

# Latest news from the National Cycle Network

## Getting ahead in the Valleys



A brand new seven-mile path linking Merthyr Tydfil and Pontwalby in the Neath Valley in South Wales is open for business having been completed this month.

The path, which is part of NCN46, took four years to build and is the final part of the Rhondda Cynon Taf section of the “Heads of the Valleys” cycle route, part of the Valleys Cycle Network (VCN), a fantastic network of routes extending from Abergavenny in the east to Kidwelly in the west. **We have now constructed over 100 kilometres of new route under the VCN programme!!!**

Sustrans worked with Rhondda Cynon Taf council to complete the path, which was funded by the Welsh government via the Heads of the Valleys programme. Rachel Lister, VCN project manager at Sustrans explained “The path is a fantastic facility and forms part of a great leisure route across the valleys. This route has been a long-held ambition by Sustrans and other partners, so to see the completion of the Rhondda Cynon Taf section of the Heads of the Valleys cycle route is a major milestone.”



## Connect2 update

This month's main headline for Connect2 is that of the 83 schemes that make up the programme, 82 are now on site. 23 are complete and open to the public, while a further 43 only have minor works left to complete before they are finished.

It's also been a bumper month for route openings and events with more coming up:

### Bradford

On 1<sup>st</sup> September we held a fantastic community event to celebrate the opening of Manchester Road bridge for cycling and walking, and the unveiling of its portrait bench.

Several hundred people took part in a procession over the bridge, and around 200 entered our Fresh air miles treasure hunt. The art bike proved very popular with the kids too!



And if you wished you'd been there, you can see the opening event and hear what local people had to say about their new route, by watching the video at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izxFuq2H32E&feature=youtu.be>

## Worcester

Hundreds of locals joined us to celebrate the opening of a network of new walking and cycling routes in Worcester on 19 Aug. Worcester has recently benefited from Sustrans' lottery-funded project to bring the National Cycle Network into the heart of thousands of communities across the UK. The iconic Diglis bridge across the River Severn was installed in 2010, and this has opened up the whole riverside area of the city to fantastic new walking and cycling routes.



## Bedlington and Blyth

The official ceremony to open Bedlington and Blyth was also held on 1 September with James Turner, head of Big Lottery in the region, cutting the ribbon. Over 350 people enjoyed celebrations and activities in Gallagher Park. The launch included guided bike rides, stunt displays, free bicycle repairs and a bike-powered smoothie Maker.



And there are more openings planned for this month with a celebration walk and ride planned for the route between Sleaford and Leasingham on 22 September, and the official opening of Conwy Morfa walking and cycling link between Conwy and Penmaenmawr (pictured below) on 27 September with Carl Sargeant, the Minister for Local Government and communities opening the route.





And on the topic of photos of schemes under construction, please see below for some of our most recent pictures:

In Dewsbury repair work to the viaduct parapets is moving on apace (pictured left) while in Bath on the Two Tunnels project, work is underway on construction of the bridge over Dartmouth Avenue in Bath (aerial photo pictured right).



In Warwickshire the link between the new bridge on the Kenilworth Greenway and the University of Warwick is now finished and open, and has been road tested by a running NCN Development Manager and his dog Freddie. There's also now a nice new portrait bench on the route featuring John Starley of Coventry who invented the safety bicycle, Helen Martin of Kenilworth who helped to set up the University of Warwick in 1963, and Victorian bicycle design pioneer Edward Fardon of nearby Stoneleigh.



Elsewhere, knowing how much everyone out there loves bridges, for those for whom a simple photo is no longer enough, please click the link below to see a time-lapse video of the new bridge carrying the railway over the cycle route at Royston being installed:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFlzUc\\_Y\\_Fl&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFlzUc_Y_Fl&feature=youtu.be)

Much engineering excitement at Rhyl where the new Foryd Harbour pedestrian and cycle bridge will span the River. The bridge will connect the communities of Rhyl and Kinnel Bay with a safe, direct route that will become the show piece for the network of walking and cycling paths that have been developed in this area over the last few years, providing a crossing for NCN5 and linking the nearby counties and communities of Conwy and Denbighshire. Cheerful engineer Martin Philpott reports that when it comes to piling the central pier section of the scheme, the sheet piles are now already 10m into the ground. The scheme involves construction of a new slip way and extending the existing harbour wall by 100m. Slipway works can only be done at low tide, and the contractors are using quick set concrete that reacts with water to harden so that they can maximise the time available. Meanwhile the bridge is at the fabricators being slowly put together.



### **New path thru Rhu**

School children at Rhu Primary school near Helensburgh opened a new cycling and walking path this month which was built thanks to funding from Sustrans Community Links programme and from Argyll and Bute Council. The route is part of the local cycle network and aims to encourage walking and cycling on the journey to school, also easing traffic congestion around the school gates. An old pre-existing walkway was re-routed to avoid steps, making it bike, wheelchair and buggy-friendly, and pupils and members of the school's Eco Committee walked the route this month to mark its opening. To see some very nice interviews with the school children, click on this link to the video: <http://helensburgh.tv/stories/2861-rhu-primary-pupils-open-new-cycle-path>



### **Chester draws**

Chester Greenway has seen some issues with conflict between cyclists and pedestrians in recent months so having already added some "Share with Care" signs along the route Area Manager Alice Rickwood has gone a step further to get the message across by adding warning signs to the surface of the surface of the path. These additional "Share with Care" signs are designed to remind people to share the route and behave sensibly, and have been fully supported by the local council (NB for

the sharp-eyed among you who notice that there is white stuff all over the signs, this is just the finishing agent which hadn't been completely brushed off at the time of photography). We have added six of these surface signs on the path in the locations where there have been most reports of speeding cyclists.



### 6 of the best

The work of Sustrans' Rangers on the NCN in Sheffield caught the eye of a reporter on the Sheffield Telegraph this month who has written a glowing report about the efforts of Simon Geller and the Sheffield-based team on NCN6. Rangers were signing the route between Sheffield City Centre and Forge Dam as NCN6 this month.

To read the interview in full go here:

<http://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/news/route-rangers-point-the-way-for-cyclists-1-4838821>



### Galton Bridge

And on the subject of work by Rangers, behold a photo of Gregg Smith who has done battle with the considerable vegetation on NCN 5 at Galton Bridge near Smethwick in the West Midlands.

This is a well used ramp on the route that is now considerably easier to access thanks to Gregg and the team's efforts.



### Tree training

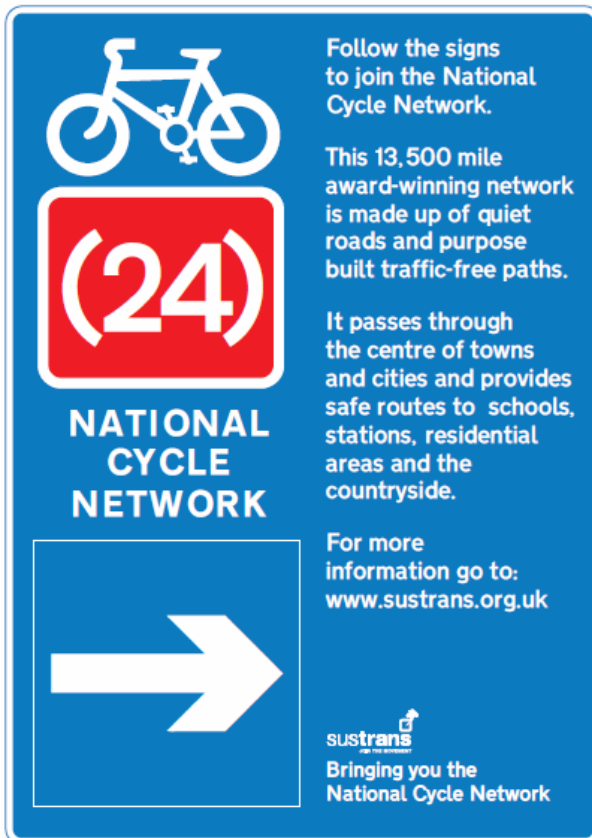
Sustrans will be running courses throughout November to train staff how to inspect trees on land that we own. The course will be LANTA accredited and as a result staff carrying out inspections will be able to say

- 1 – Trees are fine
- 2 – Trees need to be cut down
- 3 – We need to get a proper arboreculturalist to inspect a certain tree



## New signing TIN

Another new Technical Information Note is ready to hit the streets, and this one is about the National Cycle Network. TIN 27 “National Cycle Network – Signing and Route Branding” is now available on the Technical pages of Susnet and deals with, among other things, such topics as how to sign sections of NCN that are isolated from the rest of the network but are up to NCN standard, how and when to use finials, and Sustrans’ new strap line for non-highway signs “Sustrans bringing you the National Cycle Network”.



## And finally

A nice note to finish on that has come to us via Pru Comben in the supporters team, from happy cyclist Stuart Camp. Feel good.....

*“To all the team at Sustrans. My wife and I have just completed the Way of the Roses today. We just wanted to congratulate everyone involved in the work you do. The route was amazing, well thought through and planned, to ensure safety and the best opportunity to see what this part of the UK can offer. We can’t imagine the amount of work that goes in to create a route of this kind. Thank you and carry on the good work”*

Martyn Brunt  
September 2012