



Is your community group active within the **Strangford and Lecale AONB** or the **Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark**? If so, we have an exciting opportunity for you!

The **AONB and Geopark Ambassadors training scheme** is designed to equip local community representatives with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to deliver inspiring environmental outreach projects in their own communities.

Through a mix of **face-to-face workshops and online learning**, your group will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the rich natural and cultural heritage of our landscapes.
- Explore the history, biodiversity, and unique features of the AONB and Geopark.
- Take part in hands-on activities that bring learning to life.
- Learn practical ways to share this knowledge and inspire others in their local area.
- Get support to develop your own outreach project

This is a fantastic chance to become a **AONB & Geopark Community**, helping to connect people with the beauty and importance of our local environment, while supporting your group's own projects and initiatives.

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Why take part:

- A **6-day blended in-person training**.
- Further **zoom sessions** aimed at equipping you with the skills to deliver your own AONB and Geopark workshops.
- A **nature -based resource pack** to the value of £1,500 (see end of document) help deliver your community outreach.
- Access to a **network** of like-minded peers.
- Toolkits, and **mentoring** support.
- Once your workshops are successfully delivered, your community will get a dedicated page on our website highlighting your area as an **AONB & Geopark Community**

What is expected of you?

- Each community group must have two representatives at each event
- Representatives must commit to delivering six workshops back in their community (support will be given to develop the workshops)

This programme is **free of charge**. All we ask from you is a commitment to attend the whole programme.

Programme timeline	Date	Location
Introduction Session	Thursday 2 nd October 7pm-8pm	Zoom
"Taking notice" - supporting nature wellbeing through outdoor education.	Sunday 11 th October 10am-4pm	Castlewellan Forest Park
Strangford & Lecale Tour – Bus tour exploring the natural heritage highlights of the AONB.	Tuesday 21 st October 10am – 4pm	Meeting point Downpatrick
Ring of Gullion – Bus tour exploring the natural heritage highlights of the AONB.	Tuesday 4 th Nov 10am-4pm	Meeting point Newry
Practical conservation day – Get stuck into some practical conservation work at one of our forest parks.	Friday 14 th Nov 10am-4pm	Delamont Country Park
Practical conservation day – Get stuck into some practical conservation work at one of our forest parks.	Friday 28 th Nov 10am-4pm	Slieve Gullion Forest Park
Project ideas workshop	Thursday 11 th Dec 6pm – 8pm	Newcastle Co Down
Winter lecture series – Topics include using canva and social media, how to set up a community garden, funding opportunities leave no trace and biodiversity recording.	Thursday evenings between Dec – Feb	Zoom
Project Delivery	Feb – April	Your locations

Please note that this schedule may be subject to change and will be dependent on weather conditions

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Selection criteria

- Preference is given to groups located within either Strangford and Lecale AONB or the Ring of Gullion AONB
- Those groups who can commit to all of the training sessions.
- Groups who commit to delivering at least 6 outreach sessions within their community.
- Once the first three criteria have been applied then groups are chosen at random.

*This scheme is open to all community groups in the Strangford and Lecale AONB who meet the selection criteria, regardless of which council area they are in.

Resource Pack

- The nature-based resource pack will be developed with the community representatives and the AONB team. Ideas for what it might include are:
 - Native trees
 - Wildlife recording equipment
 - Litter pickers and gloves
 - Nature education equipment
 - Gardening tools and equipment
 - Pollinator friendly plants

Applications close 5pm Friday 26th September

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