

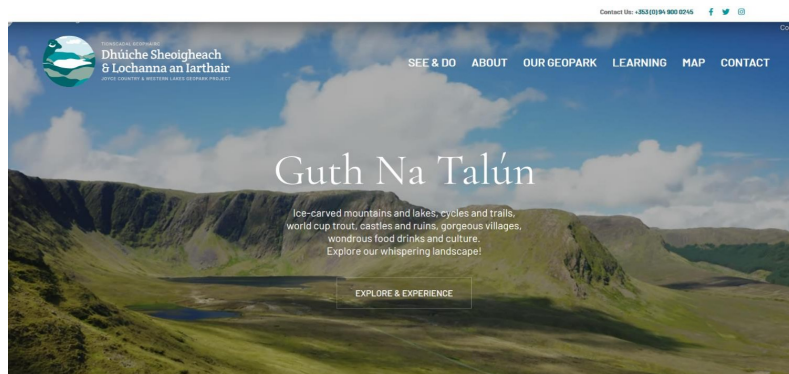
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TIONSCADAL GEOPHÁIRC

## Dhúiche Sheoigheach & Lochanna an Iarthair

JOYCE COUNTRY & WESTERN LAKES GEOPARK PROJECT



### Our new website is now live – check it out!

#### Placing the geopark idea front and centre

The new website for the geopark is now available. With fantastic photos and videos of our wonderful region, it already has a wealth of information to showcase what's available. Clickable sections include: **See and Do** (towns & villages, geosites and places of interest); **About** (the geopark project, the Global Geoparks Network, FAQs, and business networks); **Our Geopark** (the landscape, our communities, people and culture, language); and a **Learning** section. An **Interactive Map** will help visitors to find lots of information about specific locations including where to eat and stay, and attractions and things to do. Some pages are still being finalised. Versions will soon be available in Irish, French, German and Chinese. It's Mobile friendly too.

Check it out [www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie](http://www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie) and tell us what you think of it [info@jcwgeopark.ie](mailto:info@jcwgeopark.ie)



#### Social media training successes

## Local businesses and communities learning how it's done

Around 40 people from the geopark area have been participating in social media training (online) since mid-July. About half are local business owners wanting to better promote their services (hospitality, crafts, publishing, etc). Others are local community development representatives keen to be more effective reaching out to their communities.

Trainer Barry Murphy has just completed 3 of the 4 phases – i) Introduction; ii) Facebook (+ Instagram & Twitter) and marketing; and iii) Weekly group Q&A / mentoring sessions. Each session has been recorded and made available on YouTube, allowing participants to dip in and out as time permits. The final phase is a monthly Q&A link-up from October through to February 2021.

Informal participant feedback has been very good, typical of this quote: "I've benefited greatly from the course, and am now much more confident in my social media postings and advertising - 'going forward' as they say!". The participants will form the basis for setting up **networks of local businesses and of community development councils**. A full assessment will be done at course end, including on further training needs.



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## Business development supports coming

### We want to hear your thoughts

Support for sustainable business development and creation of jobs in the geopark area is a key goal of this project. We are now collecting contact details of local tourism-related businesses to potentially list on our new website. This autumn we plan to host an online workshop and also a short survey to find out about business training needs and offer ideas for start-ups. Contact us with any queries on [info@jcwlgeopark.ie](mailto:info@jcwlgeopark.ie) and please pass on to your friends and associates who might be interested. More information on it all will be provided through your community councils.

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## A JCWL Heritage Network created

### Show-casing the rich culture and heritage in the geopark area

A new heritage network has been created with representatives from most communities and local historical societies in the geopark area. It emerged from discussions with locals interested in cultural and heritage ideas. The aim of the network is to support and engage the diverse communities of the region, improve information flow and promote heritage events organised by the various local organisations. A great example of the potential for this network was the

recently prepared National Heritage Week (NHW) 2020 collection. Consisting of 7 articles (1 bilingual EN/IR), it tells the stories of how Loughs Carra, Mask and Corrib have shaped the communities living on their shores. During NHW 2020, each article was shared on the project facebook page (1 per day), generating great interactions. The full document is published on the Heritage Week website [here](#) and will be available to download from our new website. Anyone not yet on the network but who wishes to be part of it can join by contacting Benjamin at [geologist@jcwlgeopark.ie](mailto:geologist@jcwlgeopark.ie)



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## Mindfulness course

### Enhancing well-being

'Introduction to Mindfulness' courses are being offered by JCWL GeoEnterprise (the organisation representing the geopark communities in the project). The courses are an experiential introduction to the skills of Mindfulness with a view to integrating them into people's daily lives. It will be a shared and collaborative learning journey with members from other communities within the geopark area. The courses will run for 6 weeks online and will include all course material as well as audio recordings of Mindfulness practices. Suitable for those over 55 years. The course tutor Suzanne Mulqueen holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Mindfulness and is certified by, and affiliated to, the Mindfulness Association. Course 1 dates: Oct 6, 13, 20, Nov 3, 10, 17. The same courses are also available January to March, and April-May 2021. Cost €40. Places are limited, so be in quick. Contact Suzanne at [s\\_mulqueen@hotmail.com](mailto:s_mulqueen@hotmail.com) or 087 235 8946 [www.facebook.com/JCWLGeoHeritage](https://www.facebook.com/JCWLGeoHeritage)



**Joyce Country &  
Western Lakes  
Geo Enterprise**

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## Clonbur national winner of Bol Begin Together award

### This baile beag's 2nd national award in four years

Some fantastic news for Clonbur/An Fháirche community, and a boost for the wider geopark idea too. Just announced as national winner of the Bank of Ireland Begin Together Awards in the "Towns under 2000 Population" category. It comes from a tremendous effort by the whole community to plan, organise and work towards such an ambitious goal. This "Baile Beag" aims to use the

€10,000 prize to fund a feasibility study for a visitor centre, which could potentially include information on the aspiring Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark. Clonbur is really showing the way on community development, especially the wonderful spirit of volunteerism. This award follows on from their All-Ireland Pride of Place win in 2016. And now they've done it again. An Fáirche: áit iontach le conaí, áit iontach le cuairt.... Clonbur: a great place to live. A great place to visit... Congratulations!! Click [here](#) for the announcement.



## The Welcome Standard – getting that shamrock is easier than you think!

### Find out what's involved and for what benefits

Fáilte Ireland's Welcome Standard is a quick and accessible way of getting your property added as a recognised provider of approved tourist accommodation. Given the very high standard of accommodation now available in Ireland, this classification is primarily focused on the quality of service and hospitality offered rather than a rigid set of regulations. The standard allows for greater innovation, individuality, and authenticity in approved tourist accommodation. Look out for our free webinar on the Welcome Standard this autumn. And for brief detail on what's involved, costs, key benefits, eligibility and how to get started,

**What's Involved:** Complete a self-assessment form online. There are periodic inspections by Fáilte Ireland which is understandable to maintain the integrity of the programme.

**The Cost:** Fáilte Ireland have waived all fees for joining and being part of the Welcome Standard.

### 3 Key Benefits:

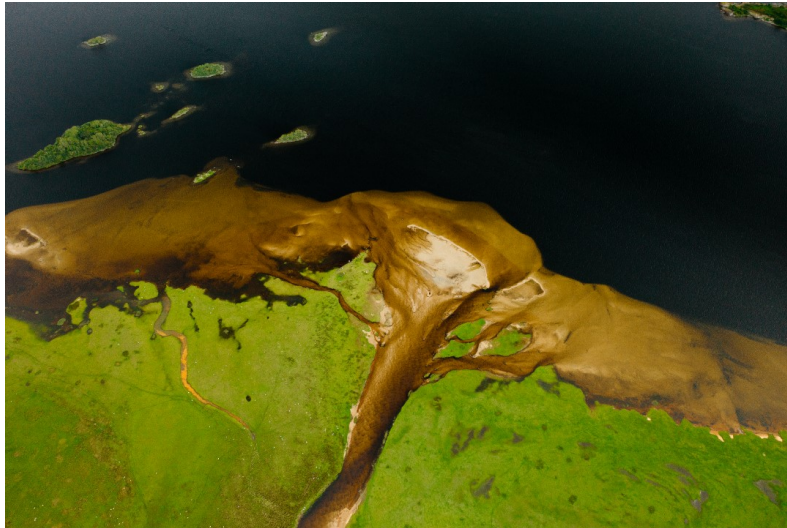
1. Certification & Signage – you can display the Shamrock Quality Mark to your potential guests – both online and offline. Many choose to display their certification on the exterior of their property.
2. Marketing – being part of the programme gets your property included on [DiscoverIreland.ie](https://discoverireland.ie) and [Ireland.com](https://ireland.com).
3. Access to Business Supports – once you're part of the Welcome Standard you gain access to upcoming opportunities, initiatives, industry news and sources of expert knowledge. At present, many of the Covid supports on offer require you to be part of Fáilte Ireland's Quality Assurance Programme so the Welcome Standard will sort this for you.

**Eligible Accommodation:** Self-catering cottages and apartments, camping & caravan parks and some other styles of accommodation.

**How to Get Started:** <https://failteireland.ie/welcomestandard.aspx>

*Article by Terence O'Toole, Managing Director of Love Connemara Cottages and a director of the Irish Self-Catering Federation.*





## How to get in touch

### It's good to talk ...

The project welcomes contact from local communities, local and national and international schools and other education institutions, tourism service providers and other businesses.

Contact details are in the panel at the end of this newsletter and all subsequent issues.



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