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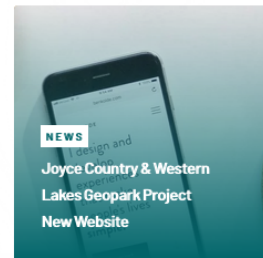
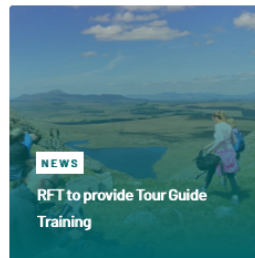
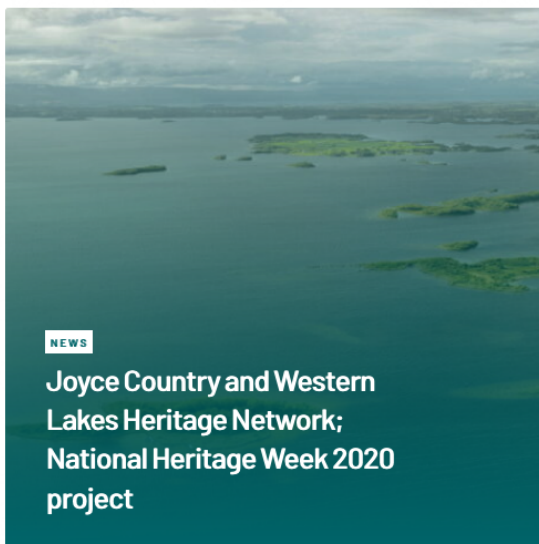
## Dhúiche Sheoigheach & Lochanna an Iarthair

JOYCE COUNTRY & WESTERN LAKES GEOPARK PROJECT



### THE LATEST NEWS

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## A suite of trainings on offer

### Training coming up soon through a range of providers

**1. Start your own Business.** Offered free by South West Mayo Development Company: 1-day training on the last Wednesday each month from January to November 2021, lunch provided, training at Mayo Abbey or could be in local community.

Topics include: business formation & structures, planning/business plan, marketing, start-up costs/P&L/budgets/cash flow, grants & supports. Anyone interested in starting business is eligible, and those who are social welfare beneficiaries can retain 100% social benefits in 1st year of new business, then 75% in 2nd year, then 0% from year 3 onwards. Contact either Breda Murray or Patricia Prendergast South West Mayo Development 094 94 936 6692 or Nicola McGuinness Mayo Abbey 094 93 65987.

**2. Co Galway SICAP training.** Galway Rural Development's Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme covers the whole of County Galway. With 18 staff and outreaches in over 22 locations, GRD offers training throughout the year such as Start Your Own Business, Marketing, Web Design, Business Development, GDPR and many others, free to those on a low income.

Please see <http://www.grd.ie/programmes/local-community-development-programme> for your local officer's contact details to register your interest.

**3. GeoAmbassador.** This JCWL Geopark Project short course is for those who want to get to know more about the geopark idea, the local geological heritage and sites of interest and how people can benefit.

Run over two sessions of 1.5 hours each, and presented by the geopark geologists, it will first be offered in January 2021 to those who replied to the business survey in October/November, then wider to others in the geopark region and further afield. Details to come on the project website and on our social media channels @JCWLGeopark.

**4. Tour Guiding course.** For those interested to be qualified tour guides in the geopark and wider Connacht, this QQI Level 6 course is currently completing procurement and will be advertised shortly for start in early 2021 and completion late spring or early summer.

It will be promoted on the project social media channels @JCWLGeopark and news section on the website [www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie](http://www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie)



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## Message of support from Fáilte Ireland

### Look for the COVID-19 Business Supports Hub

2020 has been a year of extreme worry and stress for us all, and COVID-19 has already had far reaching implications for the tourism and hospitality sector. However, in the face of this adversity, the industry in Ireland has shown remarkable resilience. Our top priority is supporting Ireland's tourism and hospitality businesses to survive, re-open and recover from the catastrophic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

The full resources of Fáilte Ireland are being directed to support members of the tourism industry at this time. We have created an extensive range of business supports to guide each business through their operations during COVID-19 and these supports have been developed in consultation with industry experts to meet urgent needs and help your business recover.

These supports, which can be accessed online by visiting our COVID-19 Business Supports Hub at <https://covid.19.failteireland.ie/>, include expert advice and up to date industry guidance. They also feature FAQs on a range of areas, from sectoral guidelines for reopening within Government Public Health advice, to managing financial and HR challenges as you navigate through this difficult period and make key decisions for your business. As we continue to move through the COVID-19 crisis, remember that Fáilte Ireland's COVID-19 Support

Hub is updated regularly, or you can contact a member of the local Wild Atlantic Way team in Galway/Mayo [wild.atlanticway@failteireland.ie](mailto:wild.atlanticway@failteireland.ie) for one-to-one support.



Rádas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Tionscadal Eorpach  
2020



Geological Survey  
of Ireland

## Joyce Country and Western Lakes geopark project

GUTH NA TALÚN | EXPLORE OUR WHISPERING LANDSCAPE

A UNESCO Global Geopark is an area with sites and landscapes of international geological significance. Geoparks have a bottom-up approach and encourage local communities and authorities to come together for the sustainable development, protection and education within that area. This holistic concept has become increasingly popular around the world. UNESCO Global Geopark status adds no further planning regulations to those already in place by EU, national or local government. Currently, there are 3 UNESCO Global Geoparks in Ireland: Marble Arch Caves, in counties Fermanagh and Cavan, Burren and Cliffs of Moher, in Co Clare, and Copper Coast, in Co Waterford. The Joyce Country & Western Lakes geopark region is an aspiring geopark and is expected to apply for UNESCO Global Geopark status.

### A geopark is/does/will:

- ✓ An initiative built from the ground up – increasing local jobs and income
- ✓ Promote sustainable development in local communities, and in the education, tourism, and agri-food sectors
- ✓ Have UNESCO Global Geopark status for 4 years, which needs to be revalidated in order to retain the status
- ✓ Work with landowners on how best to highlight local heritage
- ✓ Explore and celebrate the links between our local communities, the way we live on and work the land, and the Earth
- ✓ Raise the profile of our local area and community life to increase the number of visitors



### A geopark isn't/doesn't/won't ever be:

- ✗ A national park, nor is it a stepping stone to becoming one
- ✗ A new legislative designation
- ✗ A permanent designation or status
- ✗ Mean automatic access to private or commonage land
- ✗ Change or disrupt any current government farm-related payments
- ✗ Add any further planning regulations to those already in place by EU, national or local government



Find out more by visiting [www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie](http://www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie)  
or [www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/unesco-global-geoparks/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/unesco-global-geoparks/)  
emailing [info@jcwlgeopark.ie](mailto:info@jcwlgeopark.ie) or calling +353 (0)94 900 0245.



## Flyer mail drop coming your way in the new year

### A small card explaining what a geopark is ... and isn't

We have a small info flyer to drop in to every household, community and business in the proposed geopark region in January 2021 – it's in both English and Irish.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions we haven't been able to get out and about among the communities as we'd have liked to inform about and launch the geopark project. We know many in the region understand the geopark concept, although many don't know what it's about, and quite a few haven't even heard of the proposal. There might even be some who may have the wrong idea of it too. With key points about what a geopark is/isn't, does/doesn't, will/won't ever be, the flyer will help inform about opportunities and clear up misunderstandings. We hope it helps to inform you. And it's small enough to stick on a fridge door.



## A Tourism Strategy for JCWL geopark region

**An easy read, it points the way for tourism development in the JCWL area**

New tourism opportunities for businesses will be one of the key outcomes of the geopark project, leading to more local jobs and income possibilities.

The basis of this is the region's fantastic geological history of international significance and how it has shaped our landscape, the way people live and the rich heritage that we can now promote and enjoy more than ever. To help guide such tourism momentum, a new Tourism Development Strategy has been developed for the area by the project with expert input from an experienced facilitator. A brief document, it describes the vision, includes a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and a look at living with and beyond COVID-19. A very important section is the Geopark Charter – a set of principles which guides our partnerships with businesses, communities, etc, all of whom are asked to subscribe and uphold these principles in the development of the Geopark. It concludes with six strategic objectives and key actions. See the strategy in the news section of the website

[www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie](http://www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie)





## Baile an Róba – a Gaeltacht Service Town

### A plan for expanding everyday Irish use in Ballinrobe

Gaeltacht Service Towns are situated in or adjacent to Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas and which have a significant role in providing public services, recreational, social and commercial facilities for those areas.

The role of these towns, according to the Gaeltacht Act 2012, is to identify how to foster and reinforce the positive impact these towns can have on the Irish language as the community and family language of the Gaeltacht. Ballinrobe is one of three Mayo Gaeltacht Service Towns (along with Belmullet and Castlebar). A meeting on 30 November was a step towards forming a committee in Ballinrobe to develop a language plan for the town which will link with the language plan for the Joyce Country and Tourmakeady Gaeltacht (Plean Teanga Dhúiche Sheoigheach agus Thuar Mhic Éadaigh). This is a significant step for the Irish language and culture in Ballinrobe, an idea supported by this Geopark Project as the Irish language and culture is a unique selling point of the Geopark Project. The project will follow and support Ballinrobe where possible in this initiative.



PLACE NAMES AND GEOLOGY IN THE  
JOYCE COUNTRY AND WESTERN LAKES REGION

LOGAINMEACHA AGUS GEOLÁOCHTA SA  
RÉIGIÚN DHÚICHE SHEOIGHEACH AGUS  
LOCHANNA AN IARTHAIR

## New Place Names booklet

### Focus is on geological features and examples from our region

A new booklet exploring the relationship between geology and place names is to be launched early in the new year.

This bilingual publication by JCWL Geoenterprise (the cross-community group represented in the Geopark Project steering group) and funded by the Geological Survey Ireland Geoheritage Fund 2019 follows and adds to the works of the late Fiachra McGowan and Tim Robinson by focussing on the geological and geomorphological features recorded in place names in Ireland with more specific examples from the project region.

Our region has fascinating examples of such links like in Cloghbrack (an Chloch Bhreac) or Aill Dubh which directly link with the colour of their local bedrock. Furthermore, places like Ballintubber (Baile an Tobar) tell us about our karst landscape in limestone and others like Clogher (an Clochar) remind us of the ice-sheets that left stones in our soil. The booklet provides tools to research your local geology all over Ireland with a glossary of frequent terms used. It will be launched early in the new year with a digital version available on our website and printed copies delivered to schools and communities in the region.



## Publicity campaign for the JCWL Geopark Project

## **Telling, showing and promoting what the region has to offer**

As we all look to a better 2021 than this year, especially for tourism-related businesses, the project will be increasing promotion and publicity about the geopark region and what it offers. In fact, it's already started, with a double-page spread (pages 22-23) in Mayo News of 1st December 2020.

It might be up in the online version soon – search on [www.mayonews.ie](http://www.mayonews.ie) for key words Guth na Talún or Joyce Country and Western Lakes. Also recently, Radio Na Gaeltachta interviewed the geopark geologist Benjamin Thébaudeau and Project Manager Dr Siobhán Power (Geological Survey Ireland) about the geopark idea and an indication of what lies ahead – look out for a link on the website to listen back. And we have an article in this winter's issue of Mountain Log – Mountaineering Ireland's flagship publication. We'll be targeting further local and regional newspapers and other traditional and social media early in 2021. Keep up to date through the project facebook page, Instagram and Twitter @JCWLGeopark. And as the vaccines for COVID-19 are rolled out and hopefully a sense of normality returns there'll be more promotions and a launch. Keep watching this space!



## **Connemara Dark Skies initiative**

### **There's great potential in the night sky**

Connemara Dark Skies is a recently formed group, interested in raising awareness of the many benefits of maintaining access to and the visibility of the



night sky in Connemara, and the negative impact of the ever-growing light pollution.

This work has the potential to bring economic benefits to the area by encouraging eco and dark sky tourism, particularly outside the main summer season. We hope to work towards formal accreditation for a dark sky area in Connemara, much like Ireland's first International Dark Sky Park in Mayo [www.mayodarkskypark.ie](http://www.mayodarkskypark.ie) or the Dark Skies Reserve in Kerry.

Light pollution Artificial light at night is an environmental pollutant that harms our planet and robs us of the opportunity to experience the wonder of a natural night sky. Much outdoor lighting used at night is inefficient, overly bright, poorly targeted, improperly shielded, often completely unnecessary. Wasting energy has huge economic and environmental consequences. Excess light at night disrupts the world's ecosystems, harms wildlife whose life cycles depend on dark nights. Research suggests that artificial light at night can negatively affect human health, disrupting the sleep rhythms.

High quality lighting design reduces energy use and carbon emissions, saves money, and allows us to enjoy the night sky. Installing well-designed outdoor lighting could cut energy use by 60–70 percent, save money and cut carbon emissions. Reducing light pollution is one of the easier ways for us to reduce our impact on the environment and support actions on climate change.

With that in mind we are organising a webinar on January 21st from 11am to 1pm targeting the local community involved in promoting tourism. We hope this will support local businesses to get involved in the growing area of Astro-tourism.

Email: [connemaradarkskies@gmail.com](mailto:connemaradarkskies@gmail.com)

Please join us at: <https://www.facebook.com/connemaradarkskies>

Further information [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org) and [www.mayodarkskypark.ie](http://www.mayodarkskypark.ie)



## And finally... Christmas and New Year wishes

As we awoke on New Year's Day 2020, who could have predicted what a devastating year 2020 would turn out to be? Like living in a movie ... of the horror kind. Although rough for most, and a crushing year for those losing loved ones, not to mention business shocks and collapses, at least Christmas isn't cancelled.

And now there's great hope on the horizon with the vaccine roll-outs. We're confident too that the plans and actions of this JCWL Geopark Project and its partners will help the families, communities and businesses in this geopark region to work together and look ahead optimistically. Keep up to date by following us on facebook, Instagram and Twitter @JCWLGeopark and through our website [www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie](http://www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie) Most of all, we wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.



You are receiving this email because you opted in via our community and business communication.

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