

**You are cordially invited to attend the Irish UNESCO Global
Geoparks Annual Public Forum 2025 on Wednesday 26th and
Thursday 27th of November**

**Hosted by the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global
Geopark, Clare County Council**

Please note that booking is essential for all events on this following programme

Call **Hotel Doolin at 065 7074111** to book your attendance at the conference,
accommodation, gala dinner and your place on the Geopark Field Excursion.

PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 26th, November

at Hotel Doolin, Doolin, Co. Clare

Our theme this year is:

**NATURAL CAPITAL UNPACKAGED – HOW UNESCO GLOBAL
GEOPARKS CAN PLAY A ROLE**

Keynote speaker

***Natural Capital approaches - an introduction by Dr. Catherine Farrell, CIEEM, Assistant
Professor at Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin.***

Prior to her appointment in March 2025, Catherine worked as a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Natural Sciences. A pioneer of nature restoration and research in Ireland and internationally, Catherine worked to pilot the UN SEEA Ecosystem Accounting framework at catchment scale in Ireland through the EPA funded INCASE project, 2019-2023. A founding member of Natural Capital Ireland, Catherine has a strong commitment to community and business engagement and innovation through nature conservation and works to bridge and build connections from local / SME (bottom up) to national / corporate scales, while recognising the integral need for strong and functional governance systems (top down). Catherine is presently Business Programme Lead for the Business for Biodiversity Ireland Platform, providing support for a number of ENGOs and community nature projects in Ireland.

Marine natural capital accounting: An Irish perspective by Professor Stephen Hynes, Professor of Economics, J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics, University of Galway.

Aside from his role as Professor of Economics, Stephen is also the director of the Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU). Stephen's main research interest is in microeconomic behaviour analysis, related to natural resource/environmental and rural development policy and his work has been published by several of the top ranked journals in the fields of marine, agriculture, environmental and natural resource economics. In recent years, Stephen has led and been partner on a number of large multi-disciplinary European Union funded projects focused on blue growth and the economics of marine ecosystem conservation and restoration. These projects include MOSES, REDRESS, WIN-BIG and MPA Ireland LIFE.

Natural Capital as an environmental policy tool and can Geoparks contribute? By Matthew Hornsby, Department of Climate, Energy & the Environment. Matthew is Assistant Principal officer in the Department of Climate, Energy and Environment with responsibility for agricultural emissions, carbon removals and soils policy. He acts as Irish national point of contact on the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. He holds an MSc in environmental policy from UCD and has experience working in several government departments and agencies in Ireland and the UK.

The event will be opened by

Cllr Paul Murphy, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council

David Bruck, Irish Ambassador of the National Delegation to UNESCO, Paris, France

Dr. Koen Verbruggen, Director of Geological Survey Ireland

Dr. Marie Cowan, Director Geological Survey Northern Ireland

Irish Geoparks Updates

We will welcome the latest addition to the Irish Geoparks Family; Joyce Country and each of the five UNESCO Global Geoparks on the Island of Ireland will present short updates on their plans and projects.

Please book your place so that we can plan seating and lunch.

Gala Dinner

Join us for a Gala Dinner at Hotel Doolin, featuring the '30 Mile Menu' of local food, including 'GEOfood' produced within and around the UNESCO Global Geopark.

Places are limited so booking is essential.

THURSDAY 27th, Field Excursion, leaving from Hotel Doolin

Field excursion by coach to key Geopark Sites and businesses with a focus on sustainable development, geoheritage and natural capital. *Spaces are limited, booking is essential.*

ITINERARY for Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark FIELD EXCURSION

09.30: Leave Hotel Doolin

09.35: Doolin Pier – Ferry Hub for access to Aran Islands and Cliffs of Moher. The seasonal nature of tourism. Visitor management. Geoheritage -coastal erosion and recent high profile fossil discoveries.

10.20: Ballyrean – Coastal limestone stop for bus tours. ‘Commonage’ land ownership challenges. Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Limestone Pavement and Graffiti! Visitor management. Geoheritage – Fossils, terraces, collapsed caves and coastal erosion.

11.00: Fanore Beach – Sensitive public amenity site. Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Successful Dune restoration and ongoing biodiversity restoration work. Visitor management. Beach ambassadors. Fanore National School. Ecological studies and the problem with rabbits! Geoheritage – Biokarst and coastal erosion.

12.15: Lisdoonvarna. Meet with Social Enterprise group (Lisdoonvarna Fáilte) for discussion about village renewal and collaboration on walking trails, GSI funded geoheritage project (GeoStack) and the history of the Victorian Spa Wells. River and rainfall monitoring citizen science project. Lisdoonvarna secondary School Young Scientist competition. Geoheritage – the Clare Shale Formation and radioactive phosphate!

13.15: Lunch in Lisdoonvarna

14.30: Kilfenora Burren Centre. Social community project. Geopark support for visitor exhibition. Managing a small tourism enterprise off the main tourism trail. Local heritage trail. Kilfenora Cathedral and 12th Century High Crosses. Traditional Irish music. Developing a merchandising model for the Geopark.

15.45: Arrive back to Hotel Doolin

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