

SOMERSET GEOLOGY GROUP

Update 3: Autumn 2016 (October 2016)

Working in partnership with Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC), a part of Somerset Wildlife Trust;

Dear all - This is to update you on our latest activity and to thank everyone who responded to our **Spring Update** and my email in May, to provide more of an idea of who-you-are and what potential expertise and voluntary support you may be able to offer our proposed '**Review of Somerset's Local Geological Sites**'. This was the priority identified at our September 2015 open meeting and over this spring and summer, Garry Dawson and myself have been working together to move this potential project forward. We had two preliminary planning meetings with SERC and, in the first week of October, held a first '**Steering Group**' meeting. We now have a proposal for the project (to run for 2 to 3 years starting in 2017) and are delighted to say that we have the endorsement of Exmoor National Park, Natural England and Somerset Earth Science Centre.

We are ready to start fundraising and have a first offer of sponsorship: from Andy King's consultancy, **Geckoella** (£500; plus 5 days help-in-kind with the pilot stage of the project).

- *Please let us know if you can assist in any way with fundraising contacts or sponsorship for the project. There is potential for help-in-kind as well as a donation.*

We have been making contact with adjacent county groups and gathering information from across the country to help us identify latest best-practice. Some careful thinking is needed, for example, on the site assessment form we will use for the review, as we need to focus on gathering a more robust evidence base and assessment procedure. The four criteria for selection remain the same: '*scientific*', '*education*', '*historic*' or '*aesthetic*' (landscape) interest, but most of our Somerset LGSs were identified before the DEFRA guidance in 2006, which requires a more substantive approach.

We plan to involve volunteers from our group (as per your various replies) and recruited through SERC – including providing opportunities for volunteer placements for geology students.

- *Please encourage any geology students you know, who may be potentially interested in voluntary experience in their holiday next year, to express an interest with SERC*

Please bear with us re your offers of volunteer support: it may still be some time, for example, before we are at a stage to involve specialist advice in reviewing groups of sites. We are in a bit of a chicken-and-egg situation in terms of organising capacity! At this stage we're prioritising trying to get the review underway (including in due course project working group meetings, where we hope to take some of your offers of help). We hope to plan an open meeting in the spring to provide an opportunity for people to meet, update everyone in more detail and look at developing our capacity.

Wendy Lutley, Coordinator

Somerset Geology Group is a member of **GeoConservationUK**, the Association of UK groups, whose mission is to: '*encourage the appreciation, conservation and promotion of local/regional geological sites for education and public benefit*'.

http://wiki.geoconservationuk.org.uk/index.php5?title=Main_Page