

# NEWS

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For Immediate Release

## **Go Cuckoo over Connect2**

Walkers and cyclists are being asked to add their support to a proposed National Lottery bid geared to improving access to one of the most beautiful canal towpaths in Britain.

Rotherham Borough Council's award winning Rights of Way team is asking for local support for the Connect2 bid by Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, which if successful, will fund £1.4 million improved access works for walkers and cyclists to the Cuckoo Way that takes in the beautiful Chesterfield Canal.

The Rights of Way team has joined in partnership with Sheffield City Council to submit the proposal to Sustrans, which would provide better access for walkers and cyclists to the Canal from the Halfway Tram Stop in Sheffield via Rother Valley Country Park. The money would also improve all the rights of way around the Chesterfield Canal.

Rights of Way Officer for Rotherham Borough Council, Richard Pett, said the more support the bid receives locally the better the chance it has of being approved.

He added: "Connect2 is a national proposal organised by Sustrans, the UK's leading sustainable transport charity - to improve access. Our combined project aims to provide a safe access from the Halfway Tram Stop into Killamarsh for walkers and cyclists by building new bridges; and then linking this into improving all the rights of way in the canal corridor area around the villages of Harthill, Kiveton, Anston and Thorpe Salvin.

"Our bid was masterminded initially by three local access experts – Colin Savage of Wales Parish Council, David Blackburn of the Chesterfield Canal Trust and Jim Tompkin of the Ramblers Association. They came up with a list of commonsense proposals to improve access in the canal area, bringing more visitors into villages from the canal and improving access for local people around Rights of Way in the area."

Local support will help the scheme make the Sustrans' shortlist for projects nationally. If successful, it will then go to a national TV vote this winter.

Connect2 is one of the projects being considered to compete for a single multi-million pound grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The People's Million competition. The winner will be decided by public vote this winter. Sustrans is working with partners around the UK to overcome long-standing barriers such as busy roads, railways or rivers that are dividing communities and making it difficult for people to travel by foot or bike as part of their everyday lives.

Of the full bid, £500,000 would go directly to the local path network, and would investigate and improve matters such as:

- surfacing well-used paths or routes where families and the less able would particularly benefit
- creating new routes
- make road crossings safer
- putting in gates instead of stiles
- making access better for families and the less physically able
- improving horse-riding links
- providing more doorstep walks
- encouraging people to cycle rather than drive

If you would like to support this bid then you can make a pledge on the Sustran's website: [www.sustransconnect2.org.uk/](http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk/) Put in Chesterfield Canal under projects and pledge your support on line, or call the Sustrans information line on 08450 581 373.

You can also to Rotherham Borough Council at Streetpride, Bailey House, Rawmarsh Road, Rotherham. You can also pledge your support by emailing [richard.pett@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:richard.pett@rotherham.gov.uk).

#### **NOTES TO NEWS-EDITORS:**

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