta atá amach romhainn agus tá sé oscailte do thograí thurasóireachta thuaithe mar seo faoi láthair. Tá léiriú spéise curtha isteach ag an ngrúpa *ad hoc* agus má tá siad rathúil, athróidh an maoiniú ionchas an togra ar fad mar bheidís in ann foireann a fhostú laistigh den scála ama 5-bliana atá leagtha amach sa tuairisc seo. Tá maoiniú den tsaghas céanna ar oscailt i Maigh Eo agus tá súil go mbeidh iarratas den tsaghas céanna curtha isteach don phróiseas iomaíoch sin.

Bhí Údarás na Gaeltachta an-spreagúil i dtaobh an choincheapa de bharr go bhfuil codanna den nGeopháirc atá molta i gceantair Ghaeltachta agus tá freagracht acu as ceantair Ghaeltachta a fhorbairt, turasóireacht sa áireamh. Níl aon fhadhb acu le codanna den nGeopháirc a bheith lasmuigh de cheantar Gaeltachta.

As part of this work, it was possible to attend the Galway County Council Tourism Plan consultation day and provide feedback on the ideas discussed there. The Joyce Country Geopark plan was one of the ideas and it is a positive move by the Council to have it included in its Tourism Plan for 2020-2025. They have offered small funds (€5,000 per year) over the last two years and have talked about using the area and idea for REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) funding in the next round of funds. These are all practical steps which depend on the Geopark project moving forward. The councils have expertise in rural development and project management, and can potentially take a lead role, but only after the concept has been fully developed and is seen as viable.

Forum Connemara have the responsibility to administer LEADER funds in the Connemara region in the coming years and a suitable call for rural tourism projects is now open. The ad hoc group has submitted an expression of interest and if successful, the funds would change the whole prospect of the project as they would be able to hire staff within the timescale of the 5-year plan proposed in this report. A similar fund is open for Mayo and it is hoped that a similar application will be submitted to that competitive process.

Údarás na Gaeltachta were very encouraging of the concept as parts of the proposed Geopark will be in Gaeltacht areas and they have a responsibility of Gaeltacht area development, including tourism. They have no issue with parts of the Geopark being non-Gaeltacht. If the idea progresses, they may be in a position to work with the Geopark to provide support, either financial or staff. As with all organisations, this depends on the next steps of the project and the financial situation.

Má éiríonn leis an dtogra, d'fhéadfadh siad bheith in ann oibriú leis an nGeopháirc chun tacaíocht a thabhairt i bhfoirm maoiniú nó foireann. Maraon le gach eagra, brathann sé seo ar na chéad chéimeanna eile atá le tógáil sa togra agus cúrsaí maoinithe.

Tá freagracht ag Fáilte Éireann don tír ar fad ach thug siad comhairle fíor-luachmhar ar an gcaoi go bhféadfadh togra mar seo dul chun cinn. Tá taithí pearsanta acu ar obair Gheopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO na Boirne agus Aillte an Mhothair agus tuigean siad go hiomlán an obair agus na fadhbanna atá i gceist chun Geopháirc rathúil a reáchtáil. An comhairle a bhí acu ná breathnú go réadúil ar gach rogha agus a fháil amach an í Geopháirc an bealach ar aghaidh is fearr. D'aithin siad an earnáil oideachas allamuigh agus saoire eachtraíochta mar earnáil an-tábhachtach don réigiún agus go bhféadfadh sé forbairt le nó gan Geopháirc. Mhol siad chomh maith tuiscint shoiléir de tháirge turasóireachta uathúil an réigiúin, más spóirt allamuigh i dtimpeallacht gan mhilleadh nó stádas Tíreolaíocht Chosainte de chuid Uain Shléibhe Chonamara é a chabhraíonn leis an gceantar sin seasamh amach i margadh turasóireachta Éireannach gnóthach agus go mbeadh an togra sin le h-inniúlacht chomhoiriúnach a d'fhéadfadh deileáil le fóras a chabhródh le réigiún ar leith ina n-iniamh i dtiomáintí margaíochta náisiúnta. Is cúnamh riachtanach é seo don chéad dhá bhliain eile den dtogra Geopháirc.

Leanann Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta Éireann agus OÉ Gaillimh ar aghaidh lena gcuid tacaíochta don smaoineamh, chomh maith le Coillte, úinéir talún mór sa réigiún agus a chomhoibrigh ar obair na Geopháirce roimhe seo. Rinneadh an-iarracht ón dhá thaobh cruinniú a eagrú leis an IFA agus níor éirigh leis laistigh de theorainn ama an chonartha seo. Ba chóir dó bheith mar thosaíocht san obair amach anseo.

Fáilte Ireland have a responsibility to the whole country but they did give invaluable advice on how this project might progress. They have first-hand knowledge of the work of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark and fully understand the work and the issues involved with running a successful Geopark. Their advice was to look realistically at all options, and see was a Geopark the best possible way forward. They identified the outdoor education and adventure holiday sector as an important one for the region and one that could grow further with or without a Geopark. They also advised that having a clear understanding of the unique tourism product of an area, whether it be the outdoor sports in an unspoiled environment or the Protected Geographical status of Connemara Hill Lamb, helps that area stand out in the busy Irish tourism market and that having a project ready with matching capacity to deal with growth would help a particular region in their inclusion in national marketing drives. All this is essential help for the next two years of the Geopark project.

Geological Survey Ireland and NUI Galway continue to support the idea, as do Coillte, a major landowner in the region and previous collaborators on the Geopark work. Great efforts by both sides were made to have a meeting with the IFA but it was not possible within the timeframe of this contract. It should be a priority in future work.

5. An Gheopháirc

Ceaptar gur ainmníodh ceantar Dhúiche Seoigheach i ndiaidh clann Bhreatnach de chuid na Seoighigh a lonnaigh sa cheantar sa 13ú Céad. Tá sé deacair aontú ar fhairsinge Dhúiche Sheoigheach ach ag am amháin is an Bharúntacht Rosa a leathnaíodh ón Chaoláire Rua go dtí na locha a bhí ann. Sa lá atá inniu ann, glactar go bhfuil sé thart ar cheantar na Fáirche agus Chorr na Móna agus d'fhéadfadh sé leathnú chomh fada soir leis An Éill, ó thuaidh go Tuar Mhic Éadaigh, ó dheas go dtí An Teach Dóite, agus siar go dtí an Sraith Salach, ach nuair a cuireadh an cheist i dTuar Mhic Éadaigh ag an gcruinniú poiblí, níor mheas muintir na háite go raibh siad i nDúiche Sheoigheach.

Tar éis an próiseas comhairlúcháin a chríochnú, agus breathnú ar an ngeolaíocht agus foinsí maoinithe agus tacaíochta réadúla, tá roinnt roghanna ann don Gheopháirc. Tá cur síos déanta ar thrí rogha thíos. Tríd teorainn a leagan síos, rud atá riachtanach d'iarratas Geopháirce, d'fhéadfadh impleacht a bheith ann don ainm. Iarrtar ar an ngrúpa *ad hoc* féachaint ar na roghanna ar fad agus breathnú ar an luach don réigiún, an tacaíocht ó údaráis áitiúla, agus maoiniú nuair atá cinntí á dhéanamh i leith na Geopháirce.

5. The Geopark

Joyce Country or Joyces' Country is thought to have been named after a Welsh family of the Joyces who settled in the area in the 13th Century. It is difficult to agree on the extent of Joyce Country but one time it was the Barony of Ross and extended from Killary Harbour to the lakes. It is now centred on the Clonbur and Cornamona area between Lough Corrib and Lough Mask and it may extend east to The Neale, north to Tourmakeady, south to Maam Cross and west to Recess, although the people of Tourmakeady claimed not to be in Joyce Country when asked at their public meeting.

Having concluded the consultation process, looked at the geology and looked at realistic sources of finance and support, there are several options for the Geopark. Three options are described below. By defining a boundary, which is necessary for a Geopark application, there may be implications for the name. The ad hoc group are urged to look at all the options and consider the value for the region, the support from local authorities, and funding when making decisions directly in relation to the Geopark.



Dubhros ar Loch Coirib. Dooros on Lough Corrib.

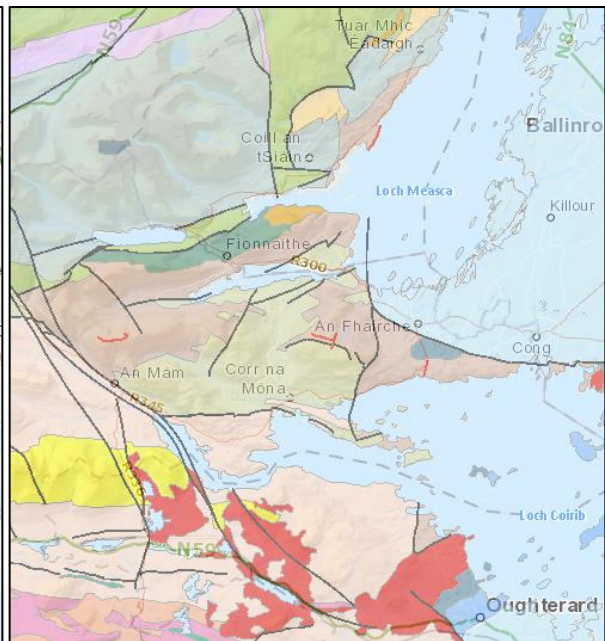
5.1. Rogha A: Beag

Achar idir Loch Coirib agus Loch Measca, Conga go Fionnaithe agus go dtí an Mám.



5.1. Option A: Small

Area between Lough Corrib and Lough Mask. Cong to Finny and to Maam.



Mapa Suirbhéireachta Ordanáis agus Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta 1:500000 map de cheantar Dhúiche Sheoigheach. Mapaí tógtha ó amharcóir Foinse Oscailte Shuirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta.

Ordnance Survey map and Geological Survey 1:500000 map of the Joyce Country area. Maps taken from Geological Survey Open Source viewer.

Geolaíocht/Tírdhreach

Tá sé seo gar d'fhairsinge Dhúiche Sheoigheach mar atá sé anois. Tá sé teoranta go dtí an ceantar idir Loch Measca agus Loch Coirib agus teoranta go Co. na Gaillimhe don chuid is mó. Tá an tírdhreach go hálainn le meascán cothrom chnoic gharbh san iarthar agus tailte mhilis níos cothromaí soir ón Fháirche. Feictear an difríocht i mbealach álainn sa topagrafaíocht an chodarsnacht idir na bruth-charraigeacha agus carraigheacha meiteamorfacha Ordaiviseach/Siolúrach agus na leapacha cothrománacha aolchloch Charbónmhar lena fhlúirseacht ghnéithe charstacha. San áireamh sna scéalta geolaíochta anseo tá na tréimhsí dheireannacha de na dríodair Dháiriacha, cuid de stua Loch na Fuaiche agus na dríodair gaolta

Geology/Landscape

This is close to the existing extents of Joyce Country. It is confined to the area between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib and mainly confined to Co. Galway. The landscape is beautiful and is an even mix of rugged hills to the west and lush flatter lands east of Clonbur. The difference in topography shows beautifully the contrast between the Ordovician/Silurian igneous and metamorphic rocks related to the closure of the Iapetus Ocean and the horizontal beds of Carboniferous limestone with its abundance of karst features. The geological stories include the later stages of the Dalradian sediments, part of the Lough Nafoe arc and the sediments related to it, and the later limestone beds with fossil assemblages and karst features including caves, clints and grikes.

leis, agus na leapacha aolchocha níos déanaí le cluichreáin iontaise agus gnéithe charstacha cosúil le huaimheanna, clinteanna agus gríoga. Tugann sé 'roghbhlúir' den ngeolaíocht, an tírdhreach, agus an fheirmeoireacht agus na traidisúin atá forbartha ón tírdhreach.

Buntáistí

Is úsáid maith é den ainm agus chuirfeadh sé le h-aitheantas 'branda' Dhúiche Sheoigheach. Tá úsáid aitheanta ag an gceantar do scoileanna allamuigh Éireannacha agus ó thar lear agus d'fhéadfaí tuilleadh fhorbairt a dhéanamh air seo. An argóint is fearr don rogha beag seo ná mar shuíomh scoil allamuigh agus ionad staidéir in iarthar na hÉireann. Tá sé seo ag tarlú cheana féin ach d'fhéadfaí tuilleadh fhorbairt agus leathnú a dhéanamh air. Níl anseo ach gné amháin de Gheopháirc agus mar sin, d'fhéadfadh sé fóras a dhéanamh i gan Geopháirc ach fiú mar ghnó príobháideach nó pobail leis féin.

Míbhuntáistí

Cé go bhfuil an gheolaíocht éagsúil anseo, níl ann ach chuid de scéal mór agus má bhíonn sé teoranta go Dúiche Sheoigheach, gearrann sé trí ghnéithe gheolaíochta gan chúis seachas tíreolaíocht áitiúil. Dá mba rud é gur thug an ceantar beag seo breis turasóireacht, thar an fás a mbeadh súil leis do thurasóireacht Éireannach, níl an cumas san áit le deileáil le daoine bhreise agus mar sin, ghabhfadh an caiteachas chuig bailte chomharsanacha ar aon nós. Is dóigh gurb é an míbhuntáiste is mó a bheadh ann ná go mbeadh sé ró-bheag chun aon tacaíocht shuntasach a fháil ó na h-údaráis áitiúla. D'fhéadfadh sé bheith rathúil in iarratais do dheontais bheaga agus b'fhéidir nach mbeadh a ndóthain i gceist chun tacaíocht a thabhairt do bhall foirne íoctha chun an Gheopháirc a fhorbairt.

Ainm

Geopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach

It gives a 'snap-shot' of the geology, the landscape, and the farming and traditions developed from the landscape.

Advantages

It is a good use of the name and would improve the Joyce Country 'brand' recognition. There is an established use of the area for Irish and overseas field schools and this could be further developed. The strongest argument for this small area option is as a field school location and centre for studies in the west of Ireland. This is already happening but it could be further developed and expanded. This is only one aspect of a Geopark and therefore it could grow in the absence of the Geopark as a stand-alone private business or community business.

Disadvantages

The geology here, while varied, is only part of the much bigger story and by confining it to Joyce Country, it cuts through geological features for no reason except local geography. If this small area brought increased tourism, above the expected growth for Irish tourism, the capacity is not in place to deal with the extra people and therefore, additional spending may go to the neighbouring towns anyway. Probably the biggest disadvantage to this is that it may be too small to get any meaningful financial support from the local authorities. It could be successful in applying for small grants but it this may not be enough to support a paid staff member to develop the Geopark.

Name

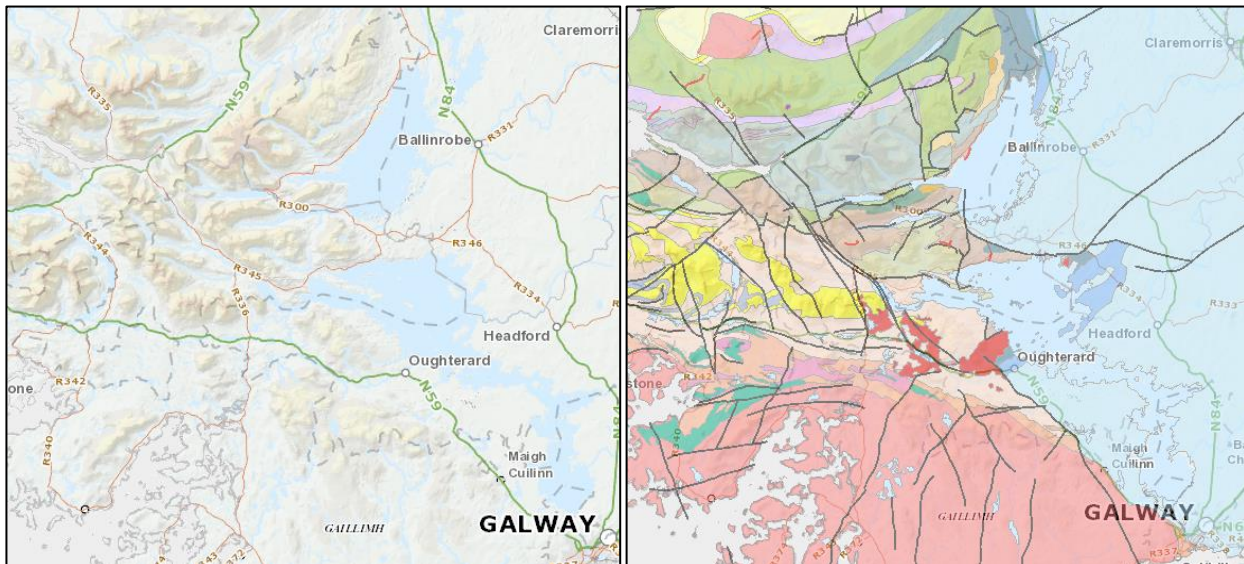
Joyce County Geopark.

5.2. Rogha B: Idirmhéanach

Trí locha - Coirib, Ceara, agus Measca agus siar go dtí An Liónáin.

5.2. Option B: Medium

Three lakes - Corrib, Carra and Mask and west to Leenane.



Mapa Suirbhéireachta Ordanáis agus Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta 1:500000 map de na locha ceantar Dhúiche Sheoigheach

Ordinance Survey map and Geological Survey 1:500000 map of the lakes and Joyce Country area.

Geolaíocht/Tírdhreach

Tugann an rogha seo isteach i bhfad níos mó den scéal agus cé go roinneann sé cuid áirithe den scéal, tugann sé trasghearradh níos fearr ar an ngeolaíocht agus an tírdhreach agus ligeann sé scéalta nua isteach sa scéal Geopháirce. Bheadh an Gheopháirc daingnithe timpeall na trí locha agus leathnódh sí siar go dtí An Liónáin chun cuid den gcósta agus Slí an Atlantaigh Fhíáin a thabhairt isteach. Mar chuid den scéal geolaíochta bheadh an Dálriadach, Batailit Eibhir na Gaillimhe, Stua Loch na Fuaiche, Umar Mhaigh Eo Theas agus aolchloch níos déanaí. Tá éagsúlacht tírdhreacha agus cleachtais fheirmeoireachta bainteach leo soiléir ó na páirceanna cothroma glasa soir ó na locha go dtí na cnoic gharbh agus an tAtlantach Fíáin.

Geology/Landscape.

This option takes in much more of the story and while it still divides the story somewhat, it gives a better cross-section of the geology and landscape and allows new stories into the Geopark narrative. The Geopark would be anchored around the three lakes and extend westwards to Leenane to include a section of the coast and the Wild Atlantic Way. The geological narrative would include the Dalradian, Galway Granite Batholith, Lough Nafooe Arc, South Mayo Trough and the later limestone. Landscape diversity and related farming practices are obvious from the flat green fields east of the lakes to the rugged hills and the wild Atlantic.

Siad na príomh-shráidbhailte a bheadh i gceist ná Conga Feichín, An Fháirche, Corr na Móna, An Mám, An Liónáin, Tuar Mhic Éadaigh, Partraí agus bheadh Áth Chinn agus Baile an Róba mar bhailte thairseacha.

Buntáistí

Cheanglódh Geopháirc loch-bhunaithe soir agus siar le fócas turasóireachta ar iascaireacht, eachtraíocht, bia agus cultúr. Oibreodh sé go maith mar dhroichead idir na príomh-fheachtais thurasóireachta atá ag Slí an Atlantaigh Fhíáin agus Sean-Oirthear na hÉireann. Bheadh an teorainn gar do Chathair na Gaillimhe agus na bailte Mhaigh Eo de Chaisleán an Bharraigh agus Cathair na Mart, ag cinntiú cumas níos fearr, táirge turasóireachta níos soiléire agus ceangailt níos fearr leis na comhairlí chontae agus a bhfreagracht as a gcontaetha iomlána. Tá sé fada a dhóthain ó Gheopháirc Dhomhanda na mBoirne agus Aillte an Mhothair ionas nach gceapfaí go raibh iarthar na hÉireann ar fad mar Gheopháirc amháin.

D'oibreodh sé le cosúlachtaí le Geopháirc atá sa réigiún cheana féin i Loch Carra (www.loughcarra.org). Cé go bhfuil sé bunaithe ar éiceolaíocht an locha agus cladaigh an locha, tugann sé geolaíocht san áireamh agus tá éiteas aige atá cosúil le h-éiteas na Geopháirceanna UNESCO. Is obair dheonach ar fad é ach is sampla áitiúil iontach é ar chéard gur féidir a dhéanamh. Tá cuid shuntasach den rogha seo sa Ghaeltacht agus tá sé cothrom i nGaillimh agus Maigh Eo - d'fhéadfadh sé seo roghanna breise maoinithe a oscailt.

Míbhuntáistí

Ní bheadh Geopháirc loch-bhunaithe ag insint an scéal geolaíochta ar fad. D'fhéadfadh an t-ainm éiginnteacht a chruthú agus ní bheadh chuile dhuine sa réigiún den dtuairim ar a mbaint le Dúiche Sheoigheach. Tá sampla an-mhaith dó seo ag obair i nGeopháirc Áirse Mharmair i bhFear Manach agus An Cabhán. Choinnigh siad an t-ainm Geopháirc Áirse

The primary villages would be Cong, Clonbur, Cornamona, Maam, Leenane, Tourmakeady, Partry, but also the towns of Headford and Ballinrobe as gateway towns.

Advantages

A lakes-based Geopark would connect east and west with a tourism focus on fishing, adventure, food and culture. It would work well as a bridge between the main tourism campaigns of the Wild Atlantic West and Ireland's Ancient East. The boundary would be close to Galway City and the Mayo towns of Castlebar and Westport, thus insuring better capacity, an obvious tourism product and closer ties to the county councils and their responsibility to their whole counties. It is far enough away from the edge of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Global Geopark to avoid looking like the whole of the west of Ireland is one Geopark.

Work with similarities to a Geopark already exists within the region in Lough Carra (www.loughcarra.org). Although based on the ecology of the lake and lake shore, it includes geology and has a similar ethos to that of the UNESCO Geoparks. It is all voluntary work but it is a great local example of what is possible. A significant portion of this option is in the Gaeltacht and it is equally in Galway and Mayo - this may allow for further funding options.

Disadvantages

A lakes-based Geopark would not be the whole geology story. The name may confuse and not everyone living in the region might be convinced of their association to Joyce Country. However there is a very good example of this working in Marble Arch Geopark in Fermanagh and Cavan. They have retained the name Marble Arch Global Geopark as it works as a marketable name even though they are in areas not traditionally thought of as being in the Marble Arch area. They use Marble Arch as a centre to promote the wider region as Joyce Country could here.

Mharmair mar go n-oibríonn sé mar ainm indíolta cé go bhfuil siad i gceantair nach gceapfaí go traidisiúnta a bheadh mar chuid de cheantar Áirse Mharmair. Úsáideann siad Áirse Mharmair mar lárionad chun an réigiún máguaird a chur chun cinn mar a d'fhéadfadh Dúiche Sheoigheach a dhéanamh anseo.

Ainm

Geopháirc na Lochanna Iarthair nó Geopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach agus na Locha.

Name

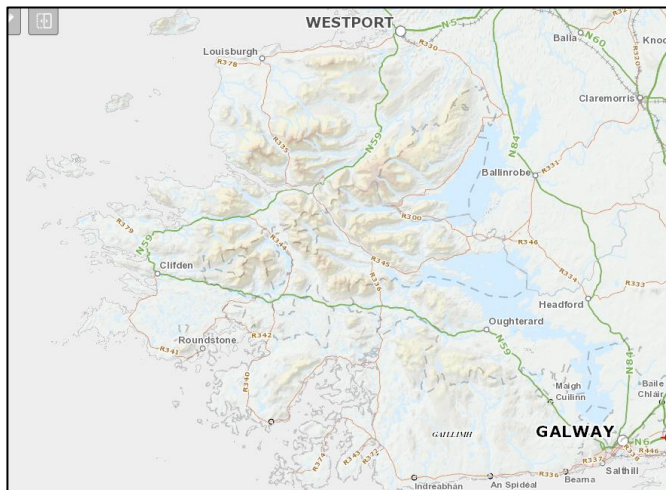
Western Lakes Geopark or Joyce Country and the Lakes Geopark.



**An Caoláire Rua ar Shlí an Atlantaigh Fháin. An t-aon fhiord in Éirinn.
Killary Harbour on the Wild Atlantic Way. Ireland's only fjord.**

5.3. Rogha C: Mór

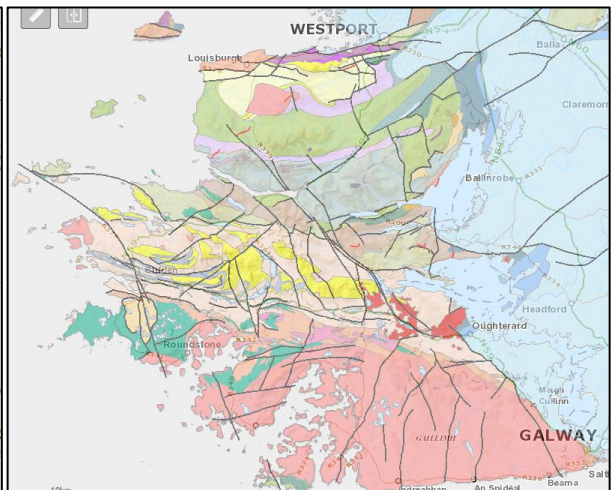
Siar ó na locha ó Chuan na Gaillimhe go Cuan Mó.



Mapa Suirbhéireachta Ordanáis agus Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta 1:500000 map d'Iarthar Chonnacht
Ordnance Survey map and Geological Survey 1:500000 map west Connacht.

5.3. Option C: Large

West of the lakes and from Galway Bay to Clew Bay.



Geolaíocht/Tírdhreach

Go heolaíoch, is é seo an rogha is fearr mar go dtugann sé fáil iomlán ar gheolaíocht iarthar na hÉireann agus an éabhlóid theicteonach na hÉireann.

Buntáistí

Raon leathan Tréimhsí Gheolaíochta, scéalta, cineálacha carraigeacha, tírghnéithe, agus tírdhreacha. Is achar mór é le cumas maith d'fhorás turasóireachta. Ar mhaithe le stádas Geopháirce a fháil, is buntáiste ar leith é cathair ina bhfuil ollscoil le taighde gníomhach ar siúl agus atá ar siúl le 170 bliain a bheith san áireamh. Tá dóchúlacht níos mó ann ar bhreis chúnaimh agus maoiniú ó eagrais mhóra cosúil le hÚdarás na Gaeltachta agus na h-údarais áitiúla.

Míbhuntáistí

Tá an forás turasóireachta sa réigiún seo sláintiúil mar atá sé agus mar sin, níl sé soiléir go ndéanfaidh Geopháirc difríocht ollmhór don fhorás sin. Cé go bhfuil an eolaíocht foirfe, tá

Geology/Landscape

Scientifically, this is the best option as it gives full access to the geology of the west of Ireland and the tectonic evolution of Ireland.

Advantages

Wide range of Geologic Periods, stories, rock types, land forms, and landscapes. It is a large area with good capacity of tourism growth. For the sake of getting the Geopark status, inclusion of a city with a university where research is actively taking place and has taken place over the last 170 years is a distinct advantage. There is likelihood of more involvement and/or financial support from the larger organisations such as Údarás na Gaeltachta and the local authorities.

Disadvantages

Tourism growth in this region is already healthy and therefore it is not obvious that the presence of a Geopark would lead to transformative growth.

seans ann go ngabhfadh sé ró-fhada ón smaoineamh ar Gheopháirc Dhúiche Sheoigheach. D'fhéadfadh sé bheith ró-ghar le Geopháirc na mBoirne agus Aillte an Mhothair, cé go bhfuil an gheolaíocht fíor-dhifriúil agus níos éagsúla.

Ainm

Geopháirc Iarthar Chonnacht

While the science is ideal, it may go too far away from the idea of a Joyce Country Geopark. It is also possibly too close to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, although the geology is significantly different and more varied.

Name

West Connacht Geopark.



Radharc ar Chuan Mó ó Chruach Phádraig.
View of Clew Bay from Craogh Patrick.

6. Uaillmhian Réalaíoch agus Indéanta

6.1. Láidreachtaí

Gan amhras, tá tábhacht idirnáisiúnta le geolaíocht an réigiúin seo leis an éagsúlacht gheolaíocht is mó ar oileán na hÉireann aige. Ón bpróiseas comhairliúcháin poiblí, tá sé soiléir go bhfuil díograis ann ón bpobal a chónaíonn agus a n-oibríonn anseo i leith Gheopháirc a fhorbairt. Feiceann siad é mar bhealach amach le forás agus fostaíocht a thabhairt ar ais sa réigiún agus mar sin dídháonrú a mhoilliú/stopadh agus mar thoradh air sin cailliúnt an chultúir, na traidisiúin agus an teanga. Tá obair tosaithe cheana féin i gceantar na Fáirche agus thaispeáin siad an cumas go bhféadfadh sé oibriú anseo agus tá an smaoineamh aitheanta chomh maith i bpobal Gheopháirce na hÉireann.

6.2. Laigí

Tá go leor laigí ann, agus tabharfar achoimre orthu anseo ach níl aon cheann a d'fhéadfaí a athrú go láidreach faoi dheireadh 2017. Ba chóir tabhairt faoi chúrsaí maoinithe agus bainistíochta ar dtús ach caithfear tabhairt futhu ar fad mura ndéanann an grúpa *ad hoc* cinneadh an togra a thréigean ar fad. Is próiseas fada é ina mbeidh obair shuntasach i gceist, agus gan maoiniú ar fáil, ní mór tabhairt faoi ar bhonn deonach amháin.

6.2.1. Plean Geopháirce agus Geothurasóireacht

Tá ardmhian ann stádas Geopháirc UNESCO a bhaint amach agus tá sé sin go maith ach tá easpa léirthisceana go bhfuil an próiseas chun an stádas a bhaint amach chomh tábhachtach céanna leis an stádas a fháil. Ba chóir go gcuirfeadh an próiseas an stádas a bhaint

6. A Realistic and Achievable Ambition

6.1. Strengths

The geology of this region is undoubtedly of international importance and has the greatest geodiversity on the island of Ireland. From the public consultation process, it is clear that there is enthusiasm for the prospect of developing a Geopark from the people who live and work here. They see it as one of the ways to return growth and employment to the region and therefore slow/halt depopulation and the subsequent loss of the culture, traditions and language. Work has already started in the Clonbur area and they have shown the potential for how it could work there and the idea is also recognised in the Irish Geopark community.

6.2. Weaknesses

There are a number of weaknesses, and these will be outlined here but none that can not be changed to strengths by the end of 2017. Finances and management should be first addressed but they all need to be addressed unless the decision of the ad hoc group is to abandon the idea completely. The process is a long one, will require substantial amounts of work and, in the absence of funding, may be undertaken on a voluntary basis only.

6.2.1. Geopark Plan and Geotourism

There is an aspiration to achieve UNESCO Geopark status and that is good but there is an under appreciation of the fact that the process of achieving this status is as important as achieving the status. The act of becoming a *de facto* Geopark should inform the stakeholders amach na páirtithe leasmhara ar an eolas faoin méid oibre a bheadh i gceist le forás

turasóireachta dearfach a mhealladh isteach sa réigiún. Ní réitíonn stádas Geopháirc UNESCO na fadhbanna ar fad ná ní thugann sé cead isteach chuig margaí turasóireacht agus rathúlacht mhaoinithe leis féin. Tagann freagrachtaí agus roinnt costais leis. Sna blianta atá amach romhainn, ba chóir do na daoine a bhfuil baint acu leis an nGeopháirc nó Geothurasóireacht go ginearálta, an branda UNESCO a choinneáil mar sprioc fadtéarmach agus gach iarracht a chur isteach i bhforbairt na geothurasóireachta agus iarracht a dhéanamh bheith mar chuid bhunaithe den margadh turasóireachta.

of the level of work involved in encouraging positive tourism growth in the region. UNESCO Geopark status does not solve all problems and give access to tourism markets and financial success on its own. It brings with it responsibilities and some costs. For the coming years, the people involved in the Geopark or Geotourism in general should keep the UNESCO brand as a long term goal and put every effort into developing geotourism and becoming an established part of the tourism market.



Caisleán na Círcé i Loch Coirib. Castle Kirk in Lough Corrib.

6.2.2. Struchtúr Bainistíochta agus Plean Bainistíochta

Tá sé seo, maraon leis an easpa maoiniú, an laige is práinní agus is mó don ghrúpa. Cuireadh iarracht mhaith isteach sa choincheap le hocht mbliana anuas ach ionas gur n-éireoidh leis an dtogra a bheith inbhuanaithe sna blianta atá amach romhainn, ní mór glacadh le plean bainistíochta níos struchtúrtha agus níos proifisiúnaí. Tá achoimre ar fhéidearthacht amháin dó seo i gCuid 7. Beidh ar na daoine nó na páirtithe leasmhara cinneadh a dhéanamh an bhfuil siad ag iarraidh bogadh ar aghaidh leis an dtogra nó nach bhfuil, go haonarach agus mar ghrúpa, agus má dhéanann siad cinneadh gur chóir, ní mór dóibh cúig bliana a bheith tiomnaithe go hiomlán don chéad chúig bliana eile agus cinneadh a dhéanamh ar chéard a chiallaíonn an tiomantas sin. Ciallóidh tiomantas cloí leis an struchtúr agus bunreacht bunaithe, má scríotar ceann.

6.2.3 Maoiniú

Meastar gur chóir buiséad d'ioncam bliantúil €100,000 a bheith ag Geopháirc fheidhmiúil do chostais fhoirne agus cláraithe. Faoi láthair, tá €20,000 in aghaidh na bliana don chéad dhá bhliain eile ag an dtogra ó SGÉ, agus tairiscintí €5,000 ó SGÉ agus Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe (do 2016). Tá an sprioc-bhuiséad infhaighte má roinntear freagracht idir maoinitheoirí éagsúla. Tá an clár LEADER oscailte faoi láthair do thograí cosúil leis seo agus cuireadh isteach léiriú spéise chuig Fóram Conamara don ghlaoch maoinithe seo.

6.2.4. Ceantar agus Ainm

Ní mór do na páirtithe leasmhara an cinneadh seo a dhéanamh sula leagfar síos aon phróiseas bainistíochta. Socróidh an t-achar limistéarach na páirtithe leasmhasa. Beidh orthu bheith an-soiléir faoina gcuid spriocanna infhaighte, tascairí feidhmíochta, agus a dtiomantas go dtí

6.2.2. Management Structure and Management Plan

This, along with the lack of finances, is the most immediate and biggest weakness for the group. Applaudable effort has been invested into the concept over the last eight years but in order for the project to become sustainable over the coming years, a more structured and professional management plan will need to be adopted. An outline of one possibility is given in Section 7. The individuals or stakeholders involved will need to firstly decide whether or not they wish to proceed, individually and as a group, and if they decide that they should, they need to fully commit for the next five years and decide on what that commitment entails. Commitment will mean adhering to the established structure and constitution, if one is written.

6.2.3. Finances

It is estimated that a working Geopark should have a budget of €100,000 annual income for staff and programme costs. Currently, the project has €20,000 per year for the next two years from GSI, and offers of €5000 from GSI and Galway County Council (for 2016). The target budget is achievable if responsibility is divided between various funders. The LEADER programme is currently open for funding projects such as this and an expression of interest has been submitted to Forum Connemara for this funding call.

6.2.4. Area and Name

This decision will have to be taken by the stakeholders before any management process is put in place. The areal extent will determine the stakeholders. They will need to be very clear about their achievable goals, their próiseas. Feictear an Gheopháirc a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ann mar thogra de chuid na Fáirche

agus d'fhéadfadh impleachtaí dhiúltacha a bheith aige seo ar thiomantas an cheantair ar fad. Dhíbir an próiseas comhairliúcháin poiblí cuid mhaith den smaoineamh seo ach d'fhéadfadh sé leanacht ar aghaidh agus mar sin ní mór tabhairt faoi seo mar chuid den bpróiseas dul chun cinn.

6.3. Deiseanna

D'fhéadfadh tráthúlacht bheith ina dheis is fearr. Thaispeáin na cruinnithe chomhairliúcháin poiblí go raibh meas dearfach ann don smaoineamh agus aitheantas gur chóir rud éigin a dhéanamh chun an pobal a thabhairt le chéile le n-oibriú i dtreo cailliúnt an daonra, deiseanna fostaíochta, scileanna agus traidisiúin áiteanna a mhoilliú. Bhí mothúchán saorálaíochas, go háirithe i dTuar Mhic Éadaigh, agus mothúchán le tabhairt faoin dúshlán agus oibriú don phobal. Ardaíodh Geopháirceanna go stádas iomlán UNESCO déanach i 2015 agus níor éirigh leis an smaoineamh buaic-aitheantas a bhaint amach sa mhargadh turasóireachta go fóill. Ag féachaint ar thaithí na geopháirceanna sa bhFóram Éireannach agus an Gréasán Geopháirceanna Eorpaigh de réir mar dhéanann an réigiún seo forbairt ar Gheopháirc *de facto*, bheadh sé in áit mhaith iarratas láidir a dhéanamh agus stádas UNESCO a bhaint amach nuair a bheadh an stádas seanbhunaithe agus aitheanta. Go náisiúnta, tá roinnt inniúlachtaí turasóireachta ollmhóra agus d'fhéadfadh an réigiún bheith páirteach i gcuid acu dá mba rud é go raibh sé dearbhaithe ar a tháirge, chumas, agus bhainistíocht. Tá an Gheopháirc atá molta curtha isteach mar chuid de straitéis Turasóireachta Chomhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe do 2020 -2025, rud a thugann aitheantas do na féidearthachtaí agus b'fhéidir tacaíocht a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ann amach anseo.

performance indicators, and their commitment to the process. The potential Geopark is often seen as a Clonbur project and this can have negative implications for the commitment of the whole area. The public consultation process did much to dispel this idea but it may still persist and will therefore need to be addressed as part of the progression process.

6.3. Opportunities

Timing for this work could be one of its best opportunities. The public consultation meetings showed that there was positive regard for the idea and a recognition that something should be done to bring the community together to work towards slowing down the loss of population, employment opportunities, local skills and traditions. There was a sense of volunteerism, particularly in Tourmakeady, and a sense of taking the challenge and working for the community. Geoparks were elevated to full UNESCO status in late 2015 and the idea has not reached peak recognition yet in the tourism market. By looking at the experience of the geoparks in the Irish Forum and the European Geopark Network as this region develops the *de facto* Geopark, it would be well placed to make a strong application and gain UNESCO status when the status was well established and recognised. Nationally, Fáilte Ireland have a number of major tourism initiatives, some for which the region could be part of if it was sure of its product, capacity, and management. The proposed Geopark is part of the Galway County Council Tourism strategy for 2020 - 2025 which signifies a recognition of the possibilities and possibly future support.

6.4. Bagairtí

Is bagairt é an easpa cumas infreastruchtúrtha le deileáil le turasóireacht mhéadaithe. Ní mór na chéad chéimeanna eile sa togra seo a bheith soiléir faoin léibhéal foráis in uimhreacha atá inmhianaithe. Tá turasóireacht in Éirinn i dtréimhse foráis faoi láthair agus bheadh sé deacair idirdhealú a dhéanamh idir forás atá bainte le Geopháirc agus treochtaí náisiúnta reatha. Beidh ar an nGeopháirc bealach a fháil le monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar fhorás áitiúil agus cumas an táirge a bhainistiú.

Fahdb amháin a ardaíodh ag ceann de na cruinnithe phoiblí ná go mbeadh Geopháirc ar nós músaem beo a chruthú agus thiocfadh cuairteoirí chun breathnú ar an slí maireachtála atá ag daoine agus go ndéanfaidh sé seo gnáthshaol na ndaoine atá ina gcónaí anseo a mhilleadh. Ní hé seo an aidhm atá ag aon Gheopháirc agus is rud gur chóir a bhainistiú. Is pobail bheo, ghníomhacha agus fhabhráithe iad Geopháirceanna, áiteanna gur féidir le cuairteoirí a bheith mar chuid den slí maireachtála seachas an saol a bheith mar chuid de bhealaí turasóirí.

6.4. Threats

Lack of infrastructural capacity to deal with increased tourism is a threat. The next steps of this project will need to be clear about what level of growth in numbers are desirable. Tourism is currently in a period of growth in Ireland and it will be difficult to distinguish between Geopark-related growth and current national trends. The Geopark will need to find a way to monitor local growth and manage product capacity.

One potential issue raised at one of the public meetings was that a Geopark would almost be like creating a living museum and visitors would come to see how people lived and this may spoil the everyday lives of the people living here. This is not the objective of any Geopark but it is something that should be managed. Geoparks are living, working, and evolving communities, places where visitors fit into the way of life rather than life fitting in to the ways of tourists.



Radharc i dtreo An Chloch Bhreac ó dhroichead Gaillimh-Maigh Eo ar Loch Measca.
View towards Cloughbrack from the Galway-Mayo bridge on Lough Mask

7. An Bealach Chun Cinn: plean 5 bliana

An chéad sprioc le baint amach ná Geopháirc *de facto* a bhunú, monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar an bhforás, agus sa deireadh an t-iarratas ar Gheopháirc UNESCO a chur isteach. Tá an próiseas chomh tábhachtach céanna leis an stádas a bhaint amach agus taispeánann sé na fadhbanna a bhaineann le Geopháirc a bhainistiú gan na freagrachtaí a bhaineann le bheith aitheanta mar Gheopháirc a bheith ann. Seo a leanas mapa bóthair chun an Gheopháirc *de facto* a bhunú agus oibriú i dtreo iarratas a dhéanamh stádas Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO.

Siad an chéad dhá bhliain is deacra mar nach bhfuil struchtúr bainistíochta ná maoiniú ar fáil faoi láthair ach tá súil go leagfaidh an mapa bóthair seo síos an bealach is fearr chun iad sin a dhéanamh.

2017

Beidh an chuid is mó den chéad bhliain caite ag díriú isteach ar struchtúr a bhunú do na blianta dár gcionn. Tá sé tábhachtach go mbunófar na struchtúir i gceart ón tús agus go bhfuil tiomantas don phróiseas ó na páirtithe leasmhara ar fad. Buailfidh an grúpa *ad hoc* le páirtithe leasmhara náisiúnta agus áitiúla féideartha agus roinnt cinntí a dhéanamh bunaithe ar thorthaí na gcruinnithe sin, cosúil le:

Céard é an t-achar limistéarach den nGeopháirc atá molta, bunaithe ar na trí roghanna curtha i láthair i gcuid 5 den dtuairisc seo? Beidh éifeachtaich aige seo ar cé acu de na páirtithe leasmhara a bheidh páirteach, cén maoiniú atá ar fáil agus ainm na Geopháirce atá molta.

7. The Way Forward: 5-year plan

The first goal is to establish a *de facto* Geopark, monitor growth, and eventually make the UNESCO Geopark application. The process is as important as the attainment of the status and it shows the issues of managing a Geopark but without the responsibilities of being a Geopark. The following is a workable road map for setting up the *de facto* Geopark and working towards applying for UNESCO Global Geopark status.

The first two years will be the most difficult as there is currently neither management nor finance in place but it is hoped that this road map will prescribe the way for both.

2017

The majority of the first year will be dedicated to establishing the structures for the following years. It is important that the structures are established properly from the start and that there is commitment to the process from all stakeholders. The *ad hoc* group will meet with the potential local and national stakeholders and make some decisions based on the outcomes of these meetings, including:

What is the areal extent of the proposed Geopark, based on the three options presented on section 5 of this report? This will have a bearing on which stakeholders are involved, what funding is possible, and the name of the proposed Geopark.

What is the future role of the current members of the *ad hoc* group, including C.D.S. Teo.? The current group are to be commended on getting the project to this stage, all as volunteers and driven by a wish to do something positive for their community.

Cén ról a bheidh ag baill reatha an ghrúpa *ad hoc*, C.D.S. Teo. san áireamh? Moltar an grúpa reatha as ucht an togra a thabhairt go dtí an stáid seo, iad ar fad mar oibrithe dheonacha agus tiomanta chun rud éigin dearfach a dhéanamh dár bpobal. Bíonn sé dúshlánach i gcásanna mar seo é a thabhairt go lámha daoine eile. Ach is céim criticiúil é ionas gur féidir leis an dtogra dul chun cinn a dhéanamh. Ní mór an t-athrú riachtanach seo a bhainistiú go cúramach. Teastaíonn teachtaireacht comhsheasamhach, tiomantas comhsheasamhach agus dul chun cinn intomhaiste i dtreo na sprice chomónta. Nascfaidh an struchtúr atá molta anseo ionadaithe phobail agus earnálach agus mar sin beidh deis ag baill reatha an ghrúpa *ad hoc* fanacht leis an dtogra más mian leo. Beidh ar C.D.S. Teo. a seasamh i leith an togra a déanamh soiléir maidir le ceangaltais leis an dtogra Geopháirce amach anseo. Tá a gcuid ionchur fíor-luachmhar go dtí an pointe seo agus tá leas soiléir ann don togra de bharr a gcuid tacaíochta leanúnach. Siad na sealbhóirí mhaoinithe do mhaoiniú SGÉ don togra faoi láthair agus leanfaidh sé seo ar aghaidh go dtí go bhfuil struchtúr nua bunaithe ar a laghad.

Bunú Comhlacht Geopháirce agus Grúpa Stiúrtha nua. Nuair atá na chéad chinntí déanta ag an ngrúpa *ad hoc*, tógfaidh sé an chuid is mó de 2017 Comhlacht Geopháirce agus Grúpa Stiúrtha nua a bhunú. Ag an bpointe seo, b'fhéidir go mbeadh sé níos fearr maoiniú do 2017 ó SGÉ a úsáid chun comhairleoir nó conraitheoir neamhspleách a earcú chun an comhlacht agus grúpa stiúrtha a bhunú agus oibriú le páirtithe leasmhara. Tá sé seo faoi réir comhaontú le SGÉ. Athnófar suíomh agus spás oifige agus eagraithe ar bhonn foirmiúil. Rogha amháin ná spás oifige a ligean ar cíós ó C.D.S. Teo. Cé go mbeadh an comhlacht nua-bhunaithe neamhspleách ó C.D.S. Teo., is suíomh soiléir agus áisiúil é ina bhfuil baint reatha agus b'fhéidir baint

It is often challenging in these situations to hand to others. However it is critical step that is required in order for the project to progress. A careful management of this fundamental change should be considered. There needs to be consistency of message, consistency of commitment and measurable progression towards the common goal. The structure proposed here will engage community and sector representatives and therefore there will be opportunities for the current members of the *ad hoc* group to remain involve if they so wish. C.D.S. Teo will need to make their position clear in relation to future commitments to the Geopark project. Their input up to this point has been invaluable and their continuing involvement is of clear benefit to the project. They are the current fund-holders for GSI funding for the project and will continue as this, at least until a new structure is established.

Establishment of a new Geopark Company and Steering Group. After the initial decisions are made by the *ad hoc* group, the establishment of a new Geopark Company and Steering Group will take the majority of 2017 to complete. At this point it may be best to use the 2017 money from GSI to hire an independent consultant or contractor to set up the company and steering group and work with stakeholders. This is subject to agreement with GSI. Office location and space will be identified and formalised for this work. One option may be to hire space in the offices of C.D.S. Teo. Although the newly formed company would be independent of C.D.S. Teo it is an obvious and convenient base that includes a current and potential future involvement. Another option may be to set up an office in the All Saints church in Clonbur with a view to using the space as a long-term Geopark Centre.

amach anseo leis an dtogra ann cheana féin. Rogha eile ná oifig a shocrú i Séipéal na Naomh ar an Fháirche le dearcadh go n-úsáidfear an spás go fadtéarmach mar Ionad Geopháirce.

Comhlacht Geopháirce agus Grúpa Stiúrtha. Go hidéalach, bunófar comhlacht neamhspleách déanta suas de pháirtithe leasmhara móra agus ionadaithe ón bpobal gnó agus grúpaí shóisialta. Ní bhíonn sé ceadaithe i gcónaí go mbeadh ionadaithe ó eagrais náisiúnta nó eagrais rialtais áitiúla mar stiúirthóirí chomhlachta. Beidh sé mar fhreagracht ag an gcomhairleoir a fhostófar comhairle a thabhairt ina leith seo nó bealach eile a fháil. Beidh an bhallraíocht ag braith ar limistéarach na Geopháirce atá molta ach san áireamh, ar a laghad, beidh ionadaí ó SGÉ, Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe, Comhairle Chontae Mhaigh Eo, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Fáilte Éireann, ionadaí ó na pobail áitiúla, an earnáil fháilteachais, earnáil thalmhaíochta, earnáil oideachais ar nós OÉ Gaillimh agus ITGM, earnáil eachtraíochta/allamuigh, earnáil bhia, ealaíona agus ceardaíochta, agus b'fhéidir ionadaithe ó Choillte, Teagasc, Fóram Chonamara, srl. Beidh an grúpa seo ina Ghrúpa Stiúrtha chomh maith agus buailfidh siad le chéile ar chlár ama aontaithe idir 6 - 10 n-uaire in aghaidh na bliana. Dréachtóidh an Grúpa Stiúrtha bunreacht le modh le cathaoirleach a thogha nó a ainmniú. Beidh an cathaoirleach neamhspleách nó athruithe go bliantúil. Sé an ról a bheidh ag an nGrúpa Stiúrtha agus an Comhlacht ná a bheith freagrach as foireann a earcú agus treoir a thabhairt d'fhorbairt na Geopháirce *de facto* agus na h-iarratais Gheopháirce UNESCO. De bharr gur tionscnamh áitiúil é, beidh méid na ndaoine ar an nGrúpa Stiúrtha ualaithe i dtreo na n-ionadaithe áitiúil.

Maoiniú. Teastóidh maoiniú suntasach do dhul chun cinn na hoibre seo, d'fhorbairt Gheopháirce *de facto* agus d'ullmhú don

Geopark Company and Steering Group. Ideally an independent company will be established comprising the major stakeholders and representatives of the business community and social groups. It is not always permissible for representatives of national organisations or local government bodies to become company directors. It will be the responsibility of the hired consultant to advise on this or find an alternative. The membership will depend on the geographic extent of the proposed Geopark but it will include, at a minimum, a representative from GSI, Galway County Council, Mayo County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Fáilte Ireland, a representative from the local communities, the local hospitality sector, farming sector, education sector including NUI Galway and GMIT, adventure/outdoor education sector, food producers, arts and crafts, and possibly representatives from Coillte, Teagasc, Forum Connemara, etc. This group will also become the Steering Group and meet on an agreed timetable between 6 and 10 times per year. The Steering Group will draft a constitution including a method of electing or nominating a chairperson. The chairperson may either be independent or changed annually. The role of the Company and Steering Group will be to take responsibility for hiring staff and providing direction for the development of the *de facto* Geopark and the UNESCO Geopark application. As it is a local or community initiative, the numbers on the Steering Group will be weighted in favour of the local representation.

Funding. Significant funding will be required for the progression of this work, the development of a *de facto* Geopark and the preparation of the UNESCO Geopark application. It is estimated that €100,000 is needed annually for the successful running of a Geopark to cover staff costs, capital works/improvements, an education programme, tourism programme, and

iarratas ar Gheopháirc UNESCO. Meastar go dteastaíonn €100,000 in aghaidh na bliana chun Geopháirc a reáchtáil go rathúil chun costais fhoirne, oibrithe/feabhsúcháin chaipitil, clár oideachais, clár turasóireachta agus obair phoiblíochta a chlúdach. d'fhéadfadh an maoiniú teacht trí mhaoiniú díreach, iarratais ar dheontais, nó trí fhoireann agus acmhainní a bheith curtha ar fáil ag páirtithe leasmhara réigiúnacha agus náisiúnta. Tá maoiniú socruithe ó SGÉ do 2017 agus 2018 ach teastaíonn tuilleadh maoinithe. Chuir an grúpa *ad hoc* léiriú spéise isteach go Fóram Chonamara ar mhaoiniú LEADER agus má éiríonn leis, cuirfear iarratas isteach ar mhaoiniú a bheidh riachtanach don chéad chúpla bliain eile. Luífidh freagracht ar iarratais ar dheontais do 2017 ar an nGrúpa Stiúrtha agus Comhlacht Geopháirce nua-bhunaithe de bharr nach mbeidh foireann buan ann chun an fhreagracht a thógáil.

Foireann. Beidh dhá bhall foirne ag teastáil do bhunú na Geopháirce *de facto* - geolaí agus bainisteoir oibríochtaí. Má tá iarratais ar mhaoiniú nó tairiscintí ar mhaoiniú in áit faoi dheireadh 2017, is féidir foireann a eacrú láithreach chun obair Gheopháirce a thosnú i 2018. Beidh oifigí, conarthaí, agus freagrachtaí fhostaithe in áit sula dtosófar leis na bpoist. Beidh na sainchuntais phoist, margaíocht ar na bpoist agus earcú ar fad mar fhreagracht an Chomhlachta Geopháirce agus Grúpa Stiúrtha.

Sainchuntas poist - geolaí. Beidh an geolaí freagrach as na gnéithe eolaíochta ar fad a bhaineann le forbairt Gheopháirce *de facto* agus as oibriú le h-úinéirí talúin, eagrais oideachais agus taighdeoirí. Beidh sé/sí freagrach as ábhar poiblíochta geothurasóireachta a scríobh. Beidh céim sa gheolaíocht nó a chomhionann, le taithí i gcumarsáid trí mheán na Gaeilge agus an Bhéarla. Beidh sé seo mar bhuntáiste ar leith do rannpháirtíocht pháirtithe leasmhara,

promotional work. The financing could either be by direct funding, grant applications, or by the supply of staff and resources by regional and national stakeholders. Funds have already been secured from GSI for 2017 and 2018 but further funding is needed. The ad hoc group have submitted an expression of interest to Forum Connemara for LEADER funds and if successful, an application will be submitted for funding which will be essential for the next few years. The responsibility for funding applications for 2017 will lie with the newly formed Geopark Company and Steering Group as there will be no permanent staff in place to take the responsibility.

Staff. Two staff members are required for the establishment of the *de facto* Geopark - a geologist and operations manager. If funding applications or offers of stakeholder funds are in place by the end of 2017, staff can be hired immediately for a 2018 start to Geopark work. Offices, contracts and employer responsibilities will be in place prior to the commencement of the posts. Job descriptions, post advertisements and hiring will be the responsibility of the Geopark Company and Steering Group.

Job description - geologist. The geologist will be responsible for the scientific aspects of the development of the *de facto* Geopark and for working with landowners, education bodies and researchers. He/she will be responsible for writing geotourism promotional material. They will have a degree in geology or related discipline, have experience in communication, and clearly demonstrate an enjoyment of working with people. Ideally, as the proposed Geopark is partly in a Gaeltacht area, the geologist should be able to communicate in Irish and English. This would be a major advantage for stakeholder engagement, producing education resources and for the general running of the Geopark. The geologist

acmhainní oideachasúla a tháirgeadh agus do reáchtáil ghinearálta na Geopháirce. Beidh an geolaí freagrach as insint gheolaíochta agus geomoirfeolaíochta a fhorbairt don Gheopháirc, na geo-suíomhanna a aithint, an clár oideachais a fhorbairt agus a chur ar fáil, agus ag oibriú le h-eagrais nó scoileanna oideachasúla idirnáisiúnta chun tuilleadh deiseanna do scoileanna samhraidh agus taighde a mhealladh.

Sainchuntas poist - bainisteoir oibríochtaí. Beidh freagracht ag an mbainisteoir oibríochtaí Gheopháirce d'oibríochtaí na Geopháirce ó lá go lá, rannpháirtíocht leis an gComhlacht Geopháirce agus an Grúpa Stiúrtha, tuarascáil airgeadais agus tuilleadh iarratais mhaoinithe, forbairt turasóireachta agus gnó, agus oibrithe chaipitil. Arís, bheadh líofacht sa Ghaeilge mar bhuntáiste, maraon le taithí togra pobail mar seo a bhainistiú.

2018

D'fhéadfadh an bhliain seo tosnú le dhá bhall foirne a earcú agus fógra poiblí a dhéanamh ar aidhmeanna agus uailmhianta an Chomhlachta Geopháirce agus Grúpa Stiúrtha. Ba chóir amchlár ar stádas Geopháirce UNESCO a bhaint amach a fhoilsiú agus láithreacht seolta ar an idirlín agus tríd na meáin shóisialta. Beidh an bhliain seo an-ghnóthach fad is atá an Gheopháirc *de facto* iomlán bunaithe, agus clár oideachais agus turasóireachta forbartha. Déanfar aitheantas branda/lógó/corporáideach, a thagann le tionscnaimh réigiúnacha agus náisiúnta, a fhorbairt agus úsáidfear é go barr a chumais chun éiteas, eiseadh agus pleananna na Geopháirce a chur chun cinn. San áireamh sna himeachtaí fhorbartha a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ann ná; cúrsa traenála gnó geothurasóireachta, cúrsa geo-ambasadóir, turais geothurasóireachta do dhaoine áitiúla, go háirithe iad siúd atá san earnáil thurasóireachta, ionas go bhfeicfeadh siad a

will be responsible for the development of the geological and geomorphological narrative for the Geopark, identifying the geosites, developing and delivering the education programme, and working with international education bodies or schools to attract further summer school and research opportunities.

Job description – operations manager. The Geopark operations manager will have responsibility for the day to day operations of the Geopark, engagement with the Geopark Company and Steering Group, financial reporting and further funding applications, tourism and business development and capital works. Again, proficiency in the Irish language will be an advantage, as is experience of managing a community project such as this.

2018

This year may start with the employment of two staff members and the public announcement of the aims and ambitions of the Geopark Company and Steering Group. The timetable for achieving UNESCO Geopark status should be published and a presence launched on the internet and through social media. This will be a very busy year as the *de facto* Geopark is fully established, and an education and tourism programme is developed. A brand/logo/corporate identity, which aligns with regional and national initiatives will be developed and used to its full potential to promote the ethos, existence and plans of the Geopark. Some of the development activities could include; geotourism business training course, geoambassador course, geotourism tours for local people, particularly those in the tourism industry, to see their local landscape through the eyes of a geotourist. By the end of 2018, the geological, geomorphological and possibly archaeological narrative will be fully developed and published on the Geopark website.

dtírdhreach áitiúil trí shúile geothurasóir. Faoi dheireadh 2018, beidh an insint gheolaíochta, geomoirfeolaíochta agus b'fhéidir seandálaíochta forbartha ina n-iomláine agus foilsithe ar shuíomh idirlín na Geopháirce. Aithneofar na geo-suíomhanna a dhíolfadh na hinsinte is fearr agus déanfar clár léiritheach a fhorbairt. Déanfar cláracha oideachasúla a fhorbairt do bhunscoileanna, mheánscoileanna, ollscoileanna agus foghlaim fadsaoil i gcomhar leis na scoileanna agus institiúidí áitiúla le tosnú i 2019. I gcomhar leis an nGrúpa Stiúrtha, leagfaidh an foireann spriocanna infhaighte agus intomhaiste don Gheopháirc don tréimhse 2018 go 2021 agus athbhreithniú a dhéanamh orthu ag deireadh gach bliain. Tiocfaidh na spriocanna seo leis na treochtaí náisiúnta i bhforás turasóireachta agus an riachtanas Geopháirce UNESCO d'iarratas rathúil. Má dhéanfar an cinneadh oibriú i dtreo stádas UNESCO, cuirfidh an próiseas iarratais taca faoi gníomhaíochtaí na Geopháirce *de facto*. Glacfar leis an oiread deiseanna agus is féidir chuile bhliain do bhreis maoiniú, comhoibriú agus poiblíocht.

The geosites which best sell the narrative will be identified and an interpretative programme for these will be in development. Education programmes for primary, secondary, tertiary and life-long learning will be in development in collaboration with the local schools and institutions for a 2019 start. In association with the Steering Group, the staff members will set out achievable and measurable goals for the Geopark for the period 2018 to 2021 and review them at the end of each year. These goals will align with the national trends in tourism growth and the UNESCO Geopark requirement for a successful application. If the decision is taken to work towards UNESCO status, the application process will underpin the actions of the de facto Geopark. As many opportunities as is reasonably possible for further funding, collaboration and promotion will be taken each year.



Loch na Fuaiche. Lough Nafooe.

2019

Bunaithe ar an gclár thuasluaite, d'fhéadfaí iarratas ar Gheopháirc UNESCO a dhéanamh faoi dheireadh 2019. Glactar go mbainfear amach chuile sprioc do 2017 agus 2018 agus go bhfuil maoiniú fadtéarmach pleanaithe nó faighte. An phríomhobair a bheidh ag an ngeolaí i 2019 ná clár geothurasóireachta agus oideachais a sheachadadh chomh maith le comhoibriú le páirtithe leasmhara réigiúnacha agus náisiúnta ar chomharthaíocht agus léiritheacht na ngeo-suíomhanna. An phríomhobair a bheidh ag an mbainisteoir oibríochtaí i mbliana ná gréasán láidir gnóanna turasóireachta a fhorbairt agus a dheimhniú go bhfuil áit na Geopháirce sa táirge turasóireachta réigiúnach agus náisiúnta cinnte. Feicfear ceantar Geopháirce mar imreoir tábhachtach sa tionscal turasóireachta. Mar thoradh, ní mór don táirge a thabharfaidh an Gheopháirc chuig an margadh réigiúnach agus náisiúnta bheith proifisiúnta, eagraithe, cumasach, agus an-éagsúil ar fad ó thairiscintí eile sa tionscail. Ní mór don fhorás ón dhá bhliain roimhe seo a bheith bainteach le h-obair na Geopháirce agus gan a bheith bainteach le treochoaí náisiúnta amháin chun tábhachtach na Geopháirce sa tionscail a léiriú go soiléir. Beidh sé seo an-tábhachtach d'áiteanna a d'fhéadfaí a rá atá fágtha ar láir ó phoiblíochtaí réigiúnacha agus náisiúnta.

2020

Má tá an t-iarratas ar Gheopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO curtha isteach i 2019, bhogfaidh an fócas i 2020 go dtí an Geopháirc a fheabhsú níos mó tríd an coincheap a fhréamhú in intinn na ndaoine. Sa bhliain 2020, beidh Gaillimhe mar Chaipitil Chultúr na hEorpa agus tá súil go mbeidh spioraid an phobail, na hoibre dheonaigh, agus bródúlacht áitiúil i gConnachta. Ba am fairfe é seo don Gheopháirc a bheith ina ardréim is airde, idir láithreachta a bhunú in intinn na daoine áitiúla agus

2019

Based on the above suggested programme the end of 2019 may be the time for the submission of the UNESCO Geopark application. This date assumes all goals for 2017 and 2018 have been met and longer-term funding is planned or in place. The main work of the geologist in 2019 will be the delivering of a geotourism and education programme and collaboration with the regional and national stakeholders on signage and interpretation of the geosites. The main work of the manager in this year will be to develop a robust network of tourism-related businesses and ensure that the Geopark's place in the regional and national tourism product is secure. A Geopark area will be seen as an important player in the tourism industry. As a result the product the Geopark brings to the regional and national market place will be required to be professional, organised, capacity-capable, and significantly different to other offerings in the industry. Growth for the preceding two years will be required to be noticeably related to the work of the Geopark and not just related to national trends in order clearly demonstrate the Geopark's importance in the industry. This will be particularly important for areas which currently may be perceived as being omitted from regional and national tourism promotions.

2020

If the UNESCO Global Geopark application is submitted in 2019, the focus in 2020 will move to further enhance the Geopark through embedding it in the minds of the people. 2020 will be the year Galway is the European Capital of Culture and it is anticipated that there will be an air of community spirit, volunteerism, and local pride in Connacht. This will be the perfect time to have the Geopark as maximum prominence, both to establish a presence in the minds of local people and visitors and for the international UNESCO assessors.

cuairteoirí agus do mheasúnóirí UNESCO idirnáisiúnta. Beidh clár turasóireachta iomlán ann, tuilleadh traenáil ghnó le riain cheardaíochta agus bhia bunaithe, agus clár oideachais seomra ranga agus allamuigh i bhfeidhm. Go luath i 2020, beidh taispeántas buan agus ionad eolais chomh maith le stáisiún eolais níos lú in óstáin, ionaid sráidbhailte agus ionaid eolais do thurasóirí tríd na Geopháirce. Beidh go leor maoiniú ann gur féidir smaoineamh ar fhoireann breise a fhostú. D'fhéadfaí earcú a dhéanamh do rólanna cosúil le h-oifigeach turasóireachta nó oifigeach margaíochta. Is gné buan é maoiniú a fháil do na hoibríochtaí ar fad sa Gheopháirc agus trí riachtanas agus luach na Geopháirce a bhunú, éireoidh sé seo níos éasca.

2021

Má bhaintear stádas Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO amach, beidh céim athruithe sa bhealach a reáchtálar na Geopháirce i mbliana. Mar thoradh ar an iarratas rathúil, ní mór go dtógáilfear ar an stádas reatha agus pleananna a leagan amach don ath-dhearbhú mar Gheopháirc faoi cheann ceithre bliana. Is am maith é seo le cruinnithe chomhairliúcháin phoiblí a eagrú agus fáil amach cén bealach a mhothaíonn na daoine a chonaíonn agus a n-oibríonn sa Gheopháirc ar nós cén chaoi a bhraitheann siad ó thaobh na buntáistí, na dúshláin le tuilleadh turasóirí, fadhbanna le cead isteach ar thalamh srl. Déanfar plean 5 bliana nua a fhorbairt le measúnú a dhéanamh ar na riachtanais oideachasúla, turasóireacht inbhuanaithe, geo-caomhnúcháin, agus foráis na Geopháirce. Ní mór do na páirtithe leasmhara athbhreithniú a dhéanamh agus athnuachan a dhéanamh ar a dtiomantas don Gheopháirc.

Is achoimre an-dearfach é seo ach braitheann sé ar fhorás ó bhliain go bliain chomh maith le tiomantas iomlán agus comhoibriú na bpáirtithe leasmhara. Is féidir an rathúlacht seo

There will be a full tourism programme, further business training with the establishment of craft and food trails, and a classroom and outdoor education programme. By early 2020, there will be a permanent exhibition and information centre and smaller information stations in hotels, village centres and tourist information centres throughout the Geopark. Funding will be such that additional staff can be considered. Possible roles may include a sustainable tourism officer or marketing officer. The need to secure funding is a permanent feature of all Geopark operations but by establishing the need and value of the Geopark, this will get easier.

2021

If successful in attaining the UNESCO Global Geopark status, this year will require a step change in the way the Geopark operates. The successful application will trigger the need to build on the current status and plans will be put in place for the revalidation in four years. This will be a good time to have a new round of public consultation meetings and gauge the feelings of the people living and working in the Geopark including how they perceive the benefits, challenges with increased tourism numbers, issues with land access etc. A new 5-year plan will be developed to assess the educational, sustainable tourism, geoconservation, and growth needs of the Geopark. Stakeholders will be required to review and subsequently renew their commitment to the Geopark.

This outline is very positive but it depends on growth from one year to the next and the full commitment and cooperation of all the stakeholders. It is possible to achieve this success if a good management structure is put in place in 2017, further funding is secured, and two full-time staff members are employed.

a bhaint amach má tá struchtúr bainistíochta maith curtha in áit i 2017, má dheimhnítear tuilleadh maoiniú agus má earcaítear dhá bhall foirne lánaimseartha.



Loch Measca. Lough Mask.

8. Na Chéad Chéimeanna Eile

Tá na chéad chéimeanna eile criticiúil do rathúlacht na Geopháirce. Tá móiminteam dearfach agus bealach ar aghaidh tugtha don smaoineamh tríd an phróisis chomhairliúcháin phoiblí agus pháirtithe leasmhara. D'fhéadfadh sé bheith mar bhogadh d'fhorbairt tuaithe sa réigiún ach beidh na ceachtanna a fhoghlaiméofar ón bpróiseas chomh tábhachtach céanna le stádas Geopháirc UNESCO a bhaint amach faoi cheann 4 bliana. Teastaíonn struchtúr bainistíochta le maoiniú, ceachtar acu a bhfuil ann faoi láthair. Ach tá díograis agus toilteanas ag muintir an réigiúin le bheith rannpháirteach agus obair chrua a dhéanamh dár bpobail agus ar deireadh do Gheopháirc.

Moltar go mbíonn cruinniú oscailte agus macánta ag an ngrúpa *ad hoc* chun plé a dhéanamh ar an mbealach gur mhaith leo dul ar aghaidh agus cé chomh tiomanta is atá siad do choincheap Geopháirce sa réigiún seo. Ní mór dóibh cinneadh a dhéanamh, bunaithe ar na trí roghanna atá tugtha anseo, ar achar agus ainm na Geopháirce.

Moltar chomh maith go gcuireann siad a gcuid cinntí a chur i láthair do na páirtithe leasmhara le haghaidh tuilleadh plé agus tiomantas ó na páirtithe leasmhara ionas go mbeadh siad rannpháirteach amach anseo. Le dul chun cinn a dhéanamh i gComhlacht Geopháirce agus Grúpa Stiúrtha a bhunú, d'fhéadfadh an chéad chéim eile a bheith ann ná comhairleoir neamhspleách a fháil chun é seo a shocrú chomh maith leis na struchtúir agus próisis eile ar fad a theastóidh, de réir mar a theastaíonn.

Teastaíonn tuilleadh maoiniú agus tá iarratais do chuid acu seo á chur i bhfeidhm cheana féin.

Teastóidh dhá bhall foirne lánaimseartha do thús 2018 chomh maith le spás oifige seirbhísithe. Ba chóir go mbeadh na baill

8. Immediate Actions

The next steps are critical if the Geopark idea is going to succeed. The public and stakeholder consultation process has given the idea positive momentum and a way forward. It could be an important movement for rural development in the region but the lessons learned from the process will be as important as achieving

UNESCO Geopark status in 4 years. It requires a management structure with finance, neither of which it has at present. However there exists an enthusiasm and willingness by the people of the region to engage and work hard for their communities and ultimately a Geopark.

It is recommended that the ad hoc group have an open and honest meeting to discuss how they want to proceed and how committed they are to the concept of a Geopark in this region. They need to decide, based on the three options given here, the area and name of the Geopark.

It is also recommended that they present their decisions to the stakeholders for further discussion and for commitment from stakeholders for future involvement. To progress the establishment of a Geopark Company and Steering Group, the next course of action may be to engage an independent consultant to set this up along with all of the structures and processes that will allow it to function as desired.

Further funds are required and the application for some of these is already in progress.

Two full-time staff members will be required for the start of 2018 along with the acquisition of serviced office space. The staff members should comprise a Geopark operations manager and a geologist.

fhoirne déanta suas de bhainisteoir oibríochtaí Geopháirce agus geolaí.

Tá an coincheap Geopháirc don réigiún seo go maith agus éireoidh leis má tá na páirtithe leasmhara tiomanta leis an dtogra agus go bhfuil creidiúint chomónta ann go bhfuil Geopháirc ann don phobal, ón bpobal.

The concept of a Geopark for this region is good and it will succeed if the stakeholders are committed to the project and share a common belief that a Geopark is for the people, by the people.



Luí na gréine mar chúlsolas ar shléibhte bharr-chothroim Phartraí
The setting sun back lighting the flat topped Partry mountains.

9. Aitheantais

Tá fíor-bhuíochas ó chroí ag dul go Dr. Jon Hunt ó OÉ Gaillimh as ucht a thacaíocht éagorach don obair seo ó thús go deireadh. Chuir a léirmheas agus spreagadh go mór leis an dtuairisc seo. Buíochas chomh maith le Prof. Martin Feely agus Dr. Alessandra Costanzo ó OÉ Gaillimhe dá gcuid tacaíochta agus díograis.

Ní bheadh Geopháirc Ardmhéine Dhúiche Sheoigheach ann gan grúpa beag daoine saotharacha agus dóchasacha. Thug siad a gcuid ama, a gcuid eolais, agus a gcuid tacaíochtaíochta go deonach dó seo agus beidh mé fíor-bhuíoch i gcónaí. Siad na príomh-imreoirí faoi láthair ná Trish Walsh, Marie Ní Chríodáin, Eoin Burke, Pearse Doherty agus níos deireanaí Michael Hegarty. Guím gach rath orthu amach anseo de réir mar a bhogann siad chun cinn leis na chéad chéimeanna eile sa phróiseas seo.

Bheannaigh muintir Dhúiche Sheoigheach agus muintir Chonamara agus Maigh Eo theas mé agus mo chuid iarrachtaí an obair seo a dhéanamh le macántacht, greann maith, agus fáilteacht. Tá mé tar éis neart chupáin tae agus neart chomhráite, agus bhí sé iontach am a chaitheamh sa chuid seo den ndomhan arís agus cuimhniú ar áilleacht an tírdhreacha. Bhí freastal agus plé na gcruinnithe poiblí spreagúil. Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le C.D.S. Teo., Tí Pheacocke agus Coiste Cultúir Teanga & Forbartha Thuar Mhic Éadaigh as ucht spás a chur ar fáil do na cruinnithe phoiblí, poiblíocht a dhéanamh ar na cruinnithe agus an fháilteacht mhór a chuir siad romhaim.

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil chomh maith leis na hionadaithe ó na páirtithe leasmhara móra a bhí an-fhlaithiúil lena gcuid ama, eolais agus comhairle. Rinne sé mo chuid oibre níos éasca a bheith in ann teacht ar thaithí fairsinge mar é.

9. Acknowledgements

The greatest personal thanks go to Dr Jon Hunt of NUI Galway for his unwavering support of this work from start to finish. This report was much improved by his considered comments and encouragement. Thanks also to Prof. Martin Feely and Dr Alessandra Costanzo of NUI Galway for their support and enthusiasm.

Joyce Country Aspiring Geopark would not exist without a small group of hard-working and hopeful people. They gave freely of their time, knowledge, and support, and for this, I will be forever thankful. The key players at present are Trish Walsh, Marie Ní Chríodáin, Eoin Burke, Pearse Doherty and latterly Michael Hegarty. I sincerely wish them the very best for the future as they move towards the next stages of this process.

The people of Joyce Country and the greater Connemara and south Mayo area have greeted me and my efforts to carry out this work with honesty, good humour, and hospitality. I've had many cups of tea and many great conversations, and it was great to spend time in this part of the world again and remember the beauty of the landscape. The attendance and discussions at public meetings was inspiring. I would like to thank C.D.S. Teo., Peacockes Hotel and Coiste Cultúir Teanga & Forbartha Thuar Mhic Éadaigh for providing space for the public meetings, their promotion of the meetings and the warm welcome that was received.

I am also thankful to the representatives of the larger stakeholders who were generous with their time, knowledge and advice. It made my job easier to have access to such a wealth of experience.

On behalf of Comharchumann Dhúiche Sheoigheach Teoranta and the Joyce Country ad hoc Group, I would like to thank Geological

Ar son Comharchumann Dhúiche Sheoigheach Teoranta agus an Grúpa *ad hoc* Dhúiche Sheoigheach, ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le Suibhéireacht Gheolaíochta Éireann, go háirithe Sarah Gatley, ceannasaí Geo-oidhreacht, agus an stiúrthóir, Koen Verbruggen, as ucht maoiniú a chur ar fáil don togra seo agus tacaíocht agus díograis a thabhairt tríd an próiseas.

Survey Ireland, particularly Sarah Gatley, head of Geoheritage, and the director, Koen Verbruggen, for financing this work and for providing support and encouragement throughout the process.

10. Aguisíní / Appendices

Dáta / Date:
19/12/2016

Am / Time:
7:00i.n./pm

Áit / Place:
Oifigi C.D.S. Teo.,
Corr na Móna

Cruinniú Poiblí - Public Meeting



Geopháirc Dhomhanda UNESCO Dhúiche Sheoigheach?

Joyce Country UNESCO Global Geopark?

Le Dr. Siobhán Power, Geolaí Comhairleach, OÉ Gaillimh
With Dr. Siobhán Power, Consultant Geologist, NUI Galway

An mbeadh sé go maith don phobal? An bhféadfadh sé tarlú i ndáiríre?
Cruinniú poiblí chun gach gné den Geopháirc féideartha a phlé.
Dé Luain, 19ú Nollaig 2016 ag 7.00i.n. in Oifigi C.D.S. Teo.
Fáilte roimh chách agus iarrtar ar an bpobal freastal

Would it be good for the community? Could we make it a reality?
Public meeting to discuss all aspects of the potential Geopark.
Monday, 19th December 2016 at 7.00pm in Oifigi C.D.S. Teo.
All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Tuilleadh Eolais / Further Information

C.D.S. Teo.,
Corr na Móna
Co. na Gaillimhe

Fón / Phone: 094-9548031
R-phost / E-mail: cdst@eircom.net





Cruinniú Poiblí -

31/01/17 @ 7i.n. i Tí Pheacocke, An Teach Dóite

Public Meeting -

31/01/17 @ 7pm in Peacocks Hotel, Maam Cross

Beidh cruinniú poiblí ar siúl ar an 31ú Eanáir 2017 ag 7.00i.n. i Tí Pheacocke, An Teach Dóite ar an téama:

Geopháirc Dhomhanda Dhúiche Sheoigheach agus Talmhaíocht - Cén Nasc Atá Ann?

FÁILTE ROIMH CHÁCH

There will be a public meeting on the 31st January 2017 at 7.00pm in Peacocks Hotel, Maam Cross on the theme:

Joyce Country Global Geopark and Agriculture - What Link Is There?

ALL ARE WELCOME







Tuilleadh Eolais / Further Information

C.D.S. Teo. 094-9548031
Corr na Móna
Co. na Gaillimhe cdst@eircom.net

Joyce Country proposed UNESCO Global Geopark Public Meeting 1

A public meeting was held at the offices of Comharchumann Dhúiche Seoigheach Teoranta (CDS Teo.), Corr na Móna, on the evening of Monday, December 19th, 2016. It was attended by 25 people residing in the Connemara and south Mayo region.

The concept of a Joyce Country Geopark has evolved over the past few years to the stage where the Joyce Country Geopark steering group secured funding from the Geological Survey of Ireland to progress the project to UNESCO application stage. The funding is at a rate of €20,000 per year for three years (2016 – 2018) and is managed and administered by CDS Teo.

In late 2016, Earth and Ocean Sciences (EOS) at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI Galway), was engaged by CDS Teo to provide a consultant geologist for a 4-month project. The aim of the project is to examine the potential for Joyce Country in the counties of Galway and Mayo to obtain UNESCO Global Geopark status. The process will culminate in the presentation of a strategy document. Dr Siobhán Power (NUI Galway) is currently working on this project and it was she who hosted this public meeting. Dr. Power gave a very brief outline of UNESCO Geoparks and why Joyce Country and the greater west of Ireland is worthy of gaining this status. She then led the resulting discussion with the attendees at the meeting. The following questions were asked and answered at the meeting.

1. What does the yellow coloured part signify in north Connemara on the Geology map? (This refers to the colours on the geological map of Ireland.)

Colours are used on geological maps to signify different rock types or groups of related rocks depending on the scale of the map. On the geological map of Ireland, yellow is used for north Connemara to show the group of rocks known as the Dalradian Group. The Dalradian Group is also found in north Mayo, Sligo, Donegal, Tyrone, northeast Antrim and Scotland.

All rocks in the Group have a shared origin and geological history. They tell the story of the opening and closing of the Iapetus Ocean, an ocean that existed long before the Atlantic Ocean. Sediments were deposited over 700 million years ago as the ocean opened and they formed layers of sandstone, mudstone and limestone. Over 450 million years ago, as two continents were moving closer together and the ocean was closing, tectonic forces increased the temperature and pressure and the old layered rocks became metamorphic rocks. The Group also includes igneous rocks, formed at the time of the closing of the Iapetus Ocean.

The landscape in Connemara was formed by the ice interacting with the bedrock during the last glaciation which finished ~13,000 years ago. Softer rock was removed by the ice and melt waters to form the valleys between the mountains of harder, more resistant rock.

2. What impact might the Geopark have on farmers?

No impact unless farmers want it to have an impact. UNESCO Global Geopark status adds no rules or regulations to those already put in place by national or local government. It is possible

to live and farm in a UNESCO Global Geopark without it ever being part of your life. Rural access programs are already in place and while waymarked pathways would add to the Geopark, they are separate to the Geopark. UNESCO Global Geoparks are areas of internationally important geology with a management plan which promotes sustainable economic development. This has the potential of having a positive impact on the farming community through the promotion of agritourism, locally sourced foods, etc.

3. What might be the restrictions on agriculture/rural development?

The only restrictions are those already in place through local, Irish and EU legislation. UNESCO Global Geopark status has no additional restrictions attached to it.

4. Who decides to go forward with an application and how do you get to the point of that decision?

You, the people, will decide. This meeting was the first of a series of three being held to allow people to learn about UNESCO Global Geoparks and ask any questions they might have. By having a very public and transparent process, it is hoped that people will be aware of the application process and feel they are able to contribute their opinions at all stages. An area must be operating as a *de facto* geopark before any application is made to UNESCO for official status. This means that there should be a workable management plan in place and sufficient funding available for staff and education and marketing programme costs. The application takes preparation time and after submission, the evaluation process itself takes almost two years. All Geoparks are re-evaluated every four years.

5. What about the rest of Connemara aside from Corr na Móna/Clonbur?

Due to the rich geodiversity of the region, the greater the area, the more stories you can tell. The original idea for a Joyce Country Geopark bringing the opportunity for rural development to the area between and west of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask is a worthy idea and should be promoted, but Joyce Country should be strategic in its use of the other tourism developments in the west of Ireland and make use of the internationally important geological stories close to Joyce Country. For example, the UNESCO Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark in Fermanagh and Cavan started with the promotion of the Marble Arch Caves by Fermanagh Council and therefore the name and centre of the Geopark remains Marble Arch. They later worked with Cavan County Council to extend the Geopark and it became the first transnational Geopark in the world. The Geopark promotes a variety of sites of geological importance in Fermanagh and Cavan from its base at the Marble Arch Caves and has worked with various partners to apply for funding for the development of sites. The Cavan Burren site is a collaborative effort between the Geopark and Coillte and is an excellent example of landscape sensitive development and interpretative resources. The Marble Arch Geopark is one model that Joyce Country could potentially follow.

6. Where is the money coming from?

The Irish Geoparks Forum advises that a Geopark needs a minimum of 100,000 Euro per annum for staff and programme costs. Currently, there is funding of 20,000 Euro per year for two

further years from the Geological Survey of Ireland. The current funding is insufficient for the long-term viability of the project. It is anticipated that this report will be used to show other possible funders that there is a robust plan in place for the long-term, and therefore used to attract funding from other organisations. When the Geopark is fully established, it can apply with national and international partners for larger funds from national and EU bodies.

7. What does it mean in terms of jobs and income?

The actual Geopark might have only one or two direct employees but it would have a responsibility to work with businesses and individuals to create employment and to promote the tourism industry, education, culture and geoconservation. The level of jobs and income depends on how people embrace the idea. The area is perfect for the ideals endorsed by UNESCO and the possibilities are only limited by imagination and the absence of drive and hard work. It is not an easy task and people will need to work together to support the project. In the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, they established a tourism business network for all businesses interesting in joining and using the Geopark structure to promote themselves. The businesses were trained in sustainable tourism, marketing, ecotourism best practice, and being part of a Geopark. The network has been very successful for each member business and has grown significantly since its inception.

8. Does the Geopark lend itself to joined up thinking in terms of increased revenue e.g. education, agriculture etc.?

This is related to the last question. Joined-up thinking is critical to the commercial success of any Geopark. Joyce Country is unique in Ireland for its diversity of geology and landscapes, access to a city and other centres of population, proximity to established brands such as the Wild Atlantic Way, Connemara and Westport, and being part of the Gaeltacht. It already has an education market but this could be enhanced further with the UNESCO brand. Increased tourist numbers and the product available to them would have to be managed carefully to insure a quality product is delivered. In the period 2017 – 2018, local businesses would have to work together to achieve sustainable growth. This will require co-operation and commitment.

9. What, if any, are the disadvantages of being part of a Geopark?

There are no disadvantages but it does require work. The status is not for all time and if standards are not maintained for the 4-year review, the status could be lost.

10. Would you envisage a single interpretive centre?

That is one option but not necessarily the best option for a whole-region approach to landscape tourism. For instance, there could be one main centre in the heart of Joyce Country and then smaller information stands at other public or business locations. The interpretation plan would need to be very carefully developed in association with bodies such as Fáilte Ireland. It would need to have a look that was unique to the Geopark and yet complimentary to other regional interpretation plans. It would also need to make the best use of new technologies, the 'smart' capabilities of the region, the users, and the potential customers.

11. Would it dilute everything if you go big?

Scientifically, it wouldn't because of the richness in the geodiversity of Connemara and south Mayo. Joyce Country is an interesting story in itself but it is only part of the larger story of the last 700 million years of geological history. In terms of management and community development, a large area with many communities is difficult and there is a risk that the original area and identity would be lost. There is no minimum or maximum area constraints in a Geopark but it needs to make scientific sense and it needs a robust management plan and access to funding. This aspect is a serious question for the future of the Joyce Country Geopark and science, identity, and funding will need to be addressed in practical and strategic terms.

12. Will there be a need for continuity/joined up areas/story?

Yes, it will be better for the science and better for the marketing potential. Each community has its own story and identity but they all contribute to the greater story. It will make for a more interesting story for tourists if each area has some unique contribution to the Geopark. Part of any community training should insure local individuals and businesses appreciate the whole region and can sell all aspects of the whole region to any tourist, educator, tour guide etc.

13. What do you hope to achieve in this particular project?

This is a very short project but it is hoped a workable road map for the next five years will be established. It is important that people living in the area are given the opportunity to learn as much as they can about the potential of the Geopark and see how they can contribute to the work. The next steps will be the most important and funding is necessary for taking the next steps. The main output of this work is to produce a strategy document for use in project and financial planning.

14. What would you see happening after this particular project?

If the general feeling in the area is that you should work towards applying for UNESCO Global Geopark status, work will have to start immediately in securing a financial management plan, carrying out the tourism and educational activities of a geopark, and working towards the application. There is two further years of funding in place but the funds are not enough to employ a person and you will need a committed person who knows what they are doing. I see this work being used to demonstrate to stakeholders and potential funders that there is a strong case for a Geopark and there is a viable management plan and work plan in place to achieve this. A region must be operating as a de facto Geopark, have staff in place and have a financial plan before the application can be made to UNESCO.

15. Will you be presenting your report?

There will be a final public meeting the week before the report is due for publication where the findings will be discussed. The report will be available to all members of the public and presented to the relevant stakeholders. March 1st, 2017 is the expected publication date.

16. What are the possibilities for this area?

Endless, and only limited by apathy and the lack of drive and imagination. Initial funding will come from local or national sources but it will require a great effort to secure these funds. When the Geopark exists as a functioning body, it will be able to apply for larger funds from the E.U. Being part of the Global Geopark Network gives access to potential partners in similar circumstances.

17. What are the milestones beyond February 2017?

The first three items have to happen immediately and the plans for them need to be in place before March 1st, 2017.

1. Formation of a Steering Group with agreed responsibilities, meeting procedure and nominated chairperson. This must include some way of including all communities and stakeholders.
2. Hire a geologist/manager.
3. Secure further funding.
4. Develop education, marketing, and interpretation strategies.
5. Gaining UNESCO Global Geopark in 2020 would be a nice tie-in with the Galway2020 European Capital of Culture but it would require that the application be submitted in November 2018. This is possible as long as there are no gaps in progress between March 2017 and November 2018.
6. The de facto Geopark would continue to operate after the application is submitted and continue to search for additional funding.

Joyce Country proposed UNESCO Global Geopark. Public Meeting 2

A public meeting was held at Peacocke's Hotel in Maam Cross on the evening of Tuesday, January 31st, 2016. This was the second of three public meetings being held as part of the consultation process for the proposed Joyce Country UNESCO Global Geopark. The main focus of the meeting was agriculture and how it aligns with the workings of a Geopark. Thirty-two people who reside and work in the Connemara region attended the meeting.

The concept of a Joyce Country Geopark has evolved since 2009 to the stage where the Joyce Country Geopark steering group secured funding from the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) to progress the project to UNESCO application stage. The funding is at a rate of €20,000 per year for three years (2016 – 2018) and is managed and administered by Comharchumann Dhúiche Seoigheach Teoranta (CDS Teo.). Dr Siobhán Power, consultant geologist at NUI Galway, is carrying out a 4-month project to look at the potential for gaining UNESCO Global Geopark status for the region, the possible funding sources, and the steps needed in order to gain the status. The process will culminate in the presentation of a strategy document for use by the *ad hoc* committee. Dr. Power gave a very brief outline of UNESCO Geoparks and why Joyce Country and the greater west of Ireland is worthy of gaining this status. In particular she looked at the UNESCO definition of a Geopark and the top ten topics in a Geopark as set out by the recent UNESCO publication – UNESCO Global Geoparks. Celebrating Earth Heritage, Sustaining Local Communities.

Geopark definition: UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. A UNESCO Global Geopark uses its geological heritage, in connection with all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using our Earth's resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing the impact of natural disasters. By raising awareness of the importance of the area's geological heritage in history and society today, UNESCO Global Geoparks give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen their identification with the area. The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high quality training courses is stimulated as new sources of revenue are generated through geotourism, while the geological resources of the area are protected.

Top 10 topics within UNESCO Global Geoparks

Natural Resources, Geological Hazards, Climate Change, Education, Science, Culture, Women, Sustainable Development, Local and indigenous Knowledge, and Geoconservation

The following questions were asked and discussed at the meeting.

1. Are there set boundaries for the Geopark?

No boundaries have been set yet. The idea for a Geopark in the region came from the Clonbur/Cornamona area and hence the use of the name Joyce Country. The Joyce Country area itself is not sharply defined but it does cover parts of Galway and Mayo counties and is partly in the Gaeltacht and partly not. Geologically, Joyce Country is a 'snapshot' of the geology of Connemara and south Mayo. The first step in achieving UNESCO Geopark status is to become a *de facto* geopark and

carry out all the educational, cultural, tourism etc. activities normally associated with a Geopark. This is the time when a robust management structure is developed and all the local and national stakeholders understand the practicalities of running a Geopark. The Geopark boundary can be agreed upon during this period by all the stakeholders. The boundary should be derived from the geology of the region in the first instance.

2. Define Sustainable Development?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as, “Economic development that is conducted without depletion of natural resources. UNESCO gives the following as an example of sustainable development, “...may take the form of sustainable tourism through, for example, the development of walking or cycling trails, training of local people to act as guides, encouraging tourism and accommodation providers to follow international best practise in environmental sustainability. But it can also be about simply engaging with local people and respecting their traditional way of life in a way that empowers them and respects their human rights and dignity. Unless a UNESCO Global Geopark has the support of local people it will not succeed. UNESCO Global Geopark status does not imply restrictions on any economic activity inside a UNESCO Global Geopark where that activity complies with indigenous, local, regional and/or national legislation.”

3. Does a UNESCO Geopark status restrict planning permission or increase difficulty getting it?

UNESCO Global Geopark status does not carry any legal status or restrictions above those already put in place by local, national or EU legislation. Important geological sites are already protected as National Heritage Areas and are included in County Development Plans. This is regardless of whether an area is in a Geopark or not.

4. If I wanted to object to my neighbour’s development, could I use UNESCO Geopark status as an excuse to do so?

You could not and neither could your neighbour use it to object to any development you were considering.

5. Can the County Council bring in new restrictions, now or in the future in relation to Geoparks?

UNESCO Global Geoparks are outside the remit of local authority with regards to restrictions. In many cases, the local authority is part of the management structure of the Geopark but their role in promotion, tourism planning and sustainable development planning. There are 120 UNESCO Geoparks throughout the world but none of them have the legal status or legislative powers to restrict development or impose planning regulations coming from their UNESCO status.

6. How do you retain UNESCO Geopark status?

UNESCO Global Geoparks are revalidated every four years. If a Geopark does not continue to fulfill the Geopark criteria, it will either be advised to improve or it will lose its UNESCO status. The criteria include geological heritage of international importance, a strong management structure with access to

adequate finance, plans for continued sustainable development, visibility in the community, and active engagement with the Global and European Geopark Network.

7. Would a Geopark bring any treaty obligations on Ireland?

Geoparks do not bring treaty obligations to their host country or countries. There are already 120 Geoparks across and three on the island of Ireland.

8. Is the non-issue or the possibility of planning permission restrictions in writing?

It is. As the status is relatively new and this is one of the main differences between Global Geopark and World Heritage Site status, reference to the absence of restrictions is made on all information published by UNESCO, geological surveys including the Geological Survey of Ireland, and individual geoparks.

9. From an SAC point of view, what's to say that in the future a geological assessment will not be needed for the County Council planning permission?

Geoparks are very different to Special Areas of Conservation. While Geoparks are areas of internationally important geology, the importance of the geology might only be seen in certain outcrops or from certain viewing points. It is preferable if access is maintained to these sites and that the sites themselves are protected from vandalism or other abuses. If the sites are on private land, access is maintained through cooperation and permission of the landowner and this relationship is respected at all times by Geopark staff and the general public. It is possible to live and work in a Geopark without it being part of your daily life and this would be the same for seeking planning permission from the local authority. The Geological Survey of Ireland is most of the way through a programme of county-by-county audits of sites of geological importance. The Mayo audit is complete but the Galway one is not done yet. From these audits, certain sites are recommended as National Heritage Areas and are afforded protection in the County Development Plan. This action is regardless of whether there is a Geopark in the county or not. These sites are part of the planning permission process. The geology of Ireland is already very well known and understood and the GSI make recommendations on planning applications if they concern National Heritage Sites. There is no need for the person seeking planning permission to give this information as it is already known. This should not be confused with geotechnical surveys, which are relating to engineering and not geological heritage.

10. What input does the community have on setting the boundaries?

Every input. By being at this meeting you are expressing your interest in the process and it is hoped that consultation with the public will continue in the next phases. A Steering Group will be formed next and people from the area and representing different sectors will be encouraged to be part of the Steering Group. As part of this consultation process, the Steering Group will discuss recommendations of areas for inclusion.

11. Should the boundary be defined by geological importance?

The boundary should be defined by the geology of the region but it is also important to look at manageably areas, historical boundaries, regional tourism and funding programmes etc. West Galway

and south Mayo have a rich geodiversity and therefore the geological stories increase as the area of inclusion increases. The number of stakeholders and possible sources of funding also increase with a larger area but a potential Geopark should be practical, especially at its inception. It is always possible to increase the area of a Geopark at a later date.

12. How easy was it for the Marble Arch Geopark to incorporate Cavan?

Fermanagh Council worked well with Cavan Council and formed a Geopark management partnership. They went through the same application process for the inclusion of Cavan as they had with their original application but it was successful and they became the first transnational Geopark in the world. The Cavan section is a good example of a relationship between a Geopark and Coillte. They were able to develop new walkways, signage and an educational interpretative centre for the benefit of the general public, schools, tourists, Coillte and the Geopark.

13. Can the boundary line drawn on a map be ever evolving?

It can evolve. The total area of a Geopark can be increased by 10% or less with the submission of a letter to UNESCO outlining the rationale for increasing the Geopark. For area increases of 10% or greater, application are made at the time of revalidation. Revalidation takes place every four years for all Geoparks.

14. What does the green coloured part signify in County Clare on the Geology map?

Sandstone and shale. Slightly older than the limestone in the Burren. Does not have a karst landscape and is mainly under later deposits, soil and grass.

15. Could the Geopark be used as a vehicle to establish and enhance walking trails?

It would be a very important part of the Geopark to work with all community groups and local stakeholders to establish any type of sustainable resource for the good of the local people and visitors. Talking trails are an excellent way for people to experience the landscape and learn about how it formed.

16. Can you elaborate on the budget requirements for the Geopark?

The Irish Geoparks Forum advises that an annual budget of at least 100,000 Euro is required for any potential Geopark. The annual budget should include the provision for a 1-2 full time staff members and education, marketing, and capital programme costs. Every Geopark should access to a geologist but this does not need to be a full-time post. It also requires a Geopark manager.

17. Can the best practises from other Geoparks be shared and incorporated?

Networking is critical for the successful running of any Geopark. UNESCO Global Geoparks become part of the Global Geopark Network and are encouraged to share experience, best practice, education, business and marketing techniques and innovations. They also work together in joint funding bids and in cultural exchange programs.

18. Apart from tourism, are there any other benefits for farmers?

Tourism is only one aspect of a Geopark. Science, education and culture are the underpinnings of all Geoparks. This gives the farmer access to scientific knowledge about the soils, landscape etc, gives the farmer access to science-related training in relation to food, geohazards, landscape, and enhances the rural and agricultural pride in a region. It exposes the farmer to new markets if new food markets are required and to different methods of farming is that is what is needed to tackle issues.

19. Does partnership strengthen an application to bring further funding from European sources?

It does. Many EU funding calls now prefer multi-partner projects, often with partners from different countries. The European and Global Geopark Networks give ready access to partners from similar geographical situations where funds such as INTERREG would benefit all the potential members. Within a country, evidence of awareness and co-operation of similar but distinct organisations would enhance the potential of achieving maximum funds for a project.

Finally, in the general discussion, many comments were made that did not fit directly into any of the above questions. They were recommendations and additional information rather than questions or answers. The comments fell into the following 4 categories. They are presented here without addition comment.

A Agriculture.

- For community buy in – people have concerns on how a Geopark would affect their daily lives and they would need clarification on planning and other restrictions in writing.
- The Geopark and in particular the science should strengthen the argument to protect the area in order to get through or potentially out of restrictions e.g. that heather is needed for stabilizing soil erosion so farmers should not be penalised.
- Connemara Hill Lamb has Protected Geographical Status west of the Corrib System. (West of Lough Corrib, Lough Mask and Lough Carra)
- Diversifying agriculture is almost impossible in this area due to restricted areas, SACs etc.
- As farmers, why don't we tell civil servants what we want to do with our land?
- Farmers know what is best for their land and what their assets are but rather than waiting to be told what their entitlements are from the Dept., we should tell them what we want to do with our land. We can show the government and the EU that we can use our resources and that our land has value. We can use the Geopark status as a vehicle to show them this.
- There is a pilot Mountain Access Scheme on Mount Gable at the moment.

B Planning

- It is recommended that Galway County Council is asked to formally declare that UNESCO Geopark status would not affect planning permission.
- It should be in the County Development Plan that there will be no restrictions with a Geopark

C Depopulation

- A Geopark could slow down depopulation.
- The Geopark process needs to be from the grassroots up and indigenous people need to be involved but they also need help to talk to those at the top.
- Young people are vital to the future of the area and they are needed for this process.
- Villages are dying out so positivity is required. This is a long process so if it starts with a few farmers who bring in a few tourists and let that grow then it may lead to spin offs for future generations and sustain them in the area.
- Geoparks encourage traditional practices.
- Depopulation should have been included in the official UNESCO definition of a Geopark.
- Depopulation is harming cultural heritage
- Tourists want to engage with local culture and traditions and these can be regenerated and used for the ever increasing experience tourists e.g. agri-tours, basket weaving etc.

D Boundary

- Boundary should include: Maam Valley, Killary, Ballinahinch/Nancy's Point, Barony of Ross, Recess, Louisburgh, Tourmakeady, Cong
- Boundary could potentially include Connemara including South Connemara and Clifden, Croagh Patrick, maritime, Inisbofin, Clare Island, Inisturk

**Joyce Country proposed UNESCO Global Geopark.
Public Meeting 3.
Tourmakeady February 16TH, 2017.**

Many of the questions were a repeat of the previous two meetings and therefore will not be presented here. The meeting was generally positive and there was a great enthusiasm and willingness to get the work done. They recognised the need to do something positive for themselves as they are not part of any tourism product although they have the scenery and the lake and are close to Westport, Galway and Connemara. There is a problem with depopulation and a lack of opportunities for young people to stay in the region.

There was a concern over the name 'Joyce Country' as they do not consider themselves part of Joyce Country but we struggled during the meeting to find a name to cover the area. There was also the very legitimate concern that over development of a "park" would turn the place into a "freak show" – the people are modern, sophisticated and intelligent and are not there just to perform for tourists. The worry was also expressed that the area would be spoiled if it was over developed. The underlying aim of UNESCO Geoparks is to promote sustainable development and if this is adhered to, there should be no over development.

In this particular area, the geology is mainly seen along the lakeshore and in the overall landscape – it would require minimal investment but it would require a way of collecting together all the resources already in place and marketing them in a successful way. This would require the co-operations of the two County Councils and other bodies.