

For immediate release: Friday 5th June

Have your say on the Wye Valley Railway: from disuse to a traffic free path for all

DROP-IN CONSULTATIONS AT:

Brockweir, Mackenzie Hall	10 – 4pm Saturday 20th June
Tintern, Anchor Inn	10 – 4pm Saturday 27th June
Chepstow, Methodist Church Hall	10 – 5pm Saturday 4th July

Residents are being invited to have their say on proposals to restore the currently disused Wye Valley Railway between Chepstow, Tintern and Brockweir as a traffic-free path for walkers, wheelchair users, people pushing buggies, cyclists and horse riders.

The proposal currently includes plans to build a new bridge over the Wye at Tintern, at the site of the old railway bridge which people may remember carried its last passenger train fifty years ago. It will also reopen two existing tunnels, one a kilometre long, completing an idyllic route for journeys to school, the shops or just to enjoy the beautiful local scenery, without having to use the car.

A series of drop in consultations in Brockweir, Tintern and Chepstow over the coming weeks will offer people the chance to find out more, get answers to any questions and inform the planning application which will follow. Information available on the day will include the latest designs, maps of the route and access points.

NEWS
RELEASES

These proposals have been developed with strong support from those living and working locally and have been guided by working closely with wildlife experts to determine how to best look after local species, habitats and biodiversity.

Jeremy Cowen from Wye Valley Communities for Safe Cycling urges people to respond to this consultation: “The prospect of a safe, traffic-free path re-establishing the historic connection along the Wye Valley Railway excites the imagination and has the potential to allow the local community to leave the car at home and move more sensitively about our beautiful valley away from the notoriously dangerous A466 and B4228. Furthermore, it has the added potential of enhancing business in the Valley, which is so desperately needed in the current climate.

“For these reasons, Wye Valley Communities for Safe Cycling would encourage local communities and councils to back this Sustrans initiative, and seize the opportunity for a wonderful facility which will benefit us all.”

Rupert Crosbee, Sustrans’ Area Manager says: “We’re presenting our current ideas at these consultation events in Brockweir, Tintern and Chepstow over the coming weeks. We’re looking forward to welcoming as many people as possible along as we want to hear more about what they think before putting our proposals forward to the local councils. What more can I say – come along, have your say and be part of the proposals – we want to hear from you!”

Sustrans hopes to submit a planning application for the route to Monmouthshire County and the Forest of Dean District Councils in Summer/Autumn this year.

This consultation has been funded by the Sustainable Development Fund, a Welsh Assembly Government initiative in Wales and a DEFRA initiative in England in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

There is tremendous support to enable people to walk and cycle more. In December 2007, Sustrans’ Connect2 won £50 million from the Big Lottery Fund in a televised vote won by a landslide. Some of this money is earmarked to putting this bridge and its surrounding paths in place.

Further information about Sustrans, including other news releases and detailed online route mapping, is available through our website: www.sustrans.org.uk

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For further information please contact the Press Office

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NOTES

- Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Its vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. It is achieving this through innovative but practical solutions to the UK's transport challenges.
- Sustrans' flagship project, the National Cycle Network, is now around 12,000 miles and runs within one mile of 55 per cent of the UK population. During 2007 over 354 million trips were made on the Network. There are around 2,500 rangers helping to look after the National Cycle Network.
- Throughout 2009 Sustrans is encouraging more women to cycle. Our website www.bikebelles.org.uk has advice for women on what to wear, where to go, how to get started and a specially recruited women's panel are sharing ideas and experiences. The thoughts and concerns of women, gathered throughout the year, will be used to inform our approach to UK governments with proposals on how to help more women get out and about on bikes, to the benefit of their health, the environment and our economy.
- Sustrans' Connect2 is a UK-wide project that will transform local travel in 79 communities by creating new bridges and crossings to overcome busy roads, rivers and railways, and linking these to networks of walking and cycling routes. As a result millions of people will be able to walk and cycle more for everyday journeys.
- Sustrans' Connect2 won £50 million from the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The People's Millions as a result of a public vote televised on ITV1 in December 2007.

- Connect2 is a £142 million scheme - £50 million from the largest ever single lottery grant – and the remaining millions in match funding for individual projects.
- The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. It was established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.
Big Lottery Fund Press Office: 020 7211 1888
Full details of Big Lottery Fund projects and grant awards are available at: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

