

# connected

## Welcome

By Malcolm Shepherd

## Latest Connect2 News

Including Meath Gardens Bridge opening

## Feature

Derry~Londonderry, linking communities together  
The Bridge to Nowhere - going somewhere!

## Community

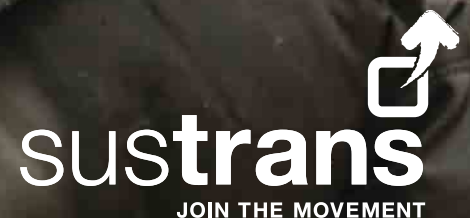
Port Talbot and Afan Valley Steering Group success  
A year in the life of a project

## Resources

Your Portrait Bench  
Connect2 Day 2010  
Communications and 2010 workshops

## Living Landmarks

Helix Eco-Park, Falkirk



# Welcome to Connected



Welcome to the winter edition of Connected, full of news and information on the latest progress of Sustrans Connect2.

Two years ago, Sustrans won a national TV vote bringing £50 million from the Big Lottery Fund to invest in communities across the UK to provide networks of walking and cycling routes linking into new and improved crossings of busy roads, railways and rivers. Since then Sustrans and our local authority and community partners have been making real progress to shape and design networks that are going to benefit as many people as possible. We are also establishing steering groups for as many communities as possible to ensure that these local travel links become a reality.

As we begin 2010, I'm pleased to report that 30 schemes have started construction. Work is underway on key travel links from Bristol to North Somerset, and along the Bridgewater Canal at Sale in Cheshire. At Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, local schools are looking forward to a safer route being in place by late spring and in Cardiff the new bridge connecting the city centre to Penarth will complete a leisure and commuter route that will transform residents' everyday travel.

Bradford's innovative bridge designs have been completed and, with the network of routes being created, will transform local travel in the city. Also at Rhyl in North Wales, the designs for a bridge over the River Clwyd have been approved and will provide a much safer way to travel to the centre of town as well as breathing new life into local tourism by connecting the town to the coastal path.

Key bridges have been built and opened in Watermead Park in Leicestershire, Tower Hamlets in London, and Newtownabbey in Northern Ireland. These bridges provide valuable links for people to access amenities and leisure facilities without having to use their cars. Meanwhile, in Worcester those travelling by foot and bike will soon benefit from the completed Diglis Bridge over the River Severn and, at Dartford, work to reconnect people sustainably to their shops, schools and green spaces is underway.

The coming year will bring many more opportunities for communities to get involved. Each new network will be celebrated with its own Portrait Bench featuring full size steel cut-outs of local icons chosen by each community. There will also be plenty of community events taking place throughout the summer as Connect2 Day celebrations get underway in June.

I'm delighted to see the Sustrans' Connect2 landscape taking shape across the UK and the progress we're making towards helping people in local communities to make their move to more sustainable, active travel. We are also working wherever we can to increase the benefits of each scheme by either extending them, or integrating them with public transport provision, or engaging in more intensive work with schools to give children the information or skills they need to get to school by foot and bike.

Sustrans' Connect2 will, quite literally, change the everyday lives of many millions of people by giving them the choice of active, healthy, low carbon travel. Thank you for all your help in making this a reality.

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We are the charity working with children in schools, with families at home, with employers and with whole communities to enable people to travel much more by foot, bike and public transport.

Sustrans is a doing charity working with many partners to bring about real change. Our thousands of supporters have enabled us to change our world one mile at a time. You can too. Join the movement today at [www.sustrans.org.uk/support](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/support)

**Editorial:** If you have any comments, queries or suggestions please email [connect2@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:connect2@sustrans.org.uk)

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Malcolm Shepherd  
Chief Executive

## Tim Temple is the Project Manager responsible for Sustrans' Connect2.

Here we get an update on the latest progress of the project.



### What have been the Connect2 key developments over the last six months?

We now have 30 schemes already under construction, which is great news. I'm also pleased to say that most signed agreements are now in place and two thirds of schemes also have steering groups established and up and running.

### Where are we currently in the overall project?

As it's a five-year programme, it means we have three and a half years left to complete all the schemes; therefore we're happy with the progress to date.

### What would you say to those people who are wondering when they will see more development work happening to their scheme?

Most of the hard work has been, and continues to be, behind the scenes – from the initial feasibility studies, designing the actual route to meet Greenway Design Guide Standards and then raising Partnership funding. We are using the Big Lottery Fund win to leverage additional funding on every scheme. Even without the current economic climate this takes time, but it's going well.

Sometimes we also work together with a number of different organisations including The Forestry Commission, National Trust and British Waterways or with Network Rail or Translink. Our engineer, Martin Philpott has been visiting schemes all around the UK offering advice to help them to deliver the most useful routes for people and their

communities. Now we're seeing lots of schemes going for planning permission and this will continue over the next couple of years.

### What are the developments coming up over the next six months?

Once we reach summer 2010, we'll start to see a few more schemes completed and finished including Newtownabbey, Sale and Sleaford. There'll also be some great Portrait Benches, a map for each scheme, workshops and community activity including Connect2 Day, so lots to look forward to.

### How has the credit crunch affected the project?

Inevitably, it's going to make a difference. The truth is, it's still too early to know, but we already have significant partnership funding committed. It will be interesting to see what happens in the next round of public spending announcements. With oil reserves declining and more concern about how we travel, providing opportunities for people to walk and cycle should be higher than ever on the political agenda for the years to come.

### Steering groups are crucial to the success of this project. How are they going?

This is the largest amount of money ever won by public vote, which shows how important Connect2 is to the general public. For us, it's really important to keep the public informed and because we know most schemes won't complete until 2012 and 2013, the steering groups are a good way to continue to engage with all our supporters. We've got 54 Steering groups so far, but there is still plenty more to be done.



## Latest news

### Watermead Park Bridge opening

The new bridge in Leicestershire was opened in July, making the area far more accessible to all visitors. People will be able to cross the new wider bridge at Thurmaston Lock much more easily as it has more gentle approaches giving local people easier access.

### Diglis Bridge in Worcestershire – cutting the first sod

On 25th November the cutting of the first sod took place to mark the start of work for the new Diglis walking and cycling bridge with Cllr Derek Prodger MBE performing the 'first dig'. The bridge will be constructed just south of Diglis Island, linking the Weir Lane footpath with Navigation Road and the Severn Way footpath. The bridge and surrounding links will create many leisure and commuting opportunities and make travelling across Worcester, on foot or bike, a more pleasant experience.

### Bristol to Nailsea, the Festival Way

Construction is now underway on a part of the route that will join the Create Centre with Bower Ashton and Ashton Court, which will make the seemingly impenetrable Brunel Way Gyratory much easier to tackle on foot or by bike and will be finished by spring 2010.

### More schemes get underway as vital agreements signed with partners

Great progress has been made in Perth and Glasgow as the Memorandums of Understanding have been signed. This brings the total figure of MoU signings to 66 to date.

### Links to Schools

Sustrans is currently administering the grant for Cycling England's Links to Schools Programme. Connect2 schemes are often ideal recipients of this grant, as they enable walking and cycling journeys for many school children. The current round of funding is up for grabs until March 2011. The Links to Schools team will be very happy to receive applications from Connect2 schemes, visit [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) for further information.

# New Meath Gardens Bridge opens in London

January 2010

A new bridge over the Regents Canal in London will enable walkers and cyclists to make local journeys in a traffic-free environment for the first time, between residential areas, local parks, schools and hospitals, avoiding the notoriously busy Mile End Road and Roman Road.



“Mile End Park is a fantastic little oasis that is great for teaching bike skills and leading rides through. Before Meath Bridge was put in you had to access the park from busy roads, not ideal with a school group. The bridge has allowed me to take school groups safely into the park and helped reassure parents of a safe route to one of only two green spaces in the Borough.”

James Scott,  
Sustrans Bike It  
Officer Tower  
Hamlets

Over the summer, four giant component pieces of the new Meath Gardens Bridge weighing more than 65 tonnes were lifted into place. There was an atmosphere of excitement as spectators gathered and watched a huge 500 tonne crane successfully lift the sections into place.

The bridge was officially opened on 20th October 2009, on a fine but chilly day and over 100 people gathered to celebrate. Attendees included the general public, councillors, the local mayor, school children,

construction engineers, steering group members, Andy Wistow, Connect2 Director and Sir Clive Booth, Chair of the Big Lottery Fund. After the ribbon was cut people walked and cycled across the balloon-lined bridge for the first time making their way to the Ecology Centre in Mile End Park to hear presentations and watch a speeded up video of the bridge being built. Resounding positive feedback was received as people left their comments of appreciation of the bridge and the benefits that this traffic-free route will provide to local communities.



From November 2010 to March 2011 Sustrans will be working with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and NHS Tower Hamlets on a Personalised Travel Plan (PTP) project on the Ocean Estate, just west of Mile End Park and within a mile of Meath Bridge. The project will combine principles from Sustrans' Active Travel and TravelSmart programmes and is part of the Tower Hamlets Healthy Borough programme.

Michelle Quin, Sustrans Area Manager says **“The Bridge is fantastic! I have been again today and it looks like it has been there forever. I am proud to have been involved in this project, although all the hard work was done before I started. The good relationship we have with the Borough will help us to build upon our work in the wider community and set a precedent for others to follow.”**

## What does this mean for Bethnal Green?

- substantial new development within the Roman Road and Mile End areas, both of which are heavily deprived, will give residents increased access to jobs, leisure and education opportunities
- members of the local community and students at the University of London campus will benefit from improved access to local green spaces using an attractive route to Meath Gardens, Mile End Park and Victoria Park en route to the Olympic Games
- the development of high quality walking and cycling routes means that the journeys between highly populated residential areas and schools, hospitals and shops will be made in a pleasant, traffic-free environment, avoiding busy Mile End Road and Roman Road
- there are several schools both along the route and further afield which will benefit including Old Ford Primary School and Bangahangia Infant School.



*Derry City Centre from Ebrington Barracks along the line of the proposed bridge*

# Derry~Londonderry

Linking communities together

The Derry~Londonderry scheme includes a network of local routes linking to a new crossing of the River Foyle to bring local communities together by creating a new, shared public space.

The new Peace Bridge currently being built in Derry~Londonderry will provide an opportunity to bring down both the physical barriers as well as the invisible cultural barriers that exist, by linking together the two communities on the west and east sides of the river. The bridge, designed for pedestrians and cyclists will measure 235 metres from bank to bank, and is approximately four metres wide. The bridge is funded by the European Union's PEACE III programme.

To ensure that the bridge becomes a living, breathing asset to the city, Sustrans' Connect2 and Derry City Council are working together on a new Waterside Greenway which will connect people to the new bridge and the existing Foyle Bridge. The traffic-free walking and cycling greenway networks will stretch for over four kilometres and will link communities from either side of the river over the new bridge to the bus station, city

centre and the regeneration spaces at Ebrington and St Columb's Park in a way which is tranquil, direct and convenient. This creates a unique opportunity to open up access and promotes connectivity between communities and urban spaces to enable an expanded and shared city centre. The links on the west side of the river will also tie to the existing Sustrans' National Cycle Network of traffic-free routes around the River Foyle.

The Parade Ground at Ebrington is currently out to tender to be redesigned as a piazza and the listed buildings surrounding it are earmarked for tourism, leisure, arts and cultural use. This will create a new cultural area within Derry~Londonderry and the greenway will give people access and enable more school children, commuters, friends and family to make healthier everyday journeys to work, school and to the shops.



*Proposed new Peace Bridge*

Currently the train station is on one side of the river and the bus station on the other so people have to physically cross the river to reach the other. Now, there are plans to move the train station close to the new Peace Bridge, which will enable quick and easy access between the two, bringing together communities and encouraging more integrated, sustainable travel.

**Sustrans' Area Manager for Derry~Londonderry, Ross McGill, says:** "People of the city voted for a Waterside Greenway to open up the city for everyday journeys by foot and by bike as part of Sustrans' Connect2 Big Lottery Fund win. We're really looking forward to seeing this happen and creating a better environment for people to walk and cycle more frequently, to the benefit of both their health and the environment."

Work is already underway and the completed Waterside Greenway will open in 2011.



## Bridge design ideas

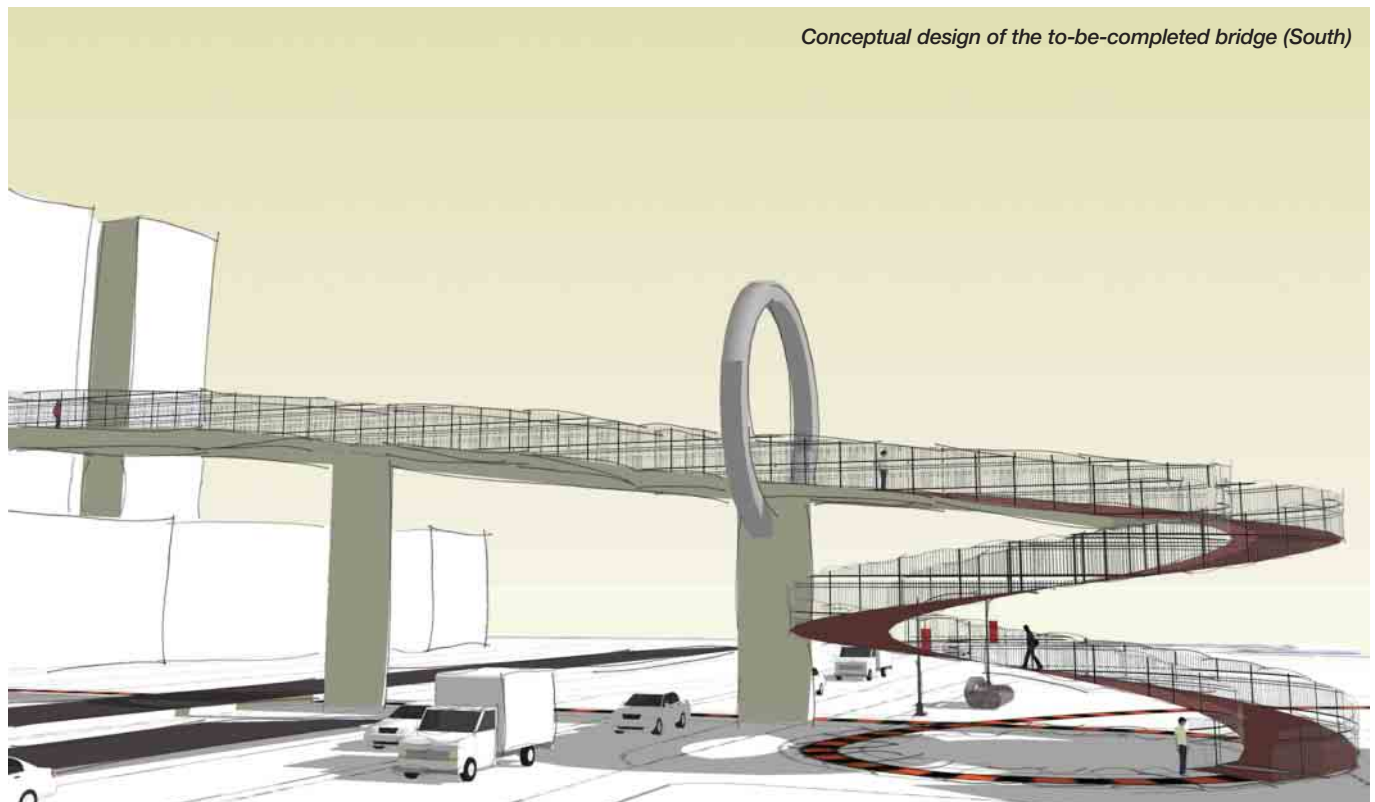
Martin Philpott, Connect2 Senior Engineer

- when looking at your gradients and bridge widths, think about your end user and where the bridge will be going
- consider when your usage peak flows will be
- make the access as easy as possible, it will encourage usage and make the route more inviting
- think about the purpose of the bridge, it doesn't always need to be iconic sometimes it just needs to fulfil a function.

# The Bridge to Nowhere... going somewhere!

The Sustrans' Connect2 scheme in Glasgow is an excellent example of how the new walking and cycling route will be integrated with other travel choices in and around the city. These changes are a clear expression of the commitment to sustainable and active travel.

January 2010



*Conceptual design of the to-be-completed bridge (South)*



*As above - North East view*

The 'Bridge to Nowhere' was originally built in the 1960s as part of the Anderston Shopping complex and was intended to link to the west-facing side of the shopping centre but was never completed. Despite the time it has sat dormant, it is structurally safe and will be the focus of this project. Over the years, traffic in the area has risen in volume considerably; junctions and crossings are particularly busy at peak travel times.

The new route will provide a segregated cycle path extending from Kelvingrove Park to the city centre via Anderston and the completed bridge. This will provide an effective and safe commuting route to the city from the West end, it will link communities to the parks and rivers to the west enabling children, families and people to reach green spaces such as Kelvingrove Park.



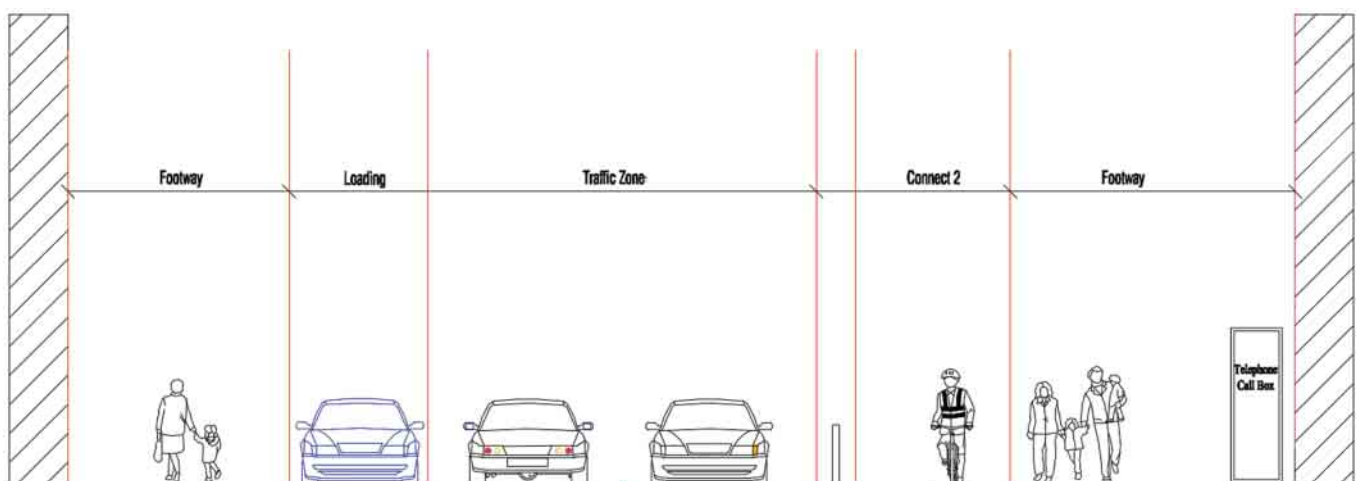
When completed, the scheme will give direct and continuous access for cyclists. There will be a two-way cycle route and the diagram (below) shows how this will be physically separated from the main carriageway by a raised kerb, making the route safer and enabling younger or less experienced cyclists to use the new route.

This was a design initially introduced in Copenhagen, Denmark; hence this design of cycle lane is frequently referred to as the Copenhagen style. At junctions on main routes, sensors will trigger the cycle phases of the traffic lights where possible. This should enhance the continuity of the route, allowing travel without unnecessary interruptions.

It is also intended to place more on-street cycle parking along the route, enhancing the infrastructure to promote cycling whether it is to get to work, school, to the shops or a picnic in the park.

## Three key elements of the Glasgow scheme

- 1 The new route will provide a key link for three schools in close proximity to the route (Glasgow Gaelic School, Anderston Primary School and St. Patrick's Primary School) and will improve cycling and active travel as an option for travelling to school.
- 2 Segregated routes via the bridge towards the Central Station, will allow quick and easy access to the city centre for commuters and shoppers.
- 3 The new link to the riverside via the existing Clydeside Expressway Bridge, will allow easier travel to the east or the west of the city or to the existing National Cycle Network.



Sample design section of how Sustrans' Connect2 will provide a safe segregated route

# Port Talbot and Afan Valley

The Welsh village of Cwmafan lies mid-way between Aberavon Seaford and Afan Forest Park and the only way in or out of the village until now was along narrow, fast roads that in many places did not have pavements. Not ideal for pedestrians or cyclists!



The Sustrans' Connect2 scheme has brought the opportunity to fill the 'missing link' and plans to develop a route through the heart of the village. The local residents group Cwmafan Residents Action Committee (CRAC) jumped at the opportunity and joined the Sustrans' Connect2 steering group – championed the 'Vote Sustrans' message to local residents and continues to promote the scheme and its benefits to the wider community.

The steering group has gone from strength to strength and recent community activities associated with the scheme include: UN exchange students from as far as Japan undertaking work on the route to develop a new loop to the riverside, local school children building bird/bat/bee boxes to be sited on the new route and an October half term youth bike ride. Regular, ongoing activities include community walks with approximately 35 residents attending each walk (local residents are trained as walk leaders through Let's Walk Cymru scheme). Consultation has also begun for the new Portrait Bench, as local residents have been asked for their ideas at public meetings, youth events and now even online as CRAC has established their own website – [www.crac.btik.com](http://www.crac.btik.com)

CRAC has also been awarded the £1,000 Tidy Towns Grant for the creation of a riverside path and nature reserve leading off the Connect2 route between Cwmafan and Oakwood. The labour will be provided by another group of UN exchange students.

A key driving force behind all of this community engagement activity is Peter Knowles. Peter heads up the steering group, and is a proactive member and Chairman of local residents group CRAC. He organises walks, cycle rides, community engagement activities with local school children, and is helping to run a competition on the Portrait Bench and lots more. He has also now become a Sustrans volunteer ranger. All of this, alongside his full-time job as a professional photographer!



# Steering Group success!



## Interview with Peter Knowles



*Peter Knowles with Cwmafan Junior School students assembling nesting boxes for the Connect2 route*

organised an event and people show up in good numbers. We find that although our committee is small we can get help and support from numerous local volunteers.

**What would you say the long term benefits of community engagement are?**

I think it is quite important that the community have a say in what is going on in their area. They see that non-political local people are leading and giving them a chance to have an input into different issues. We hold bi-monthly public meetings where all are welcome, there are no costs and plenty of diverse and interesting topics to be discussed. It is members of the CRAC team who answer questions, for example, on the Connect2 route progress.

**Why should Local Authorities be considering community involvement?**

The unitary authorities created in the 90s are so geographically large that councils need community groups spread around the county to inform and consult with. The Police and our council members find that our community

meetings are the best way to meet and interact with the people. Committees like ours will have an increasing role to play in the future.

**So, what has the steering group been up to recently?**

Now that our Memorandum of Understanding agreement has been signed it is all systems go! A number of new road crossings, bridges and links to local community facilities have been developed recently. In addition to this we are already looking into developing Community Art initiatives to support the scheme. Consultation has already begun to identify local characters for the Connect2 Portrait Bench and an ideal spot has been chosen overlooking the river and the whole community. CRAC continue to run monthly walks using parts of the Connect2 route and our last walk was a seven-mile walk. More recently, in recognition of our work to encourage a greener and healthier community, CRAC won the first ever Neath Port Talbot Award for the Green Voluntary Sector Organisation of the Year 2009.

**Peter, you've clearly been very busy! What motivates you to get so involved in the steering group?**

Having been in business in the town for 40 years you get to know a lot of people. I love to meet and interact with the community at our various functions. I think the rewards come when you have

# Community involvement - a year in the life of a project

With an increasing amount of community involvement activity already taking place for many Sustrans' Connect2 schemes, we take a look at Padiham's steering group and unveil its ideas and the secrets to its success...

In January 2009 the Sustrans' Connect2 team in Padiham, Lancashire made it their New Year's resolution to make their scheme an example of best practice in involving local residents and community groups. Their first step was to offer to co-host the Sustrans' Connect2 North of England conference in Preston, Lancashire where they discussed and shared community involvement ideas from the other projects across the North of England.

By spring, new ideas were blossoming amongst the delegates at the Community Engagement Best Practice seminars held at the new pavilion in Avenham Park, Preston. As a result of the seminars, a steering group was formed for the Padiham scheme.

Mark Dixon, Head teacher of Padiham Green Primary School, agreed to be the chair and local champion. Not only is he a capable organiser, but he was also planning to cycle the classic Tour de France stage up Mont Ventoux in the summer! The steering group met for the first time at Padiham Football Club, and members from a wide variety of local groups got the chance to input into the design of Phase Two of the scheme by discussing and influencing the design of the railway path, its landscaping and a connection to the park.

In August, over 100 people participated in Connect2 Day which was a unique behind-the-scenes walking tour of Phase One works, along the railway path. During October, as the nights began drawing in, a second successful steering group meeting was held at Shuttleworth College. Later that month officers from Lancashire met colleagues from another Sustrans' Connect2 scheme in Sale to share the benefits of their recently acquired knowledge and

experiences and to encourage cross-project learning. There will also be a meeting set up early this year to see how the community feels that it can be involved in the launch of the Old Railway and the towpath links. This will be an opportunity to further involve the steering group and to reach out to the whole area for their participation. The Padiham steering group moves to different locations, for each of its meetings. This enables different stakeholders to participate at each session.

As Caroline Holden, project lead, comments: "I'm not entirely sure how I went from being a complete novice to being a perceived expert in community involvement in only 12 months, but there's no doubt that the project is much more firmly rooted into the minds of local people in Padiham than it was this time last year, and that can only make the delivery process easier."

## Top tips from Padiham on running a successful steering group:

- make links with your local schools
- rotate your venue for your steering group to include many different stakeholders
- understand the difference between primary stakeholders (those who attend steering groups and vote) and secondary stakeholders (who occasionally attend events and meetings)
- consult at a stage when you can still adapt plans and proposals
- share ideas with your colleagues in neighbouring schemes.



# Your Portrait Bench – Who will you choose?!

The Portrait Bench is common to all Sustrans' Connect2 schemes; yet each one will be unique, with figures chosen by the general public.



Many schemes are already starting to think about how they will work with their steering groups to nominate their figures for their new Portrait Bench. The first step is to get your steering group engaged in this process and as people start thinking about this, ideas will quickly emerge...

## Handy hints for nominating your figures

- **ask the steering group to discuss at least six names to spark off ideas** - local characters, heroes, historical characters, poets, sports personalities....
- **the steering group should put it on the following meeting agenda** to discuss how they will carry this selection out in terms of nominating figures
- **the figures must have some relationship with each other** - a theme, moment in time...
- **run a local competition** inviting members of the public to submit their favourite local character nominations
- **work with a school on the route** – get the children involved in competitions, or taking photos of local characters who are important in their lives e.g. local grocer, their teacher or lollipop lady
- **don't forget there's plenty of scope to get publicity** and coverage of your scheme and most of all to get all members of the community involved

For more information on the Portrait Bench project and to get a free copy of the new handbook which gives handy hints and ideas, please email [katy.hallett@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:katy.hallett@sustrans.org.uk)

## Connect2 Day 2010 tips

Connect2 Day is a great opportunity to involve local communities and to get people interested in and interacting with a scheme. Events are usually simple, neighbourhood events – unless you can link in with an existing large-scale event, such as an opening of a section. Don't forget to use local volunteer groups and/or Sustrans volunteers to help on the day and get people involved.

### A few ideas for Connect2 Day activities

- led rides, walks to schools, and bike breakfasts
- route openings and site visits
- stalls and processions at county shows and local carnivals
- local community events, face painting for children, and competitions
- guided wildflower walks through the scheme and/or around the reserve
- community BBQ/fête style event – to show people the scheme on display and with a number of 'ideas' and 'wish' trees to give people an opportunity to comment on the scheme
- artwork exhibitions for schools to participate in and display work
- a competition in local schools to win a bike
- tie in Connect2 Day with larger launch event openings e.g. completed elements of the scheme
- story telling walks

## New resources: watch this space!

- **The Connect2 website is changing**

The existing site will be transferred across to the Sustrans website by Spring 2010. Content will be refreshed and new updates will be included on scheme pages. The Sustrans site will also enable more flexibility and functionality in terms of the video and photography content.

- **Free downloadable resources are currently being produced**

Posters, flyers and leaflets will be made available on the new website in spring 2010. Steering groups and anyone organising a Sustrans' Connect2 event will be able to download these resources for free from the website to promote their events and/or Connect2 Days.

## Get active and shake off those January Blues

Instead of staying indoors to hide away from the cold weather, why not warm up outdoors by cycling away the winter blues and get fit at the same time? As the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, Sustrans has plenty of ideas to help you get active – visit our website [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

## 2010 workshops

### 'Better by Design' workshops

Hundreds of people attended the 2009 Connect2 conferences and the key feedback was the demand from most participants for some more follow up networking events. These are currently taking place in January and the theme will be 'Better by Design'.

- The events will provide an opportunity for schemes to meet and to foster inter-project exchange and to learn about cycle infrastructure design. They will give an overview of current best national practices and discuss any key issues.
- There will be presentations by Sustrans staff and scheme representatives and also some group discussion around specific highway design issues.

### Spring 2010 Regional Workshops... coming up!

The focus of these workshops will be community involvement and how schemes can engage local people in their activity including the Portrait Bench and Connect2 Day.



## Free Your Bike

Sign up for Free Your Bike and receive a FREE information pack. If you want to know where you can cycle in your local area, visit [www.freeyourbike.org.uk](http://www.freeyourbike.org.uk) and sign up for a free information pack.

The pack comes with lots of practical advice about choosing and looking after your bike that will inspire you to dust off your bike and get cycling! It includes information on cycle routes in your area, including the routes on traffic-free paths, ideal if you need to build up your confidence in safe surroundings or for taking the family on a day out.

# It's all starting to happen on the Helix



**Connect2 is one of four Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks beneficiaries; three further projects were successful in a keenly fought competition behind closed doors. Previous issues of Connected have looked at Heartlands in Cornwall and Connswater Community Greenway in West Belfast. This time it is the turn of The Helix Project in the Forth Valley.**

offer the local communities of Falkirk and Grangemouth a central park with a lagoon; paths and cycle networks connecting neighbourhoods; new woodland areas and public artworks.

The canal extension will see the creation of a new tunnel which will take the canal and its towpath under the M9 and into a specially constructed lock and basin where the kelpies will be positioned. Both kelpies will face in a south-easterly direction, showing them off to their best advantage and making them easy to access on foot. One of the kelpies will move to displace the water required to operate the canal lock.

Helix Trust chief executive, Colin Armstrong, said: "These are exciting times for everyone involved in the Helix. The vital months spent refining our canal options have delivered an even better outcome than originally envisaged.

"We will now be moving full steam ahead to obtain the necessary planning permissions. We look forward to engaging with the local community over the coming months as we build towards initial works in the first half of 2010."

The £45 million project is being driven by a partnership of Falkirk Council, British Waterways Scotland and Central Scotland Forest Trust through the Helix Trust.

As well as being awarded a £25 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund, significant funding and land has also been committed by Falkirk Council and British Waterways Scotland. Work is due to be completed in 2013.



The industrial landscape between Falkirk and Grangemouth is set to be transformed into an inspirational green space which will be open and accessible to all, thanks to a £25 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund to the innovative Helix project in Falkirk.

This massive injection of funding will allow the Helix project to radically transform the environment in the Forth Valley as part of the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks programme.

Plans to create the 300-hectare community green space are rapidly taking shape. Subject to the necessary approvals, the Helix will install a full-length canal extension from the existing Forth and Clyde canal down to a new sea lock on the River Carron.

As well as the canal links, two giant kelpie head sculptures will be installed depicting the legend of the water horse said to haunt the rivers and streams of Scotland. The development will also



# LOVE HANDLES?

