

## **English Riviera Scoops International Conference**

23 Sep 2014

The decision to award this prestigious UNESCO conference to the English Riviera Global Geopark was announced in yesterday in front of 500 delegates attending this year's Global Geoparks Network conference in Stonehammer Geopark in Canada. Representatives of the English Riviera Geopark bid committee, Nick Powe and Melanie Border, received the news from the Global Geopark Network executive board along with three young people from Torbay taking part in the GeoCollective project.

Tarrin Marie, Joe Tomkinson and James Copland were young Geopark ambassadors for the Bay, visiting schools, writing songs and making contacts with Geoparks around the world, gathering inspiration and ideas for an innovative opening ceremony in Torquay.

Torbay Council submitted the winning bid to UNESCO's head offices in July. Matthew Sudders, ambassador and permanent UK Delegate to UNESCO said: "It is great to see the English Riviera Global Geopark and the team behind it receive the recognition they deserve through the opportunity to host the prestigious conference on Global Geoparks."

Torbay Mayor Gordon Oliver, who spearheaded the campaign in order to generate economic and tourism benefits from holding a major international conference in the Bay, said: "This is great news for Torbay. Hosting this prestigious international conference will showcase the English Riviera's unique geological features on a global stage and bring over 600 delegates to Torbay for a four day itinerary of inspiring activities. We are delighted with the accolade that UNESCO has bestowed upon Torbay by bringing the next international conference here."

Prof Iain Stewart, patron of the English Riviera Global Geopark and TV broadcaster, said: "It's fantastic news – testament both to the world-class geology and landscape that we have along the Torbay coast and the exciting and imaginative ways that the Geopark – the world's first urban Geopark – has woven the 400 million year old rocky history of this region into the everyday lives of modern Devonians.

"The geological jewels of the English Riviera are something that we in the South West should be justifiably proud of. After all, they are the reason why geologists from all over the world will be converging on our shores in two years' time. It's going

to be a rock party to remember.”

Nick Powe, chairman of the English Riviera Global Geopark organisation said: “The prehistoric caves at Kents Cavern, Berry Head, Hope’s Nose and the coastline of Torbay are all iconic features of the Geopark but equally important is the cultural heritage, the food and traditions that have evolved from this foundation, and we’ll be showing all this off to the delegates.

“We were short-listed with venues around the World and being chosen is a massive achievement for Torbay. It catapults a well-known UK seaside resort into a completely different league, attracting international attention for our amazing natural environment in its vibrant town setting, putting us on the international map as a quality destination for visitors and investors.”

Melanie Border, English Riviera Global Geopark Coordinator said: “This really is fantastic. Without doubt, we were up against some strong competition so I’d like to thank all, locally, nationally and internationally who supported our bid. To be chosen to host the Global Conference is a real honour and reflects our standing within the Global Geopark Network. Of course this is just the beginning and I’m sure the next two years will fly by but how exciting.

“The GeoCollective were a massive hit with local children and residents and were of particular interest to the delegates as they were able to share the health and well-being benefits of creative engagement which will be a major focus for our conference.”

Cllr Alan Tyerman, Torbay Development Agency board member and chairman of the 2016 Conference Bid Committee said: “The Riviera International Centre is a perfect backdrop to the main keynote speaking events, and we are developing a fantastic programme of activities that will enable delegates to explore the unique features of Torbay’s natural environment that they will remember.”