

2008 was a very busy and successful year that saw the development of new sections of the National Cycle Network, the first steps in delivering Connect2, the completion of the Rural Safe Routes to Schools pilot and the increased participation of local communities in the work that we do.

Through funding from the Northern Ireland Assembly and the European Union we completed over 200 miles of National Cycle Network including Greenways for everyday journeys to work and schools, shops and longer distance routes for touring and leisure.

Developing the Comber Greenway was a model project with expertly constructed paths supported by our first community engagement officer. Local communities planted over 1000 trees, organised events, and Sustrans staff and volunteers worked closely with schools and community groups to encourage usage and ownership.

The Rural Safe Routes to Schools project provided hands-on support from Sustrans staff for 18 schools using motivational events, on road cycle training and engineering works, enabling young people to change the way they travel. We worked in partnership with Government departments to deliver the project and with the Northern Ireland Assembly to publicise the positive results.

Based on the success of our work we have demonstrated that in partnership with others, through practical projects and community engagement, we can help people make transport and lifestyle choices that will benefit their health and their environment.

In Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of the Republic during 2008 Sustrans...

- completed the **Rural Safe Routes to Schools programme** at 18 schools with results showing positive changes in travel behaviour away from cars to walking and cycling
- completed the **Comber Greenway** providing a new and very popular **seven mile traffic free** section of the National Cycle Network from Comber to the heart of East Belfast
- officially launched **200 miles of National Cycle Network** including sections along the Lower Bann, the Faughan Valley, the Ulster Canal and around Strangford Lough
- worked on agreements with our **six Connect2 scheme partners** with pathworks progressing on the Newtownabbey Way and the Greenway in Ballymoney
- increased our active volunteer community rangers to **75**
- saw the delivery of the **first hub routes in the Republic of Ireland** and towpath works at Mullingar.

We reported that usage increased on the National Cycling Network in countries across the UK, with **10 million journeys** taking place in Northern Ireland.



79% of Headteachers believe the Rural Safe Routes to Schools initiative had a very good or excellent impact on helping their pupils become **more physically active.**

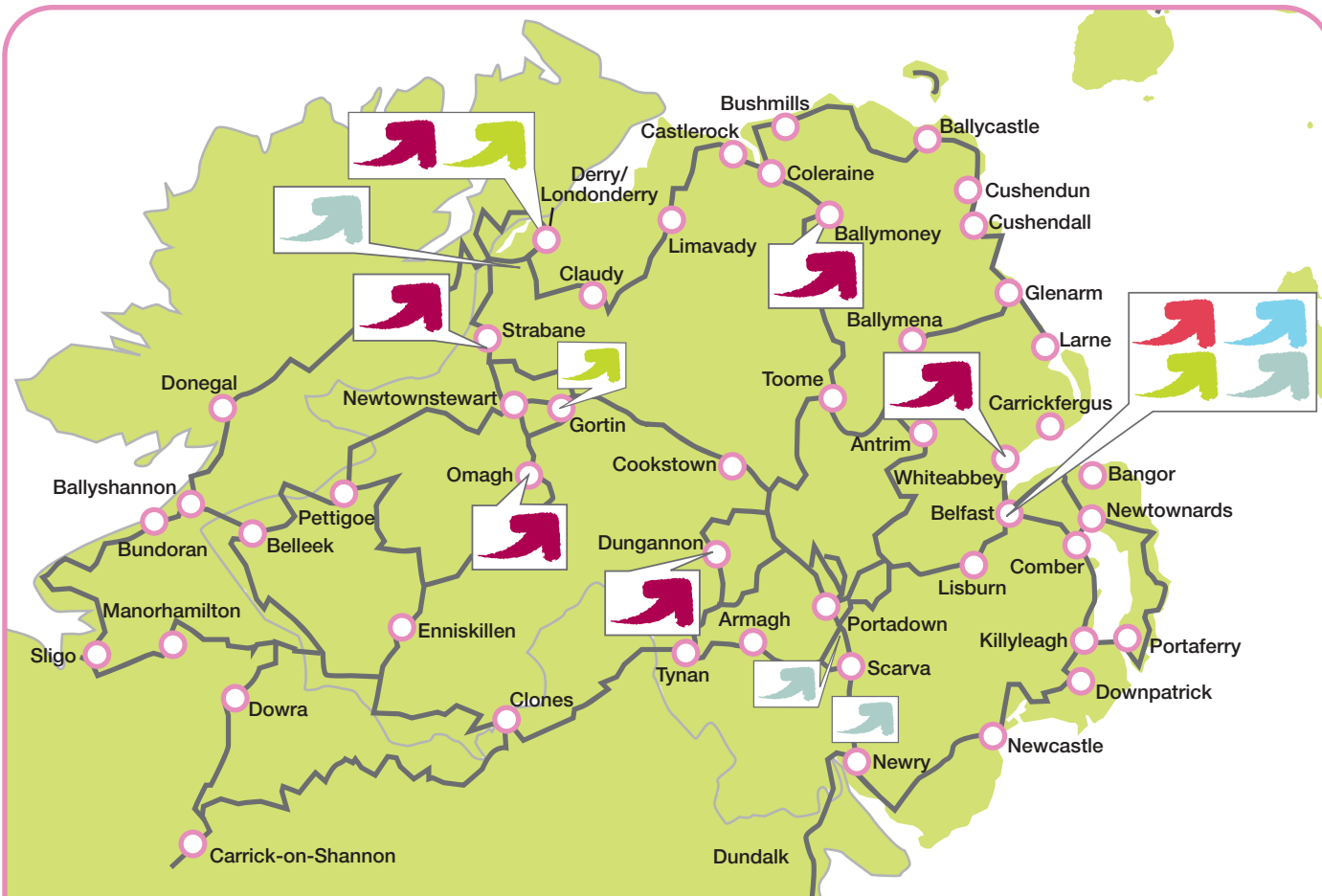


Parents, pupils and teachers

of Killylea Primary School in Armagh were concerned about congestion at the school gates. They felt that the resultant pollution was excessive and created an unsafe and unhealthy environment for everyone. The school decided to encourage walking and cycling as part of a healthier lifestyle.

With Sustrans' help, the children dressed up, decorated their bikes, held a virtual walk and cycle around the world and formed a new environment committee that encourages everyone to walk and cycle to school.

Benefits: Before the initiative **66%** of children at Killylea Primary School said they usually travelled to school by car. This **dropped to 14%** after Sustrans' help.




— National Cycle Network

 Sustrans offices

 **Art & the Travelling Landscape - selected artworks and trails**
Art & the Travelling Landscape increases access to the arts as an imaginative and inspiring way to explore wider aspects of human experience and attract people to try walking and cycling.

 **Connect2 schemes**
Connect2 is the BIG Lottery funded walking and cycling project that is transforming local travel in communities across the UK.

 **School Travel Team**
Sustrans' School Travel is working with thousands of schools to help inspire and support safe, sustainable and healthy school journeys.

 **Volunteer Ranger support staff**
Sustrans' 2,500 volunteer Rangers are the eyes and ears of the National Cycle Network, helping to ensure that the Network is kept as safe and attractive as possible for all users.

For more information about Sustrans and the National Cycle Network visit www.sustrans.org.uk or call 0845 113 00 65.

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Photography: Sustrans staff. Design: www.trmvs.co.uk



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