

Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group

Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2017

Full name Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group

Principal address

c/o Warwickshire Museum, Market Place, Warwick CV34 4SA

Committee members

John Crossling (Chair)

Barry Dale

Max Down

Nigel Harris

Christine Hodgson

John Hiatt

Roy Johnston (Secretary)

Frances Morley

Roger Pinkney (Treasurer)

Co-opted (non-Trustee) Paul Stevenson

Observers

Dr Jon Radley – Curator of Natural Sciences, Warwickshire Museum

Anton Irving – Natural England

Bankers

HSBC, 46 The Square, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1EA

Independent examiner

Nigel Grounds, Mercia Community Accounting, Lorton, Tamworth, Staffordshire

Governance and management

The organisation is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 19th October 2011. A number of Trustees were elected or re-elected at the AGM 19th October 2016. All new Trustees undertake an Induction programme soon after their election.

The governing body of the WGCG is the Management Committee which comprises 9 Trustees and 2 observers. The Trustees co-opted an additional member with specific geological expertise There are 3 sub-committees – Education, Conservation and an Outreach Group, the latter is largely responsible for organising outside events. Decisions of these sub-committees are subject to approval by the Management Committee.

The charity has a series of documents outlining policies and procedures relating to financial management, reserves, management of risk, safety, volunteers and conflict of interest. These are subject to periodic review by the Management Committee. The most recent versions are contained within the 2017 Trustees Folder.

Aims and objectives

- a) To advance the education of the public in the significance of geology for the understanding and aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, for human settlements and economic activity, for recreation and leisure and for ecology.
- b) To conserve the geological heritage of Warwickshire through identification and active conservation of geological sites and through fostering an interest in and knowledge of the geology and landscapes of Warwickshire.

When planning our activities the Trustees take note of the Commission's guidance on public benefit. To meet these Objects and provide 'public benefit' the Trustees have promoted a concerted programme of Education, Outreach, Conservation and Publications. It remains the Group's policy to focus on the links between these activities.

None of our work would be possible without the willing cooperation of a large number of volunteers. They are involved directly in practical activities including supporting outreach events, designating, recording and monitoring Local Geological Sites (LGS) and maintaining the database, curating the Group's collection, supporting the lecture and field programme, contributing to and producing the bi-annual Newsletter and other publications, dealing with local enquiries, talking to community groups and not least attending a variety of meetings. This is in addition to the large number of people who are involved in running what is an increasingly complex organisation.

The Holloway Bequest

As previously reported the Group has received a bequest from a former member, Robert Holloway, which was invested in February 2012 so as to secure an annual income large enough to support the increased range of education, conservation, outreach and publications activities now being undertaken and to secure the long term future of the Group. The performance of the investment portfolio is monitored by a group of three Holding Trustees and is reported to the Management Committee at its bi-monthly meetings and to the membership at the AGM. Our financial adviser attends a meeting of the Management Committee once a year on the anniversary of the initial investment.

The Holloway Award, according to the wishes of the benefactor, aims amongst other things, to encourage an interest in geology in children and to support young geologists early in their career. This year has seen the successful expansion of the scope of these awards. Specifically support has been given to the following activities:

- Two primary schools had a day's geological fieldwork,
- A primary school had a trip to the Lapworth Geological Museum
- Secondary schools have been on visits to the demonstration mine run by the Camborne School of Mines,
- Four Birmingham University geology undergraduates and five from Camborne School of Mines (Exeter University) have been supported financially to complete their field mapping projects;

- Two MSc students from Camborne School of Mines have had periods of research experience with British Geological Survey
- Following the success of the previous year the Bequest has again funded two places for practicing teachers at a Summer School at Keele University which is designed to enhance the teaching of geology in secondary school. The Summer School is organized in conjunction with the Earth Science Education Forum (ESEF)
- A grant was made to support a team of students from Torquay Grammar School for Girls to compete in the 11th International Earth Sciences Olympiad, and we are pleased to report that they won a bronze medal in the individual assessment and a gold in the Earth Systems Project (a team poster presentation).
- In view of a report from Leicester University describing the work of students we had supported over the past three years in outreach activities we were pleased to commit to supporting the work for a further three years.

Education Programme

A core of the Group's activities is the monthly winter series of lectures (September to April). It continues to attract good audiences (average 60 per meeting) and covers a wide range of geological topics.

The programme of summer field excursions included Wednesday evening visits led by members and three whole-day visits. The day visits involved (i) a visit to the newly re-opened Lapworth Museum led by the curator; (ii) a visit to Martley; (iii) a visit to Wollaton Hall to see the Chinese fossil exhibition led by the curator (who was previously a student member of the group). The latter visit included a side trip to Derby museum (where our Chair started his career).

There were two residential trips – (i) A study of part of the Peak District and (ii) a study of the geology of the area around Durham. Both were led by an expert on the areas with the former being a member of the Group.

An important part of our educational programme is the work undertaken with primary school children. There were two field visits to the Burton Dassett Country Park led by one of the WGCG members who is an experienced school teacher. These were over-subscribed so a second group went to the Lapworth Museum in Birmingham University campus again supported by a member of the Group.

Education by means of Public Events (Outreach)

Activities have included mounting exhibitions and displays. To provide public educational benefit about the geology of the County and to publicise the Group's activities, displays were presented at the Shipton Wool Fair and the Stratford on Avon River Festival. It is policy to try to use different locations each year so as to contact as many people as possible. As well as photographic and specimen displays the Outreach Group has continued to develop an increasing variety of "fun" (and learning) activities for children and adults. The Group is also undertaking work to make its specimen displays more interactive and/or self-explanatory.

The main educational event this year was a one-day course on the identification of Igneous Rocks led by Dr Paul Olver of the Hereford & Worcester Earth Heritage Trust. The excellent informative and involving day was attended by some 30 members and was based on the leader's specimen collection plus items from the Group's reserves.

Publications

The group continues to produce a newsletter twice a year in Spring and Autumn. The interpretation panel has been erected with the help of WDC for one of our Local Geological Sites on the well-used Sustrans Trail in Kenilworth. Leaflets have been produced relating to the wall illustrating the geology of Warwickshire built in conjunction with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust at their Brandon Marsh Reserve. In addition two interpretation panels have been erected next to the wall. Linked to this work is an interactive on-line explanation of the wall and the stones which is available at www.wgcg.co.uk/brandon.wall. The new Solihull Building Stones Trail has been published on-line.

Conservation Programme

WGCG now has designated over 100 Local Geological Sites (LGS) in the County. A new site in Ufton Fields has been cleared which is a good example of White Lias limestone. The rotational monitoring of the condition of our Local Sites has continued in the current year with each site being visited at least every five years. 2016 saw the start of the second cycle of monitoring all sites. This activity also forms one of the components of the Group's mentoring policy with members receiving supervision and instruction in the application of the agreed criteria. The information is also fed into Warwickshire County Council's Single Data List and is also provided to Natural England in support of their construction of a national database of geologically designated sites.

In light of the Group's policy of concentrating physical clearance work and interpretation on those sites with high visitor levels to maximise the value of the effort, valuable joint work with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) has continued on the development and interpretation of one of their existing reserves in an abandoned limestone quarry. Even more significant this year has been the purchase by the WWT of an old sand and gravel quarry site which includes one of WGCG's LGS (Wood Farm). The quarry had now been backfilled and landscaped. It has become Bubbenhall Meadow, completing a conservation cycle and ensuring the sites future. WGCG is actively involved in the development plans for the Meadow which is important as a representative location for the Ice Age geology of Warwickshire.

The Conservation Sub-Committee continues to monitor new planning applications through the monthly Warwickshire County Council Bulletin and through being consulted on the Local Development Plans.

External Relations

In the course of the year members of the Group have assisted other local organisations with their public education programmes by giving talks or leading field excursions.

A Local Nature Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull has been established in partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), amongst other organizations. Progress of LNPs is slow due to funding problems but the cooperation has led to a closer working relationship with WWT.

As a member of the Geology Trusts the Group has cooperated on conservation matters with other county geology groups in the West Midlands and further afield. Through this organisation WGCG contributes to national environmental policy development and in particular to the Earth Sciences Educational Forum. It is gratifying that the Group is being increasingly seen as a source of geological and geoconservation expertise.

The Organisation's Policy on Reserves

In the charity's Reserves Policy, the purpose of the reserve is:

- to ensure continuity of services and benefits to members during lean times
- to contain shortfalls in current income to meet overhead costs and unforeseen setbacks
- to prepare funding bids for new projects
- to set aside a separate reserve of 'unrestricted' funds to finance grant-aided projects where expense claims are reimbursed in arrears by funding agencies
- to aid strategic planning to sustain and develop future activities
- to fund initiatives and to take advantage of new opportunities
- develop and maintain Holloway Bursaries to young and early career geologists in line with our benefactor's wishes

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Signed

(Chair) Date: