

Perthshire path link to the Three Saints Way (3SW) is welcomed

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Phase two of Loch Earn railway project between Lochearnhead, St Fillans and Comrie is now open

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Pictured are engineer Karlene Doherty, Lady Willoughby de Eresby and Ian Findlay of Paths for All, with Eilidh and Hamish

A £550,000 community-led project to upgrade and develop the Loch Earn Railway Path was recently completed, providing a new shared use path between Lochearnhead, St Fillans and Comrie.

St Fillans Community Trust, in partnership with Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and Sustrans were delighted to complete Phase 2 of the Loch Earn Railway Path project which aims to provide a much needed safe route to Comrie, linking up some of the National Park's most rural communities.

It is hoped that the path will be an integral part of the longer pilgrim routes - Iona to St Andrews and of the Three Saints Way (3SW).

Gordon Watson, chief executive of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, said: "We are delighted to be involved in the project, helping to link up some of our most rural communities.

"The drive and capability of St Fillans Community Trust has been key to this project developing so quickly and to such a high standard.

"The work done this year is an exemplar for barrier-free shared use paths which encourage safe walking, cycling and horse-riding and once complete it will be a significant asset to the local community, National Park and wider Scottish path network."

Andy Keba, Sustrans Scotland Community Links coordinator continued: "We contributed funding towards the construction of this path through our Community Links Programme, which provides funding for the creation of cycling and walking network infrastructure for everyday journeys.

"The new path will provide a link to the wider route which, once completed, will connect the communities between Comrie, St Fillans and Lochearnhead. It will offer a safe off-road path which can be used by locals and visitors to travel either on foot or by bike along the network."

Jonston Brown from St Fillans Community Trust added: "St Fillans Community Trust is grateful to Sustrans, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Gannochy Trust, and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park for all the funding and support in achieving the latest stage in the creation of the second stage in the Loch Earn Railway Path conversion to a walking and cycling facility. We would also like to say a special thank you to Lady Willoughby and Drummond Estates for their fantastic support and cooperation, and to TP&E for managing the project and moving it forward. This sector of the path shows the standard achieved in the upgrade and we hope that the path's increased usage will bring benefits to St Fillans."

Stuart Davies, paths and projects officer at SNH said: "We are delighted to help the community to build this new multi-use path, especially as it will form part of the Cross Scotland Pilgrim Way, a priority route within Scotland's national walking and cycling network."

Phase 1 of the project saw a new route opened between Lochearnhead and St Fillans. The Community Trust is well on its way to delivering Phase 3 later this year which will link St Fillans further west in to Glentarken Woods.

Partners within the Project include: Drummond Estates, LLTTNPA, Sustrans, SNH, Gannochy LEADER, Paths for All, PKC, PKCT