



PRESS RELEASE

28th May 2019

Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science visits the Lyell Centre

The British Geological Survey (BGS) and Heriot-Watt University (HWU) welcomed Richard Lochhead, MSP, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, to the Lyell Centre on Tuesday 28th May.

Mr Lochhead and Dr Pieter van de Graaf, Head of University Research and Knowledge Exchange, Scottish Government, met with Dr Tracy Shimmield, Director of the Lyell Centre, Professor Garry Pender, Deputy Principal Research and Innovation, Heriot-Watt University, and Dr Susan Loughlin, Head of Volcanology, British Geological Survey, who shared with him the work that the Lyell Centre is doing in the areas of marine geoscience, energy and earth hazards.

The Lyell Centre is a strategic partnership between Heriot-Watt University and the British Geological Survey, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, the Scottish Funding Council and Heriot-Watt University, which enables them to work together combining their expertise in geoscience. Exploring themes ranging from geology and geophysics to marine ecosystems, the centre's combination of pure and applied expertise employs innovative methods and technologies to society's most important environmental science and energy challenges.

Mr Lochhead was also given a tour of the BGS Marine Operations base at the £21m purpose-built facility.

The Science Minister, Richard Lochhead said: "I am consistently impressed by the ways in which scientists in Scotland are following in the footsteps of geologist Charles Lyell and forging ahead in technologies with the potential to transform the way we live. It was my pleasure to visit the Lyell Centre and hear about the contribution that this state of art facility can make to land and marine conservation, geology and geoscience and to research and innovation in energy issues that are such a current, national and global matter.

"This is just one example of how cutting edge research, funded by the Scottish Government, through the Scottish Funding Council, is bringing together universities and industry to encourage collaboration across the country and internationally."

Dr Tracy Shimmield, Director of the Lyell Centre, said: "It has been a pleasure to welcome the Minister to the Lyell Centre today, and update him on the partnership between BGS and Heriot-Watt University which has brought together scientists from various disciplines to form a unique base in Scotland for land and marine geoscience expertise.

"The Lyell Centre strives to work with universities, businesses, and industry for the benefit of society, in Scotland, the UK and also internationally.

"We have been able to share with the Minister some of the initiatives we are involved in, the science and innovation the Lyell Centre has to offer, and how we are keen to develop this while continuing to forge strong partnerships with other organisations, so we can ensure that our societies are prepared for the future."

Professor Garry Pender, Deputy Principal Research and Innovation, Heriot-Watt University, said:
“Heriot-Watt’s partnership with the BGS has brought together key expertise within the Lyell Centre, providing a major centre for Scotland’s earth and marine sciences.

“It is a relationship that continues to go from strength-to-strength and allowed us to deliver a unique research proposition and the associated enhanced learning opportunities for our students.

“Today’s meeting was a chance to promote this success story to the Minister and highlight how the Lyell Centre has helped raise Scotland’s international reputation in geoscience.”

Ends

Notes for Editors:

The Lyell Centre

The Lyell Centre is a strategic partnership between the British Geological Survey and Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, which builds on our individual and combined interdisciplinary expertise in land and marine conservation, geology and geoscience. Based at Heriot-Watt University's Edinburgh campus, the Lyell Centre strives to be one of Europe's leading centres for research and expertise in the earth and marine sciences.

The British Geological Survey

The British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system. More about the BGS can be found at www.bgs.ac.uk

Heriot-Watt University

Heriot-Watt is a specialist, pioneering University, with a global presence, world renowned, innovative research and highly employable graduates. www.hw.ac.uk

For further details please contact:

Claire Buchanan, Lyell Communications Manager, British Geological Survey, The Lyell Centre, Research Avenue South, Edinburgh, EH14 4AP

Press Office: 07790607010

Email: hbuc@bgs.ac.uk

Twitter: @LyellCentre @BritGeoSurvey @HeriotWattUni