

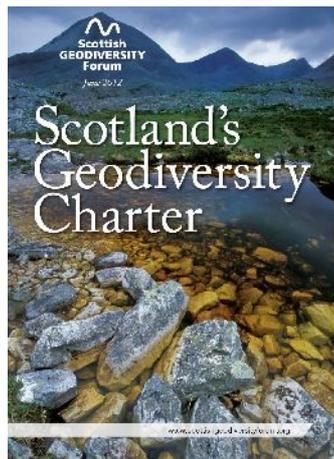
Scottish Geodiversity Forum Annual Report March 2011 - December 2012



The Scottish Geodiversity Forum was established in March 2011, with the aims of widening the profile of geodiversity and influencing national and local policies. It incorporated GeoConservation Scotland and the Scottish Geology Festival Organising Partnership.

This report covers the first 21 months of the Forum's operation, which have seen the Forum well established as a lively national grassroots body with almost 150 individual and 17 organisational members, producing Scotland's Geodiversity Charter and engaging in a range of activities to further our aims.

Scotland's Geodiversity Charter



The Forum was approached by the Scottish Government in May 2011, to explore issues raised by a Scottish Parliament petition requesting a geodiversity duty, and reports on geodiversity prepared for the government by BGS and SNH. Meetings with the Scottish Government (Rural & Environment Directorate), BGS, SNH and the Forum led to a proposal to develop Scotland's Geodiversity Charter. This was a major undertaking for the Forum, and would not have proceeded without significant support from these bodies.

The Charter sets out the importance of Scotland's geodiversity and a vision that our geodiversity is better recognised, safe guarded and managed for the future. It contains suggested actions for different sectors of society, and is supported by a range of case studies. A draft was circulated for consultation in January 2012 and received over 30 responses, which helped shape the final document.

The Charter was launched by Stewart Stevenson MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Environment and Climate Change on 6th June 2012 at the Scottish Government HQ at Victoria Quay in Edinburgh, with invited speakers Ian

Bainbridge, Head of Science SNH and Diarmad Campbell, Chief Geologist – Scotland, BGS. At the time of the launch 29 organisations had signed the Charter, representing a wide range of interests from across the country; later signatories took the total to 35 by the end of 2012. The Charter was produced with assistance from SNH and BGS; printing was funded by the Forum.

Since its launch, the Charter has been implemented through the sustained efforts of the Charter Working Group and Forum members; the Working Group has representatives of the Scottish Government, BGS, SNH and Local Authorities. A key focus has been on encouraging more Local Authorities to sign up.

Conferences

The Forum organised two one-day conferences, in November 2011 and November 2012 both at Battleby, Perth. We are grateful to SNH for financial support for these. Both conferences were attended by over 50 people, and were designed to stimulate discussion and encourage participants to go beyond just sitting and listening.

The 2011 conference, *Scotland's Geodiversity - promoting, celebrating, safeguarding*, included presentations from Colin Ballantyne on Scotland's landscapes and Donald Fisher with an international perspective on geotourism. Workshops tackled a diverse range of subjects including engaging the general public, planning & policy, and citizen science before the conference closed with a talk from Stuart Monro.

In 2012 the theme was *Scotland's Geodiversity Charter - taking it forward* and the programme included a smorgasbord of inspirational examples from across the country. Two workshop sessions followed looking at funding, local geodiversity and biodiversity sites, interpretation and engaging communities. The conference finished with a lively debate on the future of earth science education in Scotland. The conference was highly rated by the attendees, the main "criticism" being that there was not enough of it!



Other activities

Promotional materials A grant of £2,200 from the Scottish Government was used to design our logo, and produce four banners and 500 postcards each of four different designs to help promote Scotland's geodiversity.

GeoConservation UK The establishment of the Forum triggered a review of GCUK's relationship with other bodies representing nations within the UK; GCUK's constitution was changed in October 2011 and the Forum became a Partner Member of GCUK, with a Forum representative (currently Angus Miller) appointed as an ex-officio member of the GCUK Executive Committee.

Scottishgeology.com A complete revamp went live in March 2012. This involved moving the existing content to a new platform hosted with wordpress, a more modern design that has the potential for more than one person to update and provide new content. This move also forced the demise of the Scottish Geology Festival, which had ceased to exist in any real sense. We are committed to restarting the Festival in the future.

Events organisational and individual members of the Forum came together on several occasions to run events for the public; these included Volcano Fun Days at Holyrood Park in Edinburgh in October 2011 and 2012, with some of the same people also helping Geopark Shetland organise "A Blast from the Past" in July 2012. Members also collaborated to mark the opening of Fossil Grove in Glasgow at the start of the 2011 season.

Consultations The Forum took part in consultations on:

- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. In September 2012, Forum Executive members met with the team supervising the revision to the Biodiversity strategy, and discussed better integration of geodiversity into the document which is based on an ecosystems services approach. This resulted in a formal response from the Forum to the consultation;
- Proposed Arrangements for Establishing and Directing a New Body for the Management of Wales' Natural Resources (01 May 2012) and Sustaining a Living Wales - a Green Paper on a new approach to natural resource management in Wales (31 May 2012).

Siccar Point Planning Application In summer 2012 Drysdals Ltd (who run a vegetable processing factory) submitted a planning application for an effluent pipeline close to the iconic geosite of Siccar Point. With limited information available and a planning deadline within hours, Forum members mobilised to express concerns and raise awareness of the issue. A storm of international protest forced better scrutiny of the proposal and provision of further information. The Forum's response highlighted two major concerns: the permanent visual impact that the pipeline would have for visitors to Siccar Point, and potential problems with release of dirty water and vegetable matter onto the coast. Despite concerns from the Geological Society of London, British Geological Survey and many others, the application was approved on 5 November 2012.

Forum members expressed strong disappointment with the SNH response to this application, which we felt reflected a poor assessment of the potential impacts of the pipeline from a geological and geomorphic perspective and did not give enough weight to the international importance of Siccar Point.

Forum discussions Since the Forum was established it has truly become a place for discussion and sharing ideas, both at conferences and meetings and via the Forum email list, which allows any member to post to the whole Forum. Among other things there has been ongoing debate about Siccar Point, the place of earth science in the curriculum for excellence, pros and cons for keeping the Higher Geology qualification, miscellaneous questions and requests for help and ideas for promoting the Charter.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee elected in March 2011 comprised Angus Miller, chair; Mike Browne, vice-chair; Mihaela Newton, secretary; Linda Mckee, treasurer; Margaret Greene, membership secretary and ordinary members Seonaid Leishman, Katerina Braun, Sarah Stewart, Simon Howard with Colin Macfadyen as SNH representative. Two further Ordinary Members, Beverly Bergman and Simon Cuthbert, joined the committee in March 2012. The committee met every two months in Glasgow or Edinburgh to coordinate the work of the Forum.

Accounts summary

Opening Balance 19/03/2011	£0.00
Income 2011	
EGS & GSG donations	£200.00
Conference income	£735.00
Expenditure 2012	
Office bearers expenses	£19.81
Balance 31/12/2011	£915.19
Income 2012	
Donations to print Charter	£225.00
Conference income	£645.00
Expenditure 2012	
Office bearers expenses	£64.47
Charter printing	£675.00
Balance 31/12/2012	£1045.72