

PRESS RELEASE: issued 8 Jan.2013

Greenway at Earlsheaton Tunnel open for business – January 16 event

A special event is to be hosted on January 16 by Kirklees Council and cycle charity Sustrans to mark the completion of several months' work to reopen the disused railway tunnel at Earlsheaton in Dewsbury. The former railway tunnel has been reopened as a greenway for walkers and cyclists between Dewsbury and Ossett and now forms part of the National Cycle Network 699.

The Mayor of Kirklees, Cllr David Ridgway, will officiate at the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the western end of the tunnel, off Preston Street at 1.30pm. Cllr Paul Kane, Project Champion, said: "After several months of work, and years of preparation, the former railway tunnel at Earlsheaton is now back in public use. This time it provides a vital link for walkers and cyclists to make everyday journeys between the Earlsheaton and Chickenley areas of Dewsbury and Dewsbury town centre.

"The Earlsheaton tunnel, which is lit around the clock, is architecturally-inspiring and provides a convenient level link to enable local people and visitors to access all the facilities and amenities of Dewsbury town centre and its market. It is with pride that we have seen both internal and external investment attracted to the town, allowing the people of Dewsbury to commute in fantastic surroundings for leisure and business."

Sustrans' Regional Director for Yorkshire and the Humber, David Hall, said: "Walking and cycling for everyday journeys is great for our health, the environment and it's fun too. These new links are going to make a real difference to how people make their everyday journeys in Dewsbury. We hope to work with Kirklees council in the future to deliver even more routes like this locally, making it safe to get around on two wheels."

VIPs and people who have had involvement with the development of the project will be at the launch and local residents and the general public are also invited to attend and join in the celebration.

The works have been paid for through money from the Big Lottery Fund, through Sustrans' "Connect2" project; Kirklees Council; Local Transport Plan; and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund from the Department for Transport.

Invited guests and the general public are invited to join either a short walk or bike ride starting from the west or east side of the tunnel:

From the Dewsbury town centre (west) side of the tunnel:

At 1pm, cyclists can meet the Kirklees Cycling Officer, Lynnette Evans, outside Dewsbury Town Hall for a ride from Longcauseway along Sands Lane to Preston Street.

At 1pm, walkers can meet the Project Manager, Steven Hanley, at the gated entrance to Sands Lane (by the Sands Lane Lorry Park) where a walk will be led to Preston Street.

From the Earlsheaton/ Chickenley (east) side of the tunnel:

At 1pm, walkers / cyclists can meet members of the North Kirklees Ramblers Association, Paul and Chris Horbury, at the entrance to the greenway on Station Road, Earlsheaton for a short walk/ ride through the tunnel to the Preston Street end of the tunnel.

There will be a mobile barista van – ‘CoffeeKart’ - on Preston Street for the public to buy hot drinks and homemade cakes.

Also on site, will be the ‘go:cycling’ gazebo and information stand with Carl Tinson, Project Co-ordinator on-hand to give out information and answer questions. The West Yorkshire ‘go:cycling’ project is a new initiative which features Metro and the five West Yorkshire councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield working together to promote cycling across West Yorkshire in a bid to get more people cycling, more often, more safely.

The location of the barista van and gazebo, close to the tunnel entrance, has been made possible by the generosity of local company Magma Ceramics on Preston Street.

If walkers and cyclists would like to make a day of it and explore the other open sections of the Dewsbury Greenway, they can visit The Old Stables Café at Savile Town Wharf between 7am and 3pm for hot and cold refreshments. Savile Town Wharf can be easily reached by a walk or cycle along the Savile Town branch of the Dewsbury Greenway from Sands Lane over the River Calder. Follow the route down the ramp to the canal towpath of the Dewsbury Cut and turn right to reach Savile Town Wharf, where the café and The Leggers Public House are situated.

For more information, please contact:

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