

Project: Loch Earn Railway Path

Location: Strathearn, Perthshire

Date: 2012 - present

Client/ Partners

St. Fillans Community Trust, Loch Lomond Trossachs National Park, Scottish Natural Heritage, Sustrans

Project type

Long distance route development

Item of Interest

Community project delivery. Landowner negotiations. Environmentally sensitive environment. Equine provision.

Project Content

The Loch Earn Railway Path or LERP is a route with great potential to be a part of the wider long-distance active travel network, branching from NCN 7 at Locheanhead and forming a 16km stretch of the cross-country Pilgrims Way.

Backing the project from the offset was the St. Fillans Community Trust (the client) their commitment to the project has been crucial throughout. Working with support from LLTNPA and landowners, TP&E have assisted the community in delivering upgrades to over half of the 16km route to a shared-use path.

TP&E were first commissioned to undertake a feasibility study of the route in 2012. From this initial piece of work TP&E identified a phased delivery plan to upgrade the long-distance route tackling the most significant barriers to use first.

To date four phases of the project have been delivered to construction, with TP&E undertaking the role of principal designer. Undertaking landowner consultations, completing detailed design, gaining planning permission, successfully securing funding and supervising the construction works.

St. Fillans Community Trust are an inspiring example of community empowerment in Scotland delivering active travel routes. The project has been a technical sharing good practise site for designers. The community has shared their learning from delivering the project with other engaged communities. And, the project was highly Commended by the Transport Planning Awards in the People's Choice category in 2018.



Outcomes

2012: Feasibility Study of long-distance active travel route by TP&E

2013: Phase 1 – Glentarken Bridge (30m span, crossing impassable gorge to open up full route to walkers).

2015: Phase 2 – 2km route upgrade (700m upland path to bypass farm and 3 short span bridges).

2017: Phase 3 – 4km route upgrade (completion of link between villages, reopening of closed tunnel and descaling rock cuttings).

2018: Signage – Directional signage to TSRGD installed throughout completed section of route and on trunk road.

2019: Phase 4 – 2km route upgrade (railway line upgrade developing 2 accessible ramps and addressing drainage).



Although the vision of the full route is not complete yet, the completed phases already constructed provide a safe and inviting route which was previously unusable.

Already it is evident that the project has brought health and economic benefits to the villages it connects. These benefits are likely to continue and increase through development of the entire route.



Key learning points

Community ownership of project is vital.

Engaging support and assisting to the community from project stakeholders is crucial to develop community capacity.

Fostering positive landowner relationships throughout project is critical to project success.

Transport Planning and Engineering is a social enterprise engineering consultancy which specialises in designing and managing the delivery of active travel infrastructure in Scotland through working with local authorities and many empowered communities.

TP&E is a subsidiary organisation of Scotland's national cycle training, events and promotion charity Cycling Scotland.

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