



Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark

Guidelines for community and voluntary sector involvement with the Geopark

The Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark is recognised for its internationally important geology, landscapes and natural and built heritage by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organisation) and is one of a number of Global Geoparks currently recognised by UNESCO around the World.

Geopark status was first awarded to Fermanagh District Council in 2001, covering both Marble Arch Caves and the adjoining Cuilcagh Mountain Park. In 2007, the Geopark was expanded to take in 18,000 hectares of state forests in west Fermanagh including Lough Navar Forest, Castle Caldwell and Ely Lodge. Later, in 2008, the Geopark was expanded across the Irish border into County Cavan under an agreement between Fermanagh District Council and Cavan County Council making it the first international or cross-border geopark in the World. In 2015, Fermanagh District Council ceased to exist when it was replaced by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

The Geopark is managed as a joint venture by Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and by Cavan County Council. Both councils work together to maximise the tourism benefits of the Geopark, to maintain the quality of the Geopark brand and to ensure that the Geopark complies with the qualifying criteria set by UNESCO.

Community and voluntary sector involvement and support for the Geopark are priorities for both of the Councils as they help to maintain the Geopark's continuing success. Local communities and voluntary groups play an active role in the daily life of Cavan and Fermanagh and can make a significant contribution to the provision of social, cultural and tourism opportunities.

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and Cavan County Council both encourage the relevant and suitable involvement of community and voluntary sectors with the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark. However, while the involvement of community and voluntary groups with the Geopark is encouraged, some conditions obviously have to be applied to help to maximise the benefits to everybody and to help avoid any problems.

Conditions for Community and Voluntary involvement with the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark

1. Community and voluntary events linked to the Geopark should be approved in advance and will be expected to tie in with the ethos of the Geopark and of UNESCO. Such events might include village festivals, charity walks, nature walks, public lectures, etc,.
2. Commercial, for profit, events are not classed as community or voluntary events and specific permission must be obtained before they can be associated with the Geopark.
3. At least three months notice is required if a community or voluntary group wishes to hold an event linked to the Geopark. Shorter notice may be considered in unusual circumstances although it will not always be possible for the Geopark to respond in time to late requests.
4. Operational plans, risk assessments, environmental impact assessments or similar reports will be required for most events.
5. Event organisers will normally be responsible for all aspects of events and will normally be required to have adequate public liability insurance cover for all events linked to the Geopark.
6. Event organisers must ensure that all events linked to the Geopark are adequately staffed by marshals and other safety staff as necessary. All persons leading activities such as hill walking, cycling, canoeing, etc,. must be suitably qualified and experienced and proper safety measures must be in place.
7. The Geopark name or logo and associated names or logos cannot be used without permission and prior approval of all publicity materials and other items that will display the logos. The UNESCO name or temple logo cannot be used in any circumstances.
8. Any press information, advertisements or promotional material should be agreed with the Geopark staff before release.
9. Community and voluntary groups should be fully representative of their communities on an impartial and inclusive basis with properly constituted and elected committees. Similarly, events should be open to the entire community in an impartial and inclusive way.
10. The Geopark should not be associated with specific political parties or with political events. Likewise, it should not be associated with specific religious or ethnic groups to the exclusion of others.

11. The costs, promotion, licensing and running of events are normally the responsibility of the event organisers. Any takings from admission prices for events should normally be used for community or charitable purposes.
12. The organisers of events may be required to reimburse any costs incurred by the Geopark/Councils.
13. Events must comply with the UNESCO criteria for geoparks and, in particular, must be conducted in a proper, safe manner without causing environmental damage or involving the sale or destruction of geological material.
14. The organisers of approved events should work with Geopark staff to ensure that the event runs smoothly and complies with the agreed plans.

Community Contacts

Geopark staff will be pleased to meet with any community or voluntary group to discuss ways that they can be involved to best effect with the Geopark.

Preliminary, informal enquiries or ideas can be discussed with either Martina O'Neill in Fermanagh <martina.oneill@fermanaghomagh.com> or Grainne O'Connor in Cavan <goconnor@cavancoco.ie>

Formal enquiries for permission to hold events linked to the Geopark in either Fermanagh or Cavan should be made in writing or by e-mail to:

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