

# Safe Routes to schools

Northern Ireland

Summer 2007

## £1.3million to tackle rural school run

**DARD Minister Michelle Gildernew  
launches Rural Safe Routes to Schools**



Press Eye

Young cyclists and representatives from the 18 successful Rural Schools joined many guests including Michelle Gildernew Minister for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to officially launch the Rural Safe Routes to School Programme at the Ecos Millennium Environmental Centre in Ballymena.

The project aims to achieve a 10% reduction in car journeys in participating schools and to increase levels of walking and cycling by June 2008. Two School Travel Advisors will work with the schools to produce and implement School Travel Plans tailored to meet each school's specific needs to enable children to travel in an active, environmentally-friendly and thus more sustainable way.

The project will make improvements in and around selected schools to encourage more pupils to walk and cycle and will include measures such as building new cycling and walking routes to installing baggage lockers and cycle sheds.

**Welcome** to the first edition of our newsletter specially designed for the rural schools taking part in the **Rural Safe Routes to School Project**. The newsletter will keep teachers, pupils and their parents in touch with all the events & activities that are taking place and will give everyone the opportunity to share ideas & opinions.

We would love to hear your suggestions on what you would like to see in future editions of your newsletter, why not contact William or Jill on 028 9043 4569 or email your ideas to [ruralschools@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:ruralschools@sustrans.org.uk)

Comments can also be sent to Sustrans 3rd floor, Marquis Building, 89-91 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8FE.

In total £1.3million of funding from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) through the EU Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity, Department for Regional Development (DRD) Roads Service, the Department of Education and the DOE Road Safety Education Branch will be shared between the 18 rural schools.

William Methven, Rural Safe Routes to School Project Manager for Sustrans said: "We know that many youngsters want to cycle or walk to school but very few actually do. The popularity of this project shows a real and growing interest in travel that is both healthy and good for the environment. We believe this scheme will make a positive difference to the lives of hundreds of young people and help make Northern Ireland more sustainable for generations to come."

Speaking at the launch Michelle Gildernew Minister for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development said "Safe Routes to Schools is an exciting scheme that can help to change the way children travel to school, reducing the level of pollution and number of cars on our roads and improve children's health and development. Safe Routes to Schools is about empowering our communities to make the school journey safer and healthier for everyone."

In total 75 Rural Schools from throughout Northern Ireland applied to the project. The selection of the final list was challenging due to the very high standards of applications.

Congratulations to: Ballinamallard Primary School Ballinamallard; Broadbridge Primary School, Eglinton; Cloughmills Primary School, Cloughmills; Gracehill Primary School; Ballymena, Hezlett Primary School, Castlerock; Kilbride Primary School, Doagh; Killylea Primary School, Armagh; Killyleagh Primary School, Killyleagh; Down, Moneymore Primary School, Moneymore, Magherafelt; St Colmcille's Primary School, Claudy; St Jarlath's Primary School, Dungannon; St John's Primary School, Swatragh; St Joseph's Primary School, Bessbrook, Newry; St Mary's Primary School, Gortaclea, Cushendall; St Mary's Primary School, Lurgan Craigavon; St Patrick's Primary School, Castlederg; St Patrick's Primary School, Derrygonnelly and Templepatrick Primary School, Ballyclare.

For more information contact **William Methven, Rural Safe Routes to School Manager** on 028 9043 4569 or e mail [William.methven@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:William.methven@sustrans.org.uk)



## A message from John Grimshaw



This year, Sustrans celebrates its 30th anniversary. During those 30 years we have striven to emphasise the importance of the school journey in terms of the traffic it generates, the opportunity it provides for a

daily dose of physical activity and its habit forming credentials for journeys later in life.

The enthusiasm for change amongst young people is exemplified by the number of children taking to two wheels as part of our Rural Safe Routes to Schools project and is a spur for us to do more. In June, Sustrans launches our Change Your World campaign to encourage everyone, young and old, to change the way they travel for at least one journey during the first week of July.

You may also be interested in Connect2, our project competing for the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: the People's Millions, which would transform 79 communities throughout the UK. If successful, Connect2 schemes will provide safe routes between local communities, schools, parks, leisure centres and other places that young people want to reach safely. **To find a Connect 2 project in your area go to [www.sustransconnect2.org.uk](http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk)**

John Grimshaw, MBE  
Founder and Chief Executive

Sustrans



## Meet the Team

William Methven and Jill McDonald are the Rural Safe Routes to School team. Alongside the 18 schools selected for the Rural Safe Routes to Schools programme they will be producing and implementing School Travel and will encourage school children to travel in an active and environmentally-friendly way.

### William Methven - Rural Safe Routes to Schools Project Manager

Prior to taking up the post of Rural Safe Routes to Schools Project Manager, William swapped a 25 year career in business to work in the environmental sector setting up his own environmental business. William lives in Bangor and has 3 school age children and is a former Director of Sustainable Projects, Ireland who are building an eco village in Co Tipperary.

### Jill McDonald - Rural Safe Routes to Schools Development Officer

Jill has a background in sports and community development and loves cycling. She has been on various cycle touring holidays, and uses her bike to get to work each day. In her role as Development Officer she will be working with schools when they are organizing events, looking for ideas, doing workshops in classes, and will help the school travel planning process! Jill is looking forward to working with so many great schools!



### Change Your World

Swap just one car trip from 1-7 July and choose something that's better for the planet instead. And if we all give up one car journey that week we'll reduce car traffic by 10%. If that sounds like a good idea visit [www.changeyourworld.org.uk](http://www.changeyourworld.org.uk) to make your swap and for the chance to win a bike worth £449.99 in our photography competition. Change Your World is run by Sustrans.

### Stop Climate Chaos

Sustrans is a member of Stop Climate Chaos, a broad coalition of environmental, development, faith-based, women's and other organisations campaigning to stop human-induced climate change. [www.stopclimatechaos.org](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org)

# Event Highlights



Broadbridge Primary School



Killyleagh PJ Breakfast



Bikers Breakfast at Gracehill PS



Killylea Healthy Picnic



Hezlett Walk to School Week



Moneymore walkers

Each of the eighteen participating schools have already been organising events for their pupils to increase walking and cycling to school with great success. Keep up the good work!

Hundreds of pupils, parents and teachers from Kilbride, Broadbridge, Moneymore, Templepatrick, Cloughmills, St Colmcille's and Gracehill Primary Schools walked to school every day for a week whilst St Patrick's, Castlederg and Ballinamallard PS dedicated a day to walking to school with great support from pupils, parents and teachers. Cloughmills in particular had every pupil walking every day so there was absolutely no school run traffic. Two lucky pupils at Broadbridge PS were raffle winners each receiving a bike donated from their local bike shop.

**Killyleagh PS** enjoyed a breakfast of champions in their pyjamas when they arrived at school on Walk to School day and Killyleagh PS ventured into the great outdoors for a healthy picnic on the final day of Walk to School week and are now running a regular walking bus to school.

**St Patrick's, Derrygonnelly and Hezlett PS** successfully organised walking buses during Walk to School week, St Patrick's enjoyed a carnival atmosphere by bringing along banners, signs and posters they had made promoting the benefits of walking buses.

**St Joseph's, Bessbrook** had a surprise guest at their Walk to School event when Regional Development Minister, Conor Murphy visited the school to congratulate the pupils on their progress.

Bike Week came early to **St Mary's, Derrytrasna** when half the school walked to school for their Walk to School event whilst the other half cycled! There was a noticeable reduction in the speed of traffic passing the school as children were visible on pavements and there were no cars on the school run.

**Gracehill PS** organised a hugely successful Bikers Breakfast in May with 175 pupils & 110 parents taking part. As well as feasting on a healthy breakfast pupils were able to give their bikes a health check courtesy of Halfords. St John's & St Jarlath's PS are currently planning their very own Bikers Breakfast during Bike Week.

## Update

### High Visibility Vests

AXA Insurance have kindly donated some "Hi Vis" vests to Rural Safe Routes to School, next time William or Jill are on a school visit they will be bringing along 20 High visibility vests for each school! We recommend that children walking and cycling to schools wear high visibility vests.

### Bike Week

Don't forget that Bike Week takes place between 16th to 24th June 2007 for information on Bike Week events in your area visit [www.bikeweek.org.uk](http://www.bikeweek.org.uk)

### Free £10M Public Liability Insurance

Organisers of registered Bike Week events/rides taking place between 16 and 24 June 2007 (excluding races and hazardous activities) will be able to request free £10M public liability insurance. Free insurance is also offered to organisers of registered events taking place between 1 April and 16 June - including schools - if they will help to increase participation in events during Bike Week (eg: cycling skills training, free cycle safety checks). The Zurich policy has been arranged for Bike Week, a company limited by guarantee, by their insurance advisers, to whom ALL enquiries regarding the terms and extent of cover must be directed.

Please phone Sue Hilton on 0151 494 4400 or email [shilton@butterworthspengler.co.uk](mailto:shilton@butterworthspengler.co.uk)

We are grateful to the following funders for making the Rural Safe Routes to Schools possible:



# Organising a Walking Bus or Park & Stride

St Patricks, Derrygonnelly



Derrygonnelly Walking Bus

## The Walking Bus

The Walking Bus concept is the new, safe, healthy and environmentally friendly approach to alleviating the undesirable effects of school run traffic congestion. At the most basic level a Walking Bus consists of a group of children who are escorted to school by registered adults.

Small groups of children and a minimum of two adults walk a pre-defined route to (and from) school, with specified 'stops' (locations) to pick up and drop off children. The possibilities are endless!!

### Benefits for parents

- Extra time to get to work and not have to worry about dropping off or picking up your child from school.
- Less congestion outside the school gates due to the reduced number of cars doing the "school run"
- You will be safe in the knowledge that your child is travelling to school safely, improving their health and enjoyment whilst they walk.

### Benefits for children

- Children are able to walk to school with their friend and make new friends.
- Walking helps to increase a child's road safety awareness.
- Daily exercise helps to increase fitness and improve health.
- Children become more aware of their local environment.
- Can help children to increase their independence and confidence.

## Park & Stride

This is a variation on the Park & Ride idea, with park & stride you park your car a distance from the school & walk the rest of the way.

### Benefits:

- It allows those children who live too far from the school to take part in walking to school with their friends
- It removes dangerous congestion from around the school gates
- It allows teachers who travel a distance to school to also get some refreshing exercise before & after work
- So pick a safe location to park, meet up with your friends & walk the final stretch to school!

### Feedback:

Calling all teachers, pupils and parents! We would love to hear your feedback on walking and cycling to school. Email your ideas, suggestions experiences and issues to [ruralschools@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:ruralschools@sustrans.org.uk) The best ideas will be featured in our next issue.

# News Roundup

## Cycling Principal

Principal of Hezlett PS, Castlerock Peter Campbell has taken to two wheels since the launch of the Rural Safe Routes to Schools Programme, and enjoys his daily commute to school "because it is a lovely, simple, uncluttered start to the day."

## Tall Bike Tour

Rob Martin of Cyclemagic in Leicester has been taking part in a fundraising cycle around Ireland on a specially designed "tall bike". During his 2000 mile cycle Rob who is originally from Belfast has been drawing attention to the fact that bikes are a fun, healthy, viable, affordable and ecologically sustainable form of transport. On his travels he made time to drop into Hezlett PS, Castlerock to show off his amazing tall bike and talk to their school assembly. Rob also made a pit stop at the Sustrans Belfast Office where he was presented with a Sustrans 30th Anniversary plaque by the Rural Safe Routes to School team, before continuing his ride to Portaferry there was just enough time for Jill to climb aboard the Tall Bike for a quick taste of the dizzy heights of cycling!

## All in a weekend's work

Kilbride Primary School pupils David Hamilton and Jonathan Agnew have enjoyed taking part in Rural Safe Routes to Schools so much that they put together their personal School Travel plan in one weekend. Well done boys!

Hezlett Primary School



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## Did you know...

- 31% of children would like to cycle to school but less than 1% do!
- Children should take at least 1 hour's exercise daily to improve levels of concentration, bone health, muscle strength and flexibility. (Source: Chief Medical Officer's Report 2005)
- 20% of all traffic on the road at 8.50am is School Run Traffic! (Source ROSPA)
- Of all the children injured in traffic accidents in the UK & Ireland almost 75% are injured while in a car. (ROSPA)
- In Holland many more children cycle & walk to school than in the UK & Ireland yet the level of road traffic accidents is LESS in Holland (Source: Delft University of Technology)

## CHILD WELL-BEING TABLE

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Netherlands         | 12. Canada         |
| 2. Sweden              | 13. Greece         |
| 3. Denmark             | 14. Poland         |
| 4. Finland             | 15. Czech Republic |
| 5. Spain               | 16. France         |
| 6. Switzerland         | 17. Portugal       |
| 7. Norway              | 18. Austria        |
| 8. Italy               | 19. Hungary        |
| 9. Republic of Ireland | 20. United States  |
| 10. Belgium            | 21. United Kingdom |
| 11. Germany            | Source: Unicef     |