

# Welcome

## **Malmesbury to Cowbridge walking & cycle route consultation**

Thank you for coming to the exhibition. The aim of today's event is to explain about a new path for walkers and cyclists between Malmesbury and Cowbridge. We also want to get your views on the proposals.

Representatives from Sustrans and the project's steering group are available to talk to if you have any questions or want to give your views in person.

**Before you leave please take the time to fill in a feedback form and the attendance sheet.**





**Rural path on the National Cycle Network**



# Background

For a number of years there has been public demand for a safe route between Cowbridge and Malmesbury. Currently pedestrians and cyclists have to climb the hill along the Swindon Road and cross the Priory Roundabout to get into Malmesbury.

Sustrans has been working with Malmesbury St Pauls Without Parish Council, Malmesbury Town Council, Wiltshire Council and members of the local community to create a new route. A task group was formed by Malmesbury Area Board to support the project, representatives of which are present today.

The route will use part of the old railway line between Cowbridge and Malmesbury. Although some people already walk this route, they do so without the landowners' permission. The path is also unsuitable for cyclists and disabled users. It is uneven, with some steps and steep gradients.

Funding has been given to Sustrans from Redrow Homes as part of the planning agreement for the Cowbridge Mill Development. Sustrans has been in discussions with landowners over several years and hopes to have agreements in place in the near future.



**Narrow footway on Swindon Road**



# Aims & objectives

The project will make it easy to walk and cycle between Cowbridge and Malmesbury.  
This will...

- Improve cycle and pedestrian safety between Cowbridge and Malmesbury.
- Enable more people to travel without relying on their cars.
- Help meet objectives for improving health and the environment.
- Provide a leisure route for walkers, runners, cyclists and wheelchair/disabled scooter users.





**Mobility scooter user on the National Cycle Network**



# Potential benefits

Traffic-free walking and cycling networks are crucial in enabling high levels of walking and cycling.

- On average, cyclists live two years longer than non-cyclists.
- Regular cyclists are as fit as an average person 10 years younger.
- Cyclists breathe in less pollution from traffic than car drivers.
- A regular cycle commuter saves the economy £208 every year through reduced congestion and pollution.
- Cycling also encourages people to travel shorter distances and support their local shops.
- Cycling can help to tackle climate change. In the South West, transport accounts for 28% of CO2 emissions with road transport dominating that total. Around 40% of emissions come from journeys under 10 miles.

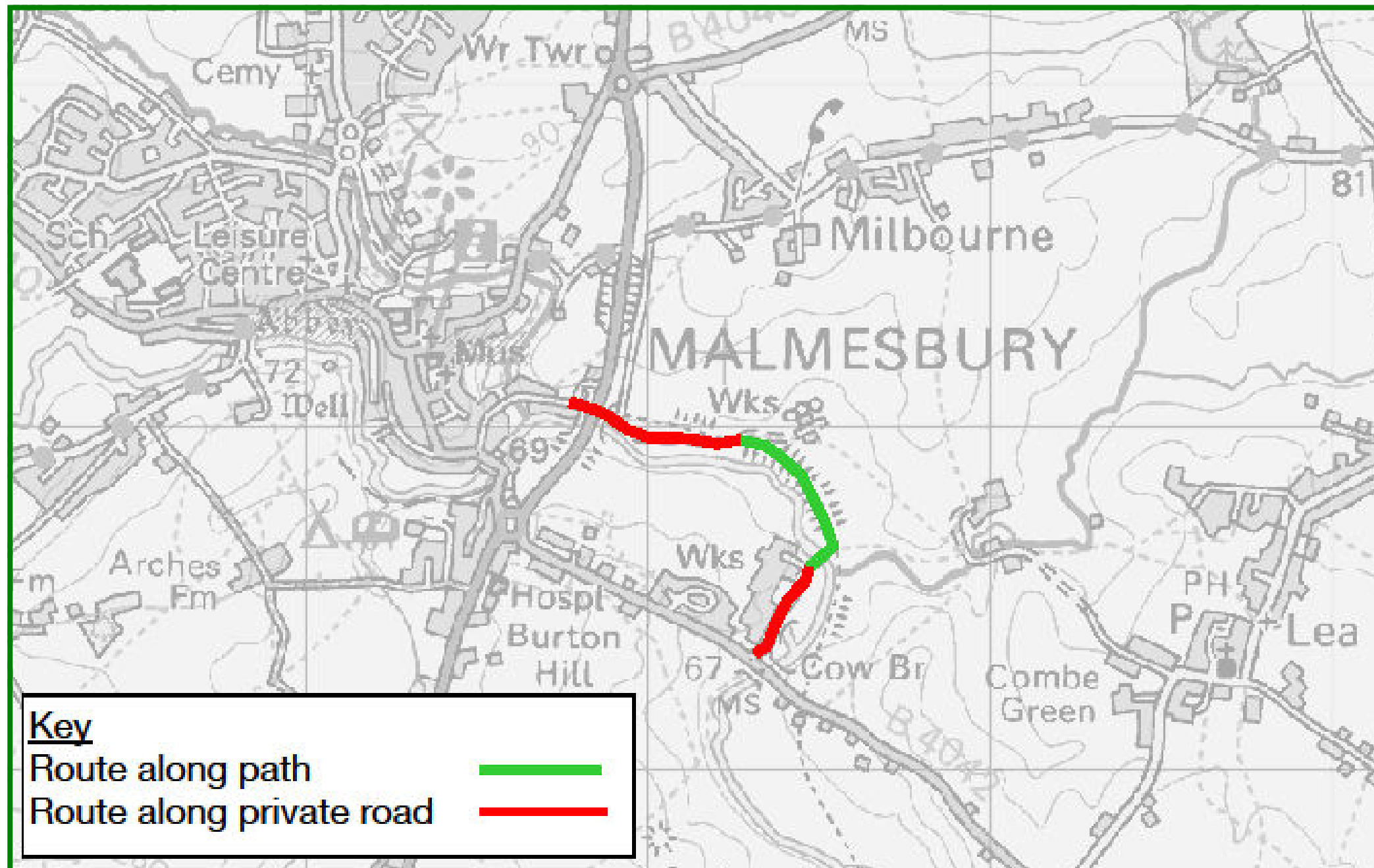


Keeping fit by bike...





# Proposed route



The proposed route starts at the eastern end of Baskerville and links into Malmesbury via St John's Street. Going east from Baskerville the route uses the sewage treatment plant access road to link to the old railway embankment. A new path will be created on the railway embankment itself. The route then crosses the field to Cowbridge Weir. At the weir it crosses the existing bridge and then follows the mill access road to Cowbridge itself.

There is a choice of two different standards of path.

1. Affordable option:

This would involve minimal surfacing and no asphalt. Any surfacing would be compacted stone-dust. At either end of the embankment some re-grading work will be necessary to reduce the steepness. This work will create a path suitable for mountain bikes and mobility scooters that are designed for off-road use. Most of the funding is in place for this option and possible sources for the remainder have been identified.

This option will cost in the region of £30,000. Currently £25,000 is available and a further £5,000 will need to be raised.

2. High quality option:

This would be an asphalt path suitable for all abilities. A much larger amount of funding would need to be raised for this option. Sustrans has identified possible sources and may be able to contribute a significant proportion itself. The landowners have not agreed to this option yet.

This option will cost in the region of £130,000 so further £105,000 will need to be raised.



# Affordable option

## Key

- Route on private road
- New stone dust path
- Unsurfaced path
- New fence or gate
- New fingerpost sign
- New concrete access ramp

1. Route starts at the eastern end of Baskerville.
2. Route uses access road to sewage treatment plant.
3. New fence and self-closing gate.
4. Embankment re-graded to reduce steepness. Stone dust path surface.
5. New self-closing gate.
6. Embankment re-graded to reduce steepness. Stone dust path surface.
7. Route crosses existing bridge. New concrete access ramps at either end.
8. New self-closing gate.
9. Route on mill access road.



View looking east under bypass along sewage plant access



View west from sewage plant access towards

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**Stone dust path surfacing:** Most of the railway embankment is firm and well drained but in some locations (see the above plan) some surfacing will be needed. For the affordable proposal compacted stone dust will be used in these locations. It is cheaper than asphalt but does not last as long. So the path will need regular maintenance if it is not to become uneven and muddy over time. This type of surface is also vulnerable to damage from grazing stock. The landowners are prepared to accept this type of surfacing but only where mud and unevenness has made it necessary. The path width would be 2.5 metres.



**New stone dust surface at Marlborough**



# High quality option

## Key

- Route on private road
- New asphalt path
- New fence or gate
- New fingerpost sign

1. Route starts at the eastern end of Baskerville.
2. Route uses access road to sewage treatment plant.
3. New fence and self-closing gate.
4. Embankment re-graded to reduce steepness.
5. New asphalt path along embankment.
6. New self-closing gate.
7. Embankment re-graded to reduce steepness.
8. New asphalt path across field.
9. Route crosses existing bridge.
10. New asphalt path.
11. New self-closing gate.
12. Route on mill access road.

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View along railway embankment



View looking east over Cowbridge Weir Bridge (railway embankment in background)



**Asphalt path surfacing:** Cycle paths should have smooth riding surfaces, good drainage and require low maintenance. A smooth path benefits wheelchair users as well as cyclists. Asphalt is the best material for this purpose and is proposed for the high quality option. It is more expensive than compacted stone dust but the longer life-expectancy makes it much better value for money. New asphalt weathers quickly to a pale grey that is similar in appearance to stone dust. Like the affordable option the proposed path width would be 2.5 metres.



**Asphalt path at Chiseldon**



# Frequently asked questions

**Who are Sustrans?** We are the country's leading sustainable transport charity. Sustrans is responsible for creating the National Cycle Network and a range of other projects designed to promote sustainable travel. Sustrans is working with Malmesbury Area Board, Malmesbury St Pauls Without Parish Council, Malmesbury Town Council, Wiltshire Council and local residents

**There is already a path along the old railway. Why do you need to build this?**

The existing path is not official and anyone walking there is trespassing. This project will make it legal to walk and cycle there while at the same time protecting the land owner by making sure people know where they shouldn't be. The proposals improve the path to make it easier for walkers and cyclists and more accessible for people with mobility impairments.

**When will the path be built?**

Subject to agreement with the landowners we are aiming to have the path ready for the summer of 2013.

**How is the path funded?**

The path will be paid for from the developer contribution for Cowbridge Mill and additional funding raised by Sustrans and Wiltshire Council.



### **How will the route affect parking?**

There will be minimal, if any, effect on parking. The route will be mostly used by local people who can easily reach it from their homes. It is too short to attract people from further away.

### **What are the effects on trees?**

There will be no affect on any mature trees. Vegetation will be cleared from the top of the railway embankment to make room for the path. This will be scrub and small trees.

### **What are the effects on wildlife?**

Sustrans has carried out a habitat survey. The path will only have a minor affect on wildlife during the construction phase and no long term impact. No protected species will be affected by the work.

### **Who will maintain the path?**

Malmesbury St Pauls Parish Council will be responsible for the maintenance of the path once it is built.

**Is the path a good use of money?** Research shows that every new cyclist using a path saves the government £10,000 in savings on health spending over the lifetime of the path. So the high quality option will only need to encourage 13 people to cycle regularly to make it worthwhile. This is a realistic number for a path between communities of the size of Cowbridge and Malmesbury.

### **What will happen after today?**

Sustrans will produce a report summarising people's views regarding the route. In particular this will advise on which of the two options is the most popular and whether the proposals have sufficient support for them to be built. Where appropriate the proposals will be amended in the light of people's comments