

Picture This

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Over one hundred local school children are taking part in an exciting new photography competition to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Causeway Coastal area's designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The 'Picture This! 20 years of the Causeway Coast AONB' project was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £17,400 and will provide opportunities for the children to learn about the natural, cultural and built heritage of the area.

Children from Portrush PS, Bushmills PS, St Patrick's and St Bridget's PS, Dunseverick PS, Straidbilly PS and St Patrick's PS, Portrush will take part in workshops to learn about the unique heritage of the area and the criteria for achieving AONB status. The pupils will visit a range of local sites, including Portbradden, White Park Bay and Ballintoy Harbour, and with help from biodiversity officers and a professional photographer, will take photographs under the theme of valuing the environment.

The photographs will be submitted as part of the 'Picture This!' schools competition and the winner will be announced at an awards ceremony during the Annual Conference of the National Association of AONBs, which is being staged in Northern Ireland for the first time in July.

The children's images will be used in a variety of publications and promotional materials that will be available from Tourist Information Centres, schools and libraries throughout the region. An exhibition of the photographs will also be produced to tour sites including Coleraine Museum, Ballycastle Museum, Causeway School Museum, Bushmills Education Resource Centre and NIEA Coastal Zone Centre, Portrush.

Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "Picture This! is a fun and innovative project that will engage the children with the rich heritage of their area, from the diverse marine and plant life found in rock pools and on cliff tops, to historic monuments, buildings and local myths and legends. The project provides an opportunity to stimulate a lifelong interest in the conservation and protection of the natural environment, and the images captured by the children will enable us all to take a fresh look at our amazing local landscapes."

The Trust Director, CCGHT said: "Picture This! really does embody what Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are all about. It's about engaging young people in their environment and instilling a real sense of belonging. Watching the children enjoying their surroundings and capturing it for all to see really does bring home the need to look after these precious landscapes and raise awareness of the diverse heritage. We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the designation of the Causeway Coast AONB this year and in only a few years time, it will be these children who will be the custodians of the AONB. What better way to see the Causeway Coast AONB afresh than through the eyes of children? It really does want to make you get out there to explore and have fun."

Further information

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