

English Riviera



**English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark
COVID19 Transformation Plan and Community Case Study
June 2020**



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



English Riviera
UNESCO
Global Geopark

one of **Earth's extraordinary places**

A Transformation Plan for English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

“As we come out of lockdown, the Geopark partner organisations are looking to reopen responsibly. The Geopark Transformation Plan has been designed to assist in this effort. It will provide local people an opportunity to rediscover and enjoy the heritage and natural environment on our own doorstep, whether the coastline, beaches, the rural and urban areas, the caves and heritage highlights across the Geopark, either by getting out and about or from home. Ensuring you feel comfortable exploring the Geopark again is a key strand in the project.”

Nick Powe
Chairman



Supporting the local community and the Geopark Partners

The [English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark](#) is working to support the local community following the unprecedented social and economic impacts of the COVID19 pandemic. As meta-level partnership organisations, Geoparks are in a unique position to reengage local people with the Geopark sites and businesses, at the right time and in the most responsible way possible. Our core priorities at this time are:

Creating new online education resources including video interviews, podcasts, and learning modules for children, families, students, and older people with an interest in the science of the Geopark.

Supporting our local communities to reconnect with our partner and associate organisations, especially those more vulnerable individuals who have been shielding in isolation due to their higher risk factors.

Coordinating and communicating to the wider community our partner plans as they gradually ease restrictions at their organisations and businesses.

Helping our tourism partners to reengage with the local community, to encourage shorter, safer and more sustainable journeys in the first instance before encouraging visitors from further afield.

Proposed Actions – in progress

1. Social Media

A public engagement programme based on new content created from partner imagery, interesting facts and video.

Ramping up social media activity, building on social media support from the Communications team at Torbay Council by curating imagery, video clips, interesting facts from Geopark partner organisations and promoting these initially to a local audience. Working with local and national economic, tourism and culture partners to then broaden our reach to a national audience.

2. Geopark In Focus

Online interviews exploring key aspects of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

Interviewing interesting people with a connection to the Geopark, be they academics with a specialist area or other personalities, to create a suite of viewable clips and podcasts that will appeal to an adult or student audience who want to improve their knowledge of the science, culture and heritage of the area.

3. Access

Providing specific post lockdown access for vulnerable for the vulnerable members of the community

Working with the Geopark partners to provide a range of specific access and engagement opportunities to help vulnerable members of community to re-engage.

Proposed Actions

And funding application dependent...

4. Visual Journeys

Access tools to support the community and the Geopark Partners

Working with registered charity Living Options Devon, to create **Visual Journey** documents that reassure and inform vulnerable people of what to expect when they arrive at a partner site, and the special measures that have been taken to ensure they feel comfortable.

5. Online Activity and Learning Hub

Geopark Champions programme for young people and their families.

Targeted at the young person or family unit. To become a **Geopark Champion** the young person or family unit must complete five fun and engaging online modules, qualifying them for a certificate with encouragement to share this achievement and activities on social media. This programme will raise awareness of the Geopark among local young people and their families, while providing an interactive education resource to access for free at home, and encouraging future visits to special places in the Geopark once restrictions are eased.

English Riviera Geology course for students, adults and 3rd age learners.

The **English Riviera Geology Course** is geared towards a more in-depth learning experience into the English Riviera's internationally significant geology, providing people with an understanding of the geological scientific basis of the UNESCO designation. Again this could be delivered through a number of modules supported by online resources.

“UNESCO Global Geoparks are not just about rocks. They are fundamentally about people. Without local peoples knowledge and commitment, Geoparks cannot thrive or flourish. Now more than ever community support is essential.

Our research shows that across the UK, there are thousands of organisations working with UNESCO designations to make their local places flourish. UNESCO designations serve as conduits to sustain meaningful partnerships that bring together local businesses, tourism agencies, charities, and local people to look after a place effectively for the long-term.

English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark is a world-leading example of this approach. We welcome this initiative which will showcase to the UK and UNESCO designations globally how they can work locally to solve global problems. More now than ever, Geopark needs to play a role in rebuilding local communities, businesses and tourism agencies – I hope this model serves as the first of many.”

Matthew Rabagliati
Head of Policy, Research and Communication
UK National Commission for UNESCO



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National Commission**
for UNESCO

A case study from the local community – From Fish Hawker Aprons to Scrubs and Masks

This is a story about local womenfolk - past and present – and about traditional skills coming into force during times of need. It's also about communities of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark building connections between diverse people so that the places they live in are more resilient and able to adapt in challenging times.

Various local community volunteers are working to support key workers during the COVID19 pandemic, using their resources and skills to make scrubs and masks. Whilst these are not the surgical masks (which have to be hermetically sealed) people in the front line are using them over their surgical masks as well as in other contexts allowing them to ease demand on surgical masks whilst brightening things up! Visitors to care homes and the local hospice are also able to access these masks, which together with social distancing methods means safer environments for all.

All stemming from a group known as the Cuttlefish Collective (more on that below) the main English Riviera wide group is called '[Baymade Scrubs](#)' and brings together people from all over the local area with a common aim to provide for others in a time of need.

Using their own resources and recycling materials, the group have already created over 750 sets of scrubs, and distributed these to local key workers. And based in Brixham, Mickaëlle Begue another member of the Collective has also been busy making these masks (pictured below).



Baymade have supported Rowcroft Hospice, Torquay, with 125 facemasks for their visitors. Used in line with national guidelines and with the recommended 2 metre distance they help to reduce risk.



“Without doubt, wearing colourful recycled cotton scrubs has cheered up both the staff and those they are caring for. We all love that our efforts are helping people at this time.”

Sandra Tipton, Baymade (above)

“The biggest THANK YOU to BAYMADE Scrubs from all the staff at Moorleigh Residential Care Home in Barton Torquay. The residents love the colourful scrubs and we find them really comfortable and light to wear in this hot weather.” Jeanette Bailey, Care Worker, Moorleigh Residential Care Home



The masks below were based on a design of the Tree of Life (left) by Simone Wilke to honour Earth Day and were made by Mickaëlle Begue of the Cuttlefish Collective. (see more on Mickaëlle and the Collective below).



The story behind this project is just as fascinating...

The group involved in making the scrubs and masks today, such as Sandra Tipton, Mickaelle Begue and Mara Slipper, worked in the past with artist [Shelley Castle](#) on creative projects in the Geopark. They first came together to celebrate the intangible heritage of the Brixham Fish Hawker women of the 1800's. During the project many bonds and lasting friendships were formed which ensured the group continued on their journey together as a textile group called 'The Cuttlefish Collective' and they are now helping to meet the challenges of today in various ways.

All started in 2018 when Geopark Partner [Brixham Heritage Museum](#) and Encounters Arts were funded by Heritage Lottery Fund to collaborate on the creative [Fish Hawkers](#) project. Museum volunteers began researching the story of the Brixham Fish Hawker women of the mid 1800's who sold fish from baskets, struggling with incredibly heavy loads up the steep hills to the wealthier households on the hill.

The women of Brixham often ran the business side of the industry when the men were at sea, using the complicated Dutch Auctioning methods used at the markets and keeping the books.

Some Fish Hawkers were extremely poor, widowed mothers of many children, who only just scraped a living together selling fish door to door in order to keep food on the table.



In 1864 the Fish Hawkers' meagre livelihoods were put at risk when there was a new wave of enforcing an old licensing law, but unlikely champions came to their aid in the form of Lord and Lady Churston – a wealthy couple whose lives couldn't have been more different to those of the Fish Hawkers.

The announcement that the Fish Hawkers had won their case resulted in a procession from Brixham harbour up to Lupton House, to thank Lord and Lady Churston for their support.

At the front of the procession, fishermen carried a gift of: 'a beautifully modelled vessel in full sail, fitted with a mechanical contrivance by which it acts as a musical box.....'

In response to the stories we uncovered about these extraordinary women, several new groups of craftswomen were formed to make various objects for a repeat procession, this time through Brixham down to the harbour for [Fishstock](#), carrying with them banners, wearing hand-embroidered aprons and singing a new folk song made by [Maggie Duffy](#)



In 2019, several of the craftswomen involved in Fish Hawkers came together with new participants for [The Offering](#) and it was at this point they became collectively known as the Cuttlefish Collective. The Offering was part of the [Eyeview](#) cultural programme from the Great Place Scheme managed by Geopark Partner [Torbay Culture](#).

The Great Place Scheme is a three year investment by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England via Torbay Culture - and has been designed to engage residents and visitors with culture and creativity, across the UNESCO Global Geopark.



'The UNESCO Global Geopark is at the heart of Torbay Culture's mission, and central to 'Enjoy, Talk, Do, Be' - the ten year cultural strategy for Torbay and its communities 2014-24. The Geopark recovery plan is an important and collaborative approach to supporting communities through positive actions and we are very supportive of this'.

Martin Thomas,
Torbay Culture





The Offering was a project looking at the extraordinary life of two types of Seahorses living in the seagrass beds in the Geopark. Together with the help of South Devon College's textile department, they created a brilliantly designed cape for the procession, embroidered with one Spiney and one Short-Snouted Seahorse.

This was worn by a young woman from Geopark Partner [Doorstep Arts](#) who led the procession through town and down to Torre Abbey Sands where a new seahorse tango was danced along the seashore and some 'Messages to the Sea' were sent out by boat as an offering to the wonderful sea of Torbay.

Natural indigo was used to dye recycled cotton that was made into three aprons representing the abundant fish stocks from the Mid 19th century, to the fish landed in Brixham today.

The third apron represented the participants fears for the future of Brixham with far fewer fish, symbolised by 'ghost fish'.

The embroidery group was taught by Angela Richardson and still meet - having started out as 8 crafters at the beginning of the project, they numbered over 20 at the end.

The banners that accompanied the procession were created by Mickaëlle Begue and a smaller group of textile artists who still work together today. All the textile pieces were made from naturally dyed recycled fabric.



'Over the past few years I've felt really privileged to work across the English Riviera with so many different people from whom I've learnt so much. Together we have enjoyed some fantastic creative journeys, exploring and learning more about the incredible natural world in the area, whilst making textile art works about anything from seahorses to protest banners. The women in the Cuttlefish Collective have not only supported one another, trading skills and knowledge, but supported so many others in their community, more so now than ever.'

Shelley Castle,
Community Artist
and Activist





“The English Riviera Global Geopark is an ongoing source of inspiration for artists and the local community.

The Geopark’s commitment to supporting innovative community engagement has manifested in a whole range of projects over recent years. From Earth Echoes (2016), a co-produced with a large community-cast, Doorstep Arts & Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; to The Offering (2019), with intergenerational community-makers; and Silence Between Waves (2019) connecting diverse participants and contemporary dancers to perform in Torbay’s arresting landscape.

These projects nurture critical engagement and celebrate place-distinctiveness, building skills, connectedness and community confidence.”

Nathalie Palin,
Creative Director,
Eyeview Cultural Programme





Today, the talented craftswomen that worked on Fish Hawkers and The Offering have been working on several extraordinary projects to support local charitable endeavours, bringing their skills to act for the good in a very direct but equally beautiful way.

The group have already made 300 bags for school children under the [Feed a Child Torbay](#) initiative, and 750 recycled fabric shopping bags for Torbay since last Summer.

And now, in a time of crisis, their skills are being called on again by the community and specifically those in the front line during the COVID19 pandemic.

The volunteers have been disseminating online lessons in how to make the masks and scrubs so this knowledge is spreading throughout the community as demand continues to grow, seeding new skills that are eminently transferable. At present, the new skills have a vital role to play but it will be interesting to see where they might be put to use next!

You can find out more about the project on the [Baymade Scrubs Facebook page](#). Or if you wish to help the project direct by making a donation, providing fabric or if you can help with sewing or distribution please contact [Sandra Tipton](#)



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