



The Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership



Valuing our
Earth heritage



What is geodiversity?

Geodiversity is the natural range (diversity) of geological features (rocks, minerals, sediments, fossils, structures), geomorphological features (landforms and processes), soil and water features that compose the physical landscape.

Geodiversity is our inheritance of the physical aspect of the natural world, to be studied, understood, used and enjoyed, and passed on to future generations.

Norfolk has a rich Earth heritage

Our Earth heritage has been exploited ever more intensively for human benefit for many thousands of years. The most important sites and features are conserved in protected sites and areas, but even these may be threatened. All development impacts in one way or another on geodiversity; it may enhance or damage it.

On the positive side, development may:

- create access to new geological information for research and education, via temporary or permanent rock / sediment exposures.

On the negative side, development may:

- destroy the integrity of landforms that have taken many thousands of years to develop;
- destroy finite geological deposits, and the palaeo-environmental information they contain, including evidence of early human settlement and climate change;
- contaminate and deplete soils and water resources.

Recording and sampling of temporary exposures (e.g. at construction sites and quarries) can preserve important information for future research.

The Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership is working to raise awareness of these issues, and to promote a greater understanding of the value of our natural, physical environment.



Studying a new exposure of rare interglacial sediments at Norton Subcourse quarry.



Mill Drove Quarry at Middleton, extracting Carstone for hardcore and building material.

Working in Partnership

The **Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership** is a forum for individuals and organisations committed to conserving Norfolk's Earth heritage. Set up in 2008, the NGP is managed by a Steering Group comprised of representatives from statutory agencies, local authorities, academic institutions, conservation organisations and environmental consultancy, as well as Earth science specialists. Together they provide a wide range of relevant expertise.



Our vision

- that the contribution of geodiversity to the landscape, biodiversity, economy and culture of Norfolk will be valued and understood,
- that the geodiversity of Norfolk will be protected and enhanced for the sustainable use and benefit of all life.

This will be realised through the Norfolk Geodiversity Action Plan (NGAP). GAPs provide a new and comprehensive approach to conserving Earth heritage, setting out a management framework for geology, geomorphology, soils and water resources for a defined area or an organisation. GAPs are modelled on the successful Biodiversity Action Plan format. Since 2004, a range of Local GAPs have been prepared in the UK, covering various Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, counties, metropolitan areas and National Parks; there are also aggregate company GAPs. There is a UKGAP which sets out a national framework.

The NGAP presents a set of objectives, actions, agents and timescales for geoconservation in Norfolk from 2011 to 2016, in five work areas:

1. Understanding and auditing our geodiversity resources;
2. Embedding geodiversity in plans and policies;
3. Protecting and enhancing our geodiversity resources;
4. Promoting geodiversity awareness and understanding;
5. Managing the Norfolk Geodiversity Action Plan.

We invite you to join us.

Examples of our work for geodiversity

- **Understanding and auditing our geodiversity resources**
Carrying out an Audit of over 350 Earth heritage sites and features, and checking the details through a ground-truthing programme.
Promoting Rescue Geology initiatives, to record temporary geological exposures.
- **Embedding geodiversity in plans and policies**
Responding to planning policy consultations at local and national levels.
Developing and testing a Sensitivity Assessment Methodology for use in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in Norfolk.
- **Protecting and enhancing our geodiversity resources**
Identifying sites and features for designating as County Geodiversity Sites (Local Sites of importance for geodiversity).
Developing a policy document on priorities for geoconservation.
- **Promoting geodiversity awareness and understanding**
Publishing Norfolk's Earth Heritage - Valuing our geodiversity, a 74-page handbook (2010) - downloadable from <http://www.nbis.org.uk/gap/> .
Publishing the Norfolk Geodiversity Action Plan.
Maintaining the NGP website, including many links and resources.
Running public events, such as a lime burning demonstration and a Chalk heritage awareness day.
- **Managing the Norfolk Geodiversity Action Plan**
Developing the Partnership through the Steering Group.
Carrying out fund-raising.
Contributing to regional and national geodiversity initiatives.

Find out more

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