

## North York Moors National Park Authority

**Application for Consent to Construct a Stone Surfaced Path that will link the North Yorkshire Moors Railway Offices and Gift Shop with the Rail Trail, where it passes over the Railway Tunnels at Lease Rigg, Grosmont.**

### Design and Access Statement



#### Introduction and Context

The Rail Trail is a popular route situated in the picturesque Esk Valley, in the north of the North York Moors National Park. It runs for most of its length along a disused railway line that dates from the 19th century, providing a mostly level route that is easy to use. The trail has the added interest of taking users on a route that explores the heart of the industrial heritage of the area which includes George Stephenson's original railway line of 1836 and a variety of industrial history from the last 150 years.

The trail is approximately three and a half miles in length linking the villages of Goathland and Grosmont, and uses both public rights of way and permissive paths on both National Park Authority owned, and privately owned land. The Rail Trail is promoted in a booklet that is produced by the National Park Authority and includes some sections that are accessible to wheelchair users.

Funded through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, this project will form part of a number of different projects in the north of the National Park that seek to create and improve a traffic free network of cycling and walking routes which link stations on the North Yorkshire Moors and Esk Valley Railways, communities, businesses, visitor attractions, and the wider network of public rights of way. Their improvement and provision will significantly increase opportunities for both tourists and local residents in terms of recreation, sustainable travel, and in the case of this project specifically - access to an important industrial heritage site and visitor attraction.

## Design Aspects

The Rail Trail, although promoted as a walk, has the potential to provide an opportunity for traffic free cycling for families. The section of the Rail Trail that links Esk Valley with Grosmont along a public footpath is the least accessible section of the trail with regard to cycling, pushchairs etc.

With this in consideration it is proposed that the public footpath that links Esk Valley with the Unclassified County Road (U7088/9) at St. Matthew's Church, Grosmont, be legally upgraded to public bridleway which would permit access for equestrians and cyclists (Map 1).

The existing footpath will be widened, resurfaced, stepped sections will be removed in order to provide as gentle a gradient as possible, and a short section of new path will be created on a different line, lower down the slope, reducing the need to ascend and descend, and removing the need for the public to negotiate two gates - improving accessibility for all whilst safeguarding stock control. (See Map 2 points A-B-C) Consultations on the legal order process to upgrade the aforementioned public footpath have already begun and are not dependant on planning permission.

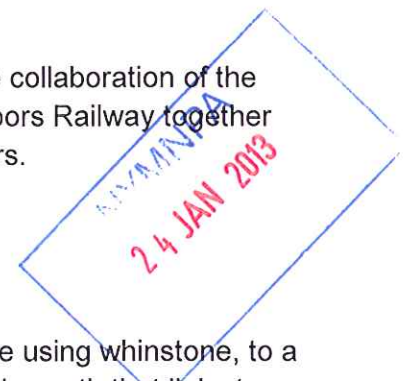
The additional proposed short section of permissive footpath, which requires planning consent, is subject to the successful confirmation of the aforementioned legal order process. The path will link the bridleway mentioned above with the North Yorkshire Moors Railway buildings via the top of George Stephenson's tunnel, to provide an opportunity for the public to leave the Rail Trail and more readily incorporate a visit to the engine sheds, gift shop, historical tunnels and picnic area (Map 2, B- D-E). These attractions are not passed on the current Rail Trail route without retracing your steps through the tunnel. It will also provide an opportunity for visitors to the village of Grosmont to enjoy a short circular walk from the village that incorporates the attractions of the historic tunnel, engine sheds, picnic area, St Matthew's church and the Old School Coffee Shop as part of a short loop. This path will also be constructed in a way that creates the minimum gradient possible, without the use of steps, to create the most accessible form of path possible at this location.

## Involvement

The realisation of this potential project has come together through the collaboration of the North York Moors National Park Authority and the North Yorkshire Moors Railway together with the involvement of, and negotiation with, neighbouring landowners.

## Design

The new sections of path will consist of an unbound aggregate surface using whinstone, to a width of 2m for the new bridleway and 1.5m for the section of permissive path that links to North Yorkshire Moors Railway (points B – E on Map 2). Both lengths of path will be approximately 120m in length. Please refer to Map 2 and Figure 1.





With reference to Map 2 the following photographs illustrate the locations of the proposed works:-

**Point A**



View looking north east in the direction of Grosmont. Line of new bridleway shown with arrow, point A to point B on Map 2.

Note point A – F on Map 2 (the line of the current public footpath in the left of the photograph) would, on successful confirmation of the creation and extinguishment orders, be returned to agricultural land, with adjustment of fencing as appropriate and removal of stone surface.

**Point B**



Looking north east towards Grosmont, illustrating the line the new bridleway would take between points B and C.

**Point C**



Looking east towards St Matthew's Church on Unclassified County Road. New line of new bridleway illustrated with arrow. The gate would be moved several metres forward (to the west) in order to allow bridleway users uninhibited access.

**Point D**



Looking south east from where the proposed permissive footpath will link the new bridleway with North Yorkshire Moors Railway. The path will cross over the top of the historic George Stephenson tunnel providing a direct route down to the visitor attractions of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

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## Point E



Looking north from point E. Arrows indicate where the proposed permissive path will climb up the slope from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway up and over the tunnel to the new line of the new bridleway.

## Landscaping and Appearance

The new paths will be constructed using whinstone aggregate as a surfacing material which will blend into the landscape appropriately. This choice of material will also minimise any ecological impact, such as an increase in alkalinity associated with materials such as limestone. Figure 2 below gives an example of a whinstone surfaced path as an illustration of appearance.

Figure 2



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Boundary fences (post and wire) will need to be moved in agreement with the landowners where necessary to facilitate new access and maintain stock control, and additionally a length of post and wire fencing from point B (on Map 2) will run in an east south easterly direction for approximately 40m in order to prevent the public from trespassing on to the

edge of the top of the railway tunnel. A natural barrier of thorny scrub already present will also be left in place to act as a natural barrier preventing access to the top edge of the tunnels for safety reasons. The new paths will also be signposted appropriately in order for the public to easily find their way. Where signposts are to be installed at the junctions of paths they will be of traditional appearance consisting of treated soft wood posts with oak fingers. The steeper sections of the new permissive path will also have a timber hand rail installed if it is deemed necessary on completion of the aggregate path, of a height of approximately 1m.

### **Tree Survey**

The proposed path will wind its way through woodland in between a number of mature trees. The woodland is a mix of mostly beech and ash. No mature trees will need to be felled. All efforts will be made to retain as many trees as possible- any trees that do need to be removed will only be felled as a last resort and will not be mature specimens, as is the case with all routine path work carried out by the National Park Authority's Ranger and Field Services.

### **Flood Risk Assessment**

The area of the proposed development does not fall within an area that is at risk of flooding. Surface water that flows/falls on to the new stone path surface will be turned off naturally by the contoured/cambered surface of the path, allowing water to soak away naturally on to the adjacent woodland floor, and ultimately down to the river as is normal procedure in path construction of this type.

### **Heritage Statement**

As the project will involve the construction of a path over the top of an important feature of the area's industrial heritage, the following statement from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's Civil Engineer, Nigel Trotter, is included to alleviate any fears that the project could have detrimental impact on the tunnel:-

*"I was responsible for the inspection, maintenance and repair of over 70 miles of railway tunnels for British Rail as Area Works Engineer at Leeds for over 10 years.*

*Both tunnels at Grosmont are substantially built with arches in either brick or stone. Although no construction details survive, the shape of the arches, which is the usually the critical issue for old railway tunnel stability and strength, in both tunnels are good with no obvious structural problems. There are some wet patches in the roof of the rail tunnel, but these are nearer the Grosmont Station end. There are also some odd patches of wet in both tunnels that often vary with the seasons, as is often the case.*

*Subject to detailed design considerations and approval by the NYMR, the proposed path over the tunnels should not pose a problem for structural stability of the tunnels and*

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*supporting slopes. Provision would of course be required for fences and other suitable safety barriers for people using the proposed paths."*

*Nigel Trotter, Civil Engineer. 22 January 2013.*

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