



*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

Isle of Arran Designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark: A Celebration of Natural Heritage and Sustainable Development



Isle of Arran, Scotland – 17th April 2025 – Arran Geopark is proud to announce its official designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark, a recognition that highlights the island's unique geological heritage, rich biodiversity, and commitment to sustainable development. This prestigious designation was awarded during the recent UNESCO Executive Board meeting, marking a significant milestone for the island and its community.

The Isle of Arran, often referred to as ‘Scotland in Miniature’, boasts diverse landscapes including rugged mountains, rolling hills, and stunning coastlines. Its geological features tell a story of over half a billion years of Earth history; the collision of continents, tropical forests, the opening of the Atlantic Ocean, and the sculpture of landscapes by glaciers. The designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark not only



celebrates these features, but it also emphasises the importance of conserving them for future generations.

"We are thrilled to receive this recognition from UNESCO," said Sheila Gilmore, Chair of Arran Geopark and CEO of VisitArran. "This designation is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our local community, who have long understood the value of our natural heritage. It provides us with an incredible opportunity to promote responsible tourism, encouraging visitors to enjoy our unique geology, fostering a deeper appreciation for the environment."

As a UNESCO Global Geopark, the Isle of Arran will focus on promoting geotourism, environmental awareness and community engagement. The Geopark will offer a range of activities, including guided geological tours, educational workshops, and conservation initiatives; all aimed at increasing understanding of our international importance for locals and visitors, while protecting the island's natural resources.

The designation also opens doors for collaboration with other Global Geoparks around the world, allowing the Isle of Arran to share knowledge and experiences whilst learning from others. This global network will further enhance the island's profile as a destination for eco-conscious travellers seeking to explore its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

The Isle of Arran Geopark Committee invites residents and visitors alike to join in celebrating this momentous occasion. A series of events and activities will be organised throughout the year to raise awareness about the Geopark and its significance, and we are delighted to be hosting this year's UK Geoparks Conference on 5-6 June.

Angus Robertson MSP, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture said:

"Scotland's natural heritage is world renowned, and I'm delighted that the Isle of Arran has now been recognised as a UNESCO Global Geopark. This is a proud moment for everybody connected to the island, whose dedication has helped secure this prestigious accolade."

"Arran's remarkable landscape tells a global geological story and this new UNESCO status ensures it will be preserved, celebrated and shared for generations to come, whether locals or visitors."

Dr Kirstin Lemon, Chair, UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks said:

"On behalf of the UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks I would like to warmly congratulate Arran Geopark on achieving UNESCO Global Geopark status. Arran



Geopark is now the tenth Global Geopark in the UK, and brings with it a unique geodiversity often referred to as ‘Scotland in Miniature’.

Of course, it is about more than just geology with a wide range of biodiversity, archaeology, history and intangible heritage, all of which combine to make this a truly distinctive space. But what makes Arran so special are the people that live and work there, who have been committed and passionate about achieving Global Geopark status since 2015 and we are delighted that this has now come to fruition.”

Lynsey Eckford, VisitScotland’s Regional Director said:

“It is fantastic to see Arran recognised as a UNESCO Geopark. This coveted status acknowledges the island’s very special and unique natural and cultural heritage and represents an exciting opportunity for Arran’s valuable visitor economy.

We know international visitors in particular, enjoy our UNESCO sites and our wide range of outdoor activities, are a significant motivation for all holidaymakers who choose Scotland. Similarly, connecting with nature and visiting the countryside and coastline are high on UK visitors’ priorities when planning a trip just now.

Working with our local partners, we want to grow the value of the visitor economy in a sustainable way which benefits not just visitors to the region but the people who live and work here too.”

Kirsty Wark, BBC television presenter and journalist who stays on Arran said:

"Arran Geopark is a wonderful opportunity for the people of Arran, Scotland and beyond, to nurture and enjoy all the natural riches of the island, encouraging the development of heritage, rural regeneration, and healthy living in the midst of the most extraordinary landscape, flora, fauna and biodiversity. Arran Geopark ensures a sustainable vibrant future for one of the world's most beautiful islands."

Dr Kate Sampson, Senior Ranger, National Trust for Scotland, Isle of Arran said:

“We are delighted to have been part of the team working together to achieve this prestigious accolade. The NTS Arran Ranger Service will continue its role restoring habitats from summit to sea, providing opportunities for all generations get involved in conservation and enhancing our wild spaces for wildlife and for people to enjoy.”



****About Arran UNESCO Global Geopark****

[Arran UNESCO Global Geopark](#) is dedicated to promoting the island's geological heritage, fostering sustainable development, and enhancing community engagement. As a UNESCO Global Geopark, it aims to protect and celebrate the unique natural environment of Arran while providing educational opportunities for residents and visitors. Arran Geopark is a Registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation [SC052706](#).

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