

Setting standards in sustainable tourism with the Burren Ecotourism Network

ESPON PLW Greening Tourism

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What are UNESCO Global Geoparks?

- UNESCO Global Geoparks are internationally recognised places with unique geology, landscapes, history and culture. Geoparks are managed with a focus on education, conservation, sustainable tourism and community engagement.
- Designation is revalidated against set criteria every 4 years
- Currently 161 across 44 countries, 83 in Europe.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



• UNESCO
• Global
• Geoparks



A well-developed tourism destination

- Cliffs of Moher second most visited attraction in Ireland; 1,605,131 in 2019
- **Nine** other visitor centres
- Strong accommodation & food sectors
- National Park
- Lots of walking & cycling trails
- Managed archaeological sites
- Wild Atlantic Way



What could the Geopark contribute?

- Create a sustainable tourism destination
- Develop a network of sustainable tourism businesses
- Measure, show evidence & generate data to inform future sustainable strategies



Sustainable tourism; a work in progress....

- 2008 – 2012 Four years of exploring national and international certification programmes for tourism businesses
- 2012 – 2017 EU LIFE; opportunity to create our own best fit... bespoke design and managed locally
- A work in progress; responsive to evaluation
- No fees to businesses



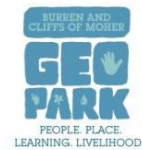
Code of Practice.....

Increases awareness of sustainability

Changes habits and mindsets

Great foundation for Certification programmes

Energy Management Award
The Boghill Centre, Kilfenora
Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



Click on the arrow above to Watch the Video

Who they are: The Boghill Centre is a residential venue Situated in 50 acres of natural bogland in the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark. Boghill is a small innovative company on the cutting edge of Ecotourism in Ireland who offer a residential venue for learning, training events, retreats and functions. They are committed to running a low cost and low impact ecological activity venue. Making the most of their natural resources their mantra is reduce, reuse, recycle. They are committed to a process of monitoring and measuring their environmental impacts with a view to continual

Important Features

- 6 principles
- 33 Performance Measures, 11 Essential Measures
- Evidence based
- Levels of achievement: Red, Amber, Green 1 & 2 and Emerald

By adopting the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism, we commit to a process of continuous improvement in sustainable tourism practice.



We observe the following principles and practices:

WORKING TOGETHER

We collaborate with all stakeholders to collectively develop the Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination.



A CARED-FOR LANDSCAPE

We actively participate in conserving our natural and cultural heritage.

A WELL-UNDERSTOOD HERITAGE

We offer quality information and interpretation to communicate our stories and the unique character of our place to guests.



VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

We work to ensure that tourism makes a positive social contribution so that it benefits our community as well as our guests. We aim to make our services available to the widest possible audience.

STRENGTHENED LIVELIHOODS

We contribute to the local economy by maintaining and supporting local employment, by sourcing services and produce locally wherever possible, and by engaging with other businesses in promoting our region as a sustainable tourism destination.

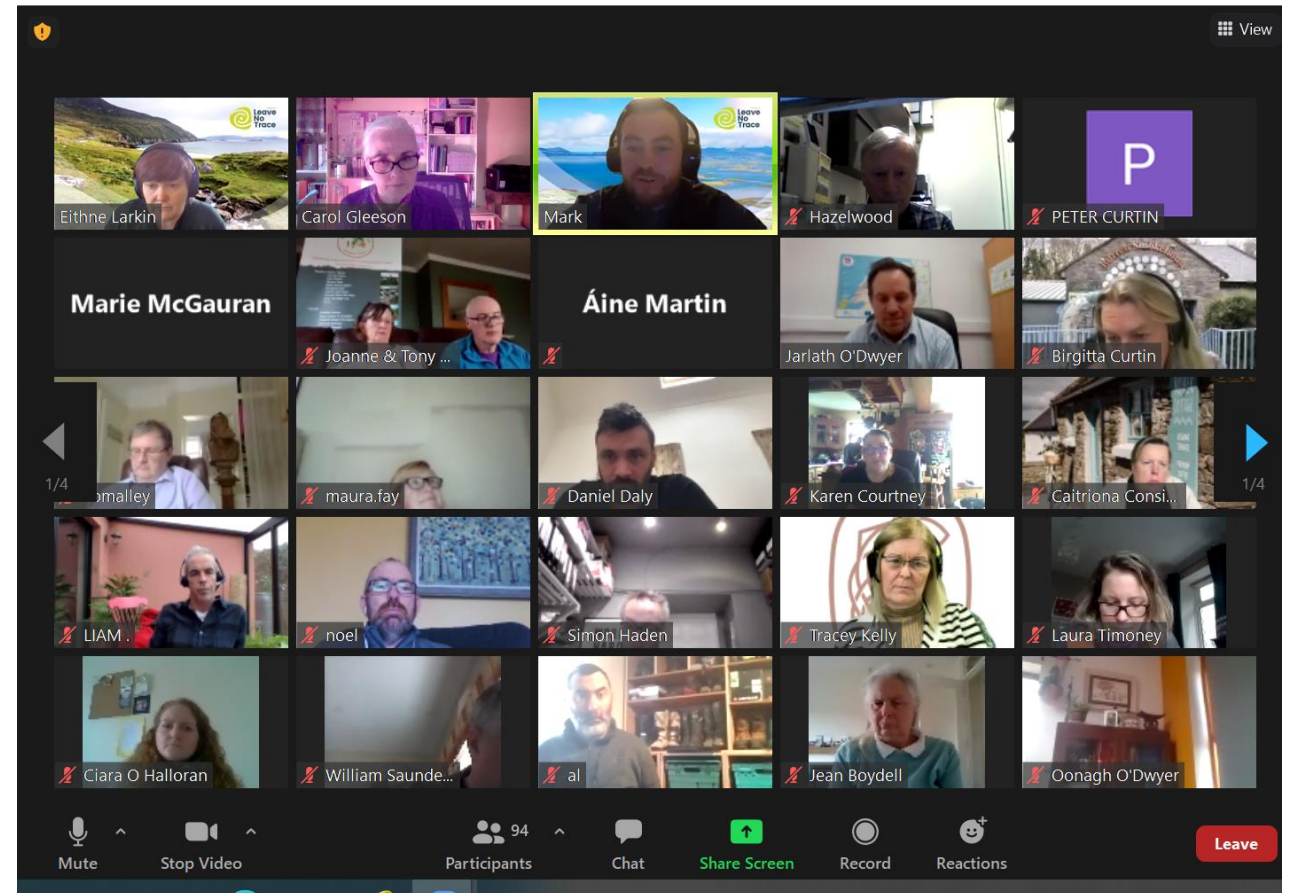


SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

We work to an Environmental Action Plan, which includes targets for improvement that are reviewed annually. We have effective systems for monitoring and adequately managing our waste, water, wastewater and energy.

Important Features

- Incremental, progressive system, designed as a business management tool
- Training & mentoring supports
- Aggregated data including a carbon calculator for the Network as a unit
- Independent evaluation
- Awards for best practice and inspiration



Recognition over the years



WINNER
RESPONSIBLE
TRAVEL & TOURISM
AWARDS 2014

WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL
Tourism for Tomorrow
FINALIST 2014

2016 WINNER

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

WORLD
LEGACY
AWARDS



ITB
BERLIN

DESTINATION LEADERSHIP

And in 2021....

The Code is fully supported by Clare County Council

The Geopark Code of Practice is Network's Unique Selling Point

“an impressive community collaboration of over 60 local enterprises which has transformed Ireland's Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark into a global leader for sustainable tourism”.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/travel/lonely-planet->



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