

News Release

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For Immediate Release

Arts Council Supports GeoOpera for Torbay

Arts Council England has awarded £49,985 towards the creation of GeoOpera, bringing together exceptional talent including the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra to perform at the opening ceremony of the 7th International UNESCO Conference on Global Geoparks, taking place in Torbay in September 2016.

Inspired by the history, unique geology and culture of the world's one hundred and twenty UNESCO Global Geoparks, The GeoOpera will engage local community composers and performers of all ages through workshops and rehearsals. Local people will be invited to a special performance, and the GeoOpera will be made into a film with educational resources translated into eight major languages, to inspire audiences worldwide.

The 7th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks is expected to bring over eight hundred delegates from thirty plus countries to Torbay. Elected Mayor of Torbay Gordon Oliver said "We're looking forward to welcoming the world to Torbay in 2016, and now the GeoOpera will provide a world class welcome. A key aim of the Council and the English Riviera Global Geopark is to raise awareness of Torbay's status as a UNESCO Global Geopark, and help communities to be inspired by our unique natural heritage."

Phil Gibby, Area Director, Arts Council England, South West, said: 'Torbay is a priority area for us and we're delighted that this grant will support the community in being a part of such an important global event.'

Councillor Nicole Amil, Executive lead for Tourism, Culture and Harbours at Torbay Council said, "Torbay and the UNESCO English Riviera Global Geopark have already gained an international reputation for our innovative approach to employing the Geopark as a stimulus for high quality artistic practice. With the significant support we've secured from the Arts Council, GeoOpera will build on this reputation, providing a showcase for our local talent from across the community to a worldwide

audience.”

Research with GeoOpera Artistic Director Mark Laville, Plymouth University Geosciences and geological experts will inform the piece. Mark said, “GeoOpera will incorporate voice, music, performance and multimedia, a multilayered response to the incredible geological story of the planet. Twenty-five Community Composers, schoolchildren, youth and adult choirs will be engaged through outreach sessions. This community of voice, performance, and instrumental becomes the Performance Cast of over one hundred and ninety people, through extended rehearsals with the artistic team and Birmingham Symphony Orchestra musicians.”

Hugh Nankivell - Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra Devon Producer and lead composer of GeoOpera said “ GeoOpera won’t be possible without our communities help! Any young people aged 16-25, who have an interest in composition and sound, can get involved to make new music together in the Bay. We want people we want those who can read and write music but we also want those who cannot read and write music. We need a group to come together to share ideas and begin the compositional process to produce an epic new opera for the Bay. We will meet weekly from February 2016 to April 2016 as a group to initiate ideas and begin to arrange them together. If you would like more information please email: doorsteparts@gmail.com”

The conference and GeoOpera performance will be held at the Riviera International Conference Centre, 27 – 30th September 2016. For more information or to register interest in attendance, sponsorship or volunteering opportunities please visit www.ggn2016.com and @GGN2016 on twitter.

Editor Notes:

The English Riviera Global Geopark successfully bid for the 7th International Conference on Global Geoparks with the support of Torbay Council, Torbay Development Agency, Plymouth University, Exeter University, The Geological Society, British Geological Survey, English Geodiversity Forum, Natural England, Arts Council England, Natural History Museum and Flybe. The conference is expected to bring over £1.6million in visitor expenditure to Torbay

The conference takes place every two years and has previously been staged in China (2004) Northern Ireland (2006) Germany (2008) Malaysia (2010) Japan (2012) and Canada (2014.) 2016 will be the first occasion that the conference takes place in Great Britain.

There are seven Global Geoparks in the UK, out of a total UNESCO network of one hundred and eleven in thirty two countries. A Geopark is concerned with conservation of natural heritage, sustainable economic development, promotion of science education and community engagement.

On its 70th anniversary year and 40 years after the creation of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the Science Commission of UNESCO (United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture) at the UNESCO General Conference in Paris

recently has approved the statutes of the new “International Geosciences and Geoparks Programme” which will allow for the creation of the new site designation of “UNESCO Global Geoparks” and the re-designation of all 120 existing Global Geoparks, including Torbay, as new UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Previously operating with the informal support of UNESCO, the status of UNESCO Global Geoparks has been recognised under the new programme. The English Riviera, which includes the three towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham, and covers the entire Torbay area, became a Global Geopark in 2007 and, against competition from China and Europe, won the bid to host the next International Conference on Global Geoparks in September 2016 when delegates from around the world will attend what will now be the first UNESCO Global Geoparks conference.

About UNESCO and the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) aims to enhance peace, security and sustainable development by fostering international collaboration through its work in education, science, culture, communication and information.

The UK National Commission (UKNC) works to support the UK’s contribution to UNESCO and bring the benefits of UNESCO to the UK.

The UKNC has three core priorities:

- To provide independent policy advice to devolved and central government on UNESCO related issues
- To support the UK government’s agenda in helping UNESCO to become more institutionally effective
- To help UK individuals and institutions to access UNESCO resources and accreditations

In carrying out these roles, the UKNC relies on advice and support of its expert network, including specialists in the fields of education, culture, the sciences and communication and information from across the UK.

Relevant links:

<http://www.unesco.org.uk/>

www.ggn2016.com

www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk

For further information please contact: Angela Cappello, Communications Officer on 01803 208851.

