

# Scottish Geodiversity Forum Annual Report 2017



This has been a ground-breaking year for the Scottish Geodiversity Forum with two significant projects: the successful completion and launch of the 51 Best Places to see Scotland's Geology and the launch of Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2018-2023, supported by 86 signatory organisations.

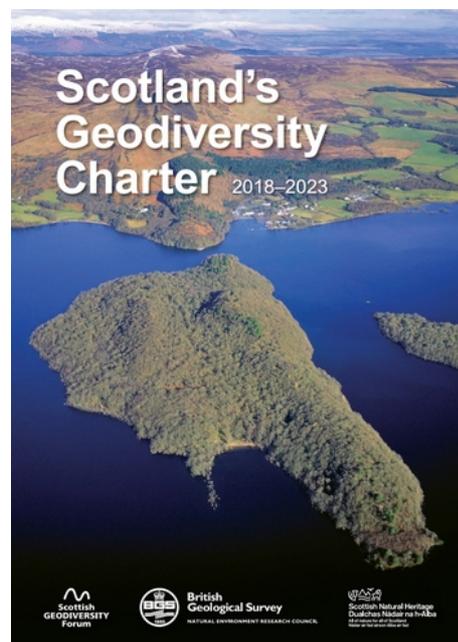
These have boosted the profile of the Forum, brought in new members and contributed to our key aims: *to promote Scotland's geodiversity, widen the profile of geodiversity and influence national and local policies.*

The Forum has continued its membership of Scottish Environment LINK and representation on the GeoConservation UK Executive Committee and the Geological Society's Geoconservation Committee. We have worked with partners including the Friends of Hugh Miller to build on the success of the first Hugh Miller Writing Competition with promotion and events, including a session at the StAnza Poetry Festival, and the launch *Footprints in the Sand: the Hugh Miller Writing Competition II 2017-2018.*

## Scotland's Geodiversity Charter

Scotland's Geodiversity Charter was published by the Forum and partners in June 2012. Since then we have worked to engage more organisations, published regular updates and developed new case studies. Five years on, the Charter Working Group decided that the Charter was still relevant, and should be kept live by refreshing the Charter for another five years. We used the opportunity of the relaunch to update the Charter text and in particular to gather relevant case studies of activity undertaken since 2012. The Charter is now supported by 35 case studies, all available on our website and linking to further information.

The relaunch was a good opportunity to engage with new signatories, and in this regard our recent membership of Scottish Environment LINK was particularly important, allowing us to promote the Charter to a wide range of environmental organisations. The Charter for 2018-2023 was launched by Bridget Campbell, Director for Environment and Forestry on behalf of the Scottish Government at a Charter conference at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh on Thursday 16 November. Our patron, Prof Iain Stewart, gave the keynote address and representatives from several key organisations spoke in support of the Charter, highlighting issues around geodiversity and many different aspects of its importance to society.



At year end, the Charter has the support of 86 signatories, including key new organisations such as the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Wildlife Trust, the National Trust for Scotland, most of Scotland's universities, eight local authorities and all of Scotland's Geoparks, National Parks and Geological Societies.

## The 51 Best Places to see Scotland's Geology

In late 2016 the Forum was awarded a £10,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for our project *Revealing the stories in the rocks: raising awareness of Scotland's outstanding geoheritage.*

This project was successfully delivered in 2017, by freelance contractors Robina Barton (Project Manager), Lara Reid (Scientific Editor) and a core team of volunteers, with strong partnership support from Dynamic Earth and Scotland's Geoparks. The 51 Best Places to see Scotland's Geology were launched online at [scottishgeology.com](http://scottishgeology.com) and the project was promoted through social media, events and a new leaflet.



We also organised Scotland's first Geoheritage Festival throughout October; 24 organisations contributed 50 events across Scotland, attended by 1750 participants, including guided walks, hands-on activity sessions for families, open days, talks and weekend courses.

The list of 51 Best Places to see Scotland's Geology was selected by a panel of expert volunteers. The sites were chosen to be accessible to visitors, with the aim of creating a network with a geographical spread across the country, that gives a good introduction to all the different aspects of Scotland's geological history and

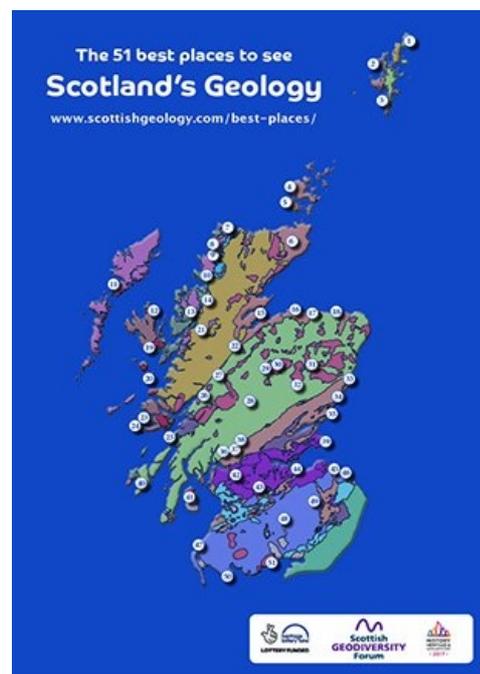
landscape. Descriptions for each Best Place were written by expert volunteers who knew the sites well, drawn from a wide range of supporting organisations including Scottish Natural Heritage, British Geological Survey, Scotland's Geoparks, universities, and museums. The descriptions were edited by Lara Reid to a common style aimed at the general reader. We produced an A5 leaflet on the 51 Best Places and 20,000 copies are being distributed through partner organisations and at events.

The Project Launch Day took place on Saturday 14 October at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh. Ten organisations provided displays and hands-on activities, and more than 600 people engaged with the activities and displays over the course of the day. Large photographs of the 51 sites were on display, and after the formal launch, five Forum members gave brief introductions to their favourite Best Place.

The strongest outcome of this project is the creation of a solid platform to engage people with Scotland's geoheritage. Having accidentally stumbled on a good brand (we only selected 51 Best Places because we couldn't get agreement on 50), our project will inspire further activity in all sorts of interesting and unanticipated ways. We expect that in the coming years, people will embark on journeys to visit some or all of the sites, there will be further publications and art projects, exhibitions and events. Already local and regional organisations have picked up and are promoting "their" Best Places. So at a national and local level, the 51 Best Places brand will encourage people to get out and explore, and to learn about Scotland's amazing geological story, and organisations and individuals will build on the platform that we have established.

### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee, elected at the AGM on 11 March 2017, is Angus Miller, chair; Mike Browne, vice-chair; Gavin Eardley, secretary; Kate Saunders, assistant secretary; Hugh Lockhart, treasurer; Margaret Greene, membership secretary; ordinary members Sarah Stewart, Beverly Bergman, Simon Cuthbert, Andrew McMillan, John Gordon, Neil Clark, Jennifer Roberts, Jim Blair, Lara Reid and Robina Barton. Organisations are represented as follows: Scottish Natural Heritage (Colin MacFadyen), Royal Scottish Geographical Society (Mike Robinson), British Geological Survey (Katie Whitbread, replaced by Sarah Arkley on 21 August) and Dynamic Earth (Hermione Cockburn). The committee conducted its business mostly by email, and met 4 times in 2017.



### Accounts

<b>Opening Balance 31/12/2016</b> (including £750 of donations for StAnza event received in 2016)	<b>1,949.40</b>
<b>Income 2017</b>	
General donations	20.00
StAnza Poetry Festival	100.00
51 Best Places Project – Heritage Lottery Fund grant	10,000.00
Charter Launch / Conference – including fees from delegates and BGS / NERC (£1000), and donations from the Edinburgh Geological Society (£500) and the Geological Society of Glasgow (£500). Preparation of the Charter also benefited from generous in-kind support from Scottish Natural Heritage and the British Geological Survey.	5,176.15
Anonymous donation to support the Hugh Miller Writing Competition	500.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>15,796.15</b>
<b>Expenditure 2017</b>	
Website costs	60.00
Membership of Scottish Environment LINK	125.00
StAnza Poetry Festival	830.90
51 Best Places Project	10,017.36
Charter Launch / Conference	4,074.18
Hugh Miller Writing Competition	99.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>15,206.44</b>
<b>Closing Balance 31/12/2017</b>	<b>2,539.11</b>
<b>Funds at 31/12/2017</b>	
General	1,017.04
Hugh Miller Writing Competition	420.10
Charter	1,101.97