Map showing the High Peak, Monsal and Tissington Trails with the proposed links to Buxton and Matlock Stations

The Peak Trails Links Project: A summary

Buxton to the High Peak Trail and the Monsal Trail, and the Monsal Trail to Matlock

The National Park has popular cycling routes along the Tissington and High Peak Railways as well as on the Monsal Trail near to Bakewell. But it has long been frustrated by their not connecting through to Buxton and Matlock Stations.

The links proposed here would overcome this and lay the foundation for the National Park to pursue a much more sustainable transport programme, one in which many visitors arrived by train and then used bicycles to explore the Park.

The map here does no more than show the line of the proposed route and highlight each section which is to be covered by a detailed report for discussion with landowners and authorities.

Note: Currently it is planned to work up each of these sections in parallel, and to realise land agreements and to make planning applications as progress on each self-contained section dictates.
Buxton & Monsal Trail: Woo Dale Links & Wye Dale Link

Introduction
If the magnificent Monsal Trail is to be opened up throughout then it cannot stop at the existing small Wye Dale car park on the very busy A6. Somehow or other the Trail has to be taken through to Buxton, particularly to Buxton Station so that the public from Manchester and elsewhere can come by train to the Park confident that they have a safe and attractive route into the open countryside.

Following the confined corridor of the A6 offers no way through. But nearby Woo Dale offers a real chance of getting away from the traffic and approaching Buxton from an attractive direction. The plan shows the overall scheme together with the first part of the Monsal Trail to Millers Dale.

Starting from the station there is the basis of a good path running beside the railway to reach Lightwood Road. Follow this and cross the A6 at the existing Pelican crossing to reach Victoria Park Road and residential roads through to Waterswallows Road. Redgap Lane leads down to Church Lane and the start of the work covered in the Woo Dale planning application. Woo Dale provides a beautiful and easily graded route down to the River Wye. Here a new path is needed along the hillside to pass under Topley Pike Railway Bridge and a small bridge over the river to the A6 verge and the Wye Dale car park. From here the existing road to Blackwell Cottages leads to the heart of Wye Dale and the start of the splendid Monsal Trail.

Plan showing the Buxton Station and Miller's Dale section linking the Monsal Trail to Buxton
Buxton Station to Redgap Lane

This section of the route linking the Monsal Trail to Buxton runs mostly along roads and so is not part of the Woo Dale planning application. However it is shown here so that the reader can see how well the overall route leads away from Buxton Station following a sequence of lightly trafficked roads.

The sketches and photographs show key points along the proposed route including – the existing path beside the station which could be improved as the station is developed; its narrow section by the railway which needs widening; interesting bridges over Lightwood Road; sketch details of crossing the A6 at the existing Pelican lights; and a view of the Byway across the Common which makes for an excellent alternative to Waterswallows Road for those who want to stay off-road to the last possible moment.

Rambles could take a shorter route by following Lesser Lane and existing footpaths to Redgap Farm and the start of Church Lane.

In the longer term the ideal route would probably run through the old sidings area as a landscaped corridor within the development before climbing the hill near the planned new distributor road route. Plans for this road and any associated housing development should include provisions for a high quality walking and cycling route, including crossing of the A6.

An additional link to the station could be made via the old path running beside the Buxton Water Plant and remains of the Peak Rail Station. This can be pursued if this path is reopened to the public.
Walking and cycling routes to Poole’s Cavern and Buxton Country Park for link to Tissington Trail.
A Note on the assessment of options for linking the end of the Monsal Trail (Wye Dale Car Park) with Buxton and a note on the options for linking Rednap Lane with Buxton itself

1. Introduction
Although the Wye Dale route was put forward by local cyclists as the best way through from the Monsal Trail to Buxton Station; before promoting it all conceivable options were looked at, on the ground and in detail, to be sure that the Woe Dale route could not be bettered or replaced. Despite considerable effort, no practical alternatives to the Woe Dale route were found.

2. Definition of route sought
The Monsal Trail is largely level, it is traffic free and it runs through spectacular scenery. It is exactly the sort of route which is likely to make a memorable trip for a novice cyclist and one which could enthuse them to cycle more.

Maybe it is too much to ask that the route from the Wye Dale end of Blackwell Lane to Buxton is equally level, equally free of traffic and equally attractive. However the route should have the following characteristics.

i. Gradients: 1:15 is generally considered rather steep, except over short distances, whereas 1:20 is a gradient which is also suitable for people in wheelchairs – an important user of all railway paths.

ii. Traffic: The route should be free of conflicts from traffic over its whole length - that is it should either be traffic free, or on low flow, low speed roads (typically less than 1000 vehicles per day and speeds less than 20mph) and all crossings of major roads should be protected or bridged.

iii. Barriers: The route should be free of unnecessary barriers and if possible free of any dismount barriers, since you would not expect to find any of these on the public road system.

iv. Surface: This should be hard and dry throughout the year and of a standard similar to a good country lane. Whilst an unsealed surface can perform well on the level of a railway track railway which remains on its original alignment here and cement works. This route could not meet any of the requirements of the Project, except that of deliverability.

3. Options for linking the Monsal Trail at Wyedale to Buxton Station
March 2010-surveyed by foot and cycle

The following notes outline the various options considered following initial suggestions by local cyclists that the Woe Dale route looked as though it had excellent potential for a route to the Monsal Trail avoiding the A6.

Derbyshire County Council’s Greenway Strategy indicated a route along the general alignment of the A6 so the search started here.

1) The A6 itself is not a remotely suitable route for any cyclists. It has a high proportion of heavy vehicles, including quarry lorries and it has no footway or verge which might be pressed into service.

2) The railway through the corridor remains in use for heavy stone trains. Although the line has been singled, the remaining line has been realigned to ease the curves, moved from side to side by original double track railway formation, and through Ashwood Dale runs centrally to avoid the retaining walls on the one side and the rock falls on the other. There is no way through on Network Rail land.

3) We looked at the land beside the road and concluded that it would be all but impossible to construct a quality path in this location. Although there are some sections where there is some land, through Ashwood Dale the space is so constricted that the path would have to be built over the River Wye for some distance. Even if such a route was agreed it would suffer from the noise of traffic over its whole length, and numerous pinch points where heavy engineering would result in exorbitant costs. It is not a practical route.

4) Route options on the north side of Wye Dale looked promising. There are 4 options which might be possible - Pictor Hall, Woo Dale, Cowlow options, and the Pennine Bridleway.

4a) The Pictor Hall route would require a new path along the north side of the river from Topley Pike Bridge to the Pictor Hall Road, a distance of nearly 900 metres. The drive up to Pictor Hall is steep and the road has footpath status only so agreements would be required. There did not look as though there was any practical way of easing the steep gradient up to Pictor Hall, and following this route would be fairly intrusive on the property itself. In addition the riverside section of the route would require detailed agreements from Natural England and the Environment Agency over its whole length. This does not look like a viable option.

4b) The Woe Dale route only requires 350m of riverside path and the Dale itself offers as easy gradient throughout. It feels much the most attractive option, and the landowner (Tarmac) is supportive. This option has been reported on in detail.

4c) The Cowlow options are twofold. The first would follow the riverside to the bottom of Woe Dale, as in the options 4a and 4b, and then require the construction of a new series of zig zags to climb the hill to Cowlow. Whilst this results in an attractive route, this would inevitably be a steep climb, and the disruption to the SAC site would be considerable. The second option manages to stay outside the SAC area but only by the means of excavating a major zigzag ramp through rock down the side of Rocks Dale. This route runs within the active quarry area and is not supported by Tarmac, although in years to come, when all quarrying in Tunstead is complete, it may be possible to devise an easier route making use of operational quarries roads. This option was also covered in a detailed report, which was discussed with Tarmac but without any success in it being taken forward.

4d) The Pennine Bridleway offers an agreed route out of the Wye Dale but it suffers from a combination of severe hills and heavy traffic which would exclude it from popular use by the general public. The climb out of Wye Dale is extremely steep and almost everyone would have to walk it both when climbing and descending. But so also are the hills either side of the Tunstead works, the worst of which is also used by all the lorries servicing this major quarry and cement works. This route could not meet any of the requirements of the Project, except that of deliverability.

5) Route options south of Wye Dale again include a number which we have investigated. They comprise ones via King Sterndale and Harpur Hill, via King Sterndale and Cowdale, and the circular southern route of the Pennine Bridleway across to the High Peak Trail at Street House.

5a) The King Sterndale Options require the support of Network Rail to remove their Topley Pike sidings. This would enable the construction of a route ramping up from the Wye Dale car park onto the railway embankment and then across the A6 on the Topley Pike Bridge beside the remaining single track railway which remains on its original alignment here above the A6 as far as the caravan park and then across the road to enter Buxton by the allotments. This route, if it could be negotiated is fairly direct but suffers from the need to negotiate and construct considerable lengths of new path as well as the uncertainties of winning Network Rail’s support at Topley Pike.

5b) This option looks at producing a more direct route, from King Sterndale to Buxton, by following the Midshires way footpath to Cowdale. This is a most attractive and easily graded alignment if the landowners agreed. From Cowdale the route follows the edge of Cowdale Quarry (itself the site of a current planning application) but would have to divert from the current footpath route over Staden Lane because of its steep gradients. A better route would keep to the edge of the quarry and then follow the field edges above the A6 as far as the caravan park and then cross the road to enter Buxton by the allotments. This route, if it could be negotiated is fairly direct but suffers from the need to negotiate and construct considerable lengths of new path as well as the uncertainties of winning Network Rail’s support at Topley Pike.
The County Council's Greenway Strategy

The County Council's Greenway Strategy sets out a framework for a network of good quality Greenways throughout the County. This proposal departs from the Council's proposals in that the route proposed does not follow the A6 corridor shown in their document nor does it provide for equestrians. The route can be seen as complementing the Council's strategy in that it will provide a high quality route avoiding the A6, for walkers and cyclists, linking the Monsal Trail from Bakewell to Buxton Station. Its ambition is to make the overall project so attractive that it will become a popular route for visiting the Peak District National Park as an alternative to coming by car.

With regards to equestrians it has proved effectively impossible to construct a path of sufficient width to allow multiple use over the narrow section beside the River Wye. Options for a bridle route were reviewed and it was felt that if a route into Buxton is required then a much more practical option would be as follows:

- via the Pennine Bridleway route past Mosley Farm to Turnstead
- continue via the existing bridle path to Buxton Bridge over the railway

For Information Only

The table lists the distance of the overall route from Buxton Station to the Wyedale carpark, the length of new construction or refurbishment of existing tracks, and raises the issues of ownership/gradients/visual quality and the Environment Agency all on a scale of 1 (straight forward) to 4 (difficult). The practicality of delivering each route is summed up in the same way whilst the final column summaries whether or not the option can be considered at all for this crucial link from the Monsal Trail to Buxton.

Table Comparing options for a good quality family cycling route from Buxton Station to the Monsal Trail in Wye Dale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>New Ownership</th>
<th>Hills</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Natural England Interest</th>
<th>Practicality</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>km</td>
<td>km</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A6 main road</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Operational railway</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Through Ashwood Dale</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a. Pictor Hall</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b. Woo Dale</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c (i) Cowlow zigzag</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c (ii) Cowlow-Black Rocks</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d. Pennine Bridleway north</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. King Sterndale and Harpur Hill</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b. King Sterndale and Cowlow</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c. Pennine Bridleway South</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Comparing options for a good quality family cycling route from Buxton Station to the Monsal Trail in Wye Dale

The table lists the distance of the overall route from Buxton Station to the Wyedale carpark, the length of new construction or refurbishment of existing tracks, and raises the issues of ownership/gradients/visual quality and the Environment Agency all on a scale of 1 (straight forward) to 4 (difficult). The practicality of delivering each route is summed up in the same way whilst the final column summaries whether or not the option can be considered at all for this crucial link from the Monsal Trail to Buxton.

- negotiate a route along the field edge on the north side of the main road to Hardybarn
- turn south to pick up Green Lane to the outskirts of Buxton

This would make a good route for equestrians although its two long steep hills precluded it from being suitable for encouraging cyclists.
Seats are an important aspect of any path. A number of examples from Greenway Paths are shown to give some idea of what might be made. Seats should always be sited to provide memorable views so as to give a good reason for using them, and they should look along the route they serve in order to give informal surveillance of the route itself.

1. Redgap Lane makes for an excellent cycling route into Buxton.

2. Church Lane leads to Woowol Farm and the end of the track down Woo Dale. Although it has deep ruts which make it difficult to cycle, the road has a sound stone base. Once the soil and detritus is cleared away then the stone base can be enhanced and a bitumen surface laid for a permanent finish.

Woo Dale Map 1
This and the following maps show the proposals in some detail

1. Access arrangements to include 3m wide heavy duty cattle grid suitable for all farm traffic, or gate, and an adjacent 1.2m wicket gate with carefully arranged approaches so as to be suitable for wheelchairs.

2. Deeply rutted farm lane to be cleaned back to a stone base, filled with sound stone to ground level, completed and finished off with a bitumen surface, all 2.5m wide for farm vehicles. The adjacent field fence should be rewired to give 2 smooth wires on the inside, the public face.

3. Link to Hardy Barn Lane is a useful bridleway route, which leads back to the river at Middle Farm.

4. The whole track through Woo Dale needs to be reconstructed as shown in the section on Page 9, with a sound stone surface, a bitumen layer to withstand agricultural vehicles and erosion, and finished with washed sand brushed into the surface to tide over the period before the surface oxidises and livestock graze over the path to give a rural feel to the route. This will be a permissive cycle route.

5. This track to Woowol Farm is a permissive route which should not be over popularised as it passes through the farm itself.

6. One or two passing bays for construction, at locations to be agreed with the National Park, to allow equipment to pass. The bays to be restored with turfs kept to one side for this purpose.

--- For Information only ---

1. Clean off grass and soil from track, clear down to a hard stone base
2. Add approximately 150 stone compacted to give sound shaped base 4m wide
3. Machine lay bitmac DBM 60mm thick with central camber
4. Repair walls as required
5. Build up to path level with grass verge to fall away from path where possible

Sketch through Church Lane looking up hill

Note: although ground is free draining into limestone below, decisions to include soakaways or other drainage to be taken on site as required.

6. Trim trees back to trunks where necessary
1. Redgap Lane
2. View of Church Lane
3. Looking into Woo Dale from the junction with Woolow Farm Road
4. Looking down Woo Dale from near its top
5. Further down Woo Dale

Scale 1:2500 at A3

BUXTON & MONSAL TRAIL - WOO DALE & WYE DALE LINK

Upper passing area to be restored

Photo 1
Photo 2
Photo 3
Photo 4
Photo 5

For Information only
Note
The A6 is equally hazardous for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians alike. At this stage it is not known how difficult it will be to make the path linking the foot of Wye Dale with Topley Pike Bridge. Once the work is done it will be possible to assess if the path is wide enough to be used by horses as well as cyclists and pedestrians.

Sketch through section of path through Woo Dale

Note on construction of path through Woo Dale
The contractor will operate within a 3m wide construction zone in order to build the 2.5m wide track and path (except at 2 passing points which will be restored after the works).

The contractor will remove all soil to expose the original stone base and load this into dumpers which will travel back along the line of the track to spoil heap locations outside the SAC on land agreed with the farmer.

One line of turfs will be set to one side to be used to make up the verges of the path at the end of the construction, so as to ensure that the grass naturally regenerates right up to the edge of the path surface.

The stone will be brought in the same way and compacted to give a strong smooth base. Similarly the dense bitmac surface will be brought down the length of the path with any damage to the already laid stone base repaired as the work proceeds. And then, as required, a surface dressing of brown gravel will be used to provide the finished surface.

Then the verge will be restored with the turfs, the whole site cleaned up, and finally any gates and fencing replaced.

Note that it is not envisaged that the grass verges will be mown in any way but that they will be maintained by grazing livestock. Any grasses which fall across the edge of the path will be left to help to reduce any impact the path might have.
Sketch across Woo Dale showing the magnificent scale of the defile

Lower passing area to be restored

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**Woo Dale Map 3**

The key connection beside the River Wye between Woo Dale and the Blackwell Mill Cottages Road

1a. There used to be a track to the pumping station, now only marked by a line of derelict fence posts which should be removed. Construct the path along the line of this track, and just before the pumping station, near to the north and pass the pumping station on its uphill side.

1b. Make a neat opening in the boundary wall, 2.4m wide, initially for the works access, but finally for a 1.2m wide self closing wicket gate and a 1.0m wide cycling cattle grid as shown in the standard details.

2a. The first section of the path, parallel to the Wye approximately 100m in length, is set well back, and above the flood plain area on side long ground as shown in the sketch.

2b. For a short section up to 50m length the path needs to be built level with the ground, close to the edge of the highest flood area, in order that it avoids difficult steep ground and losing trees. The construction should allow for the very rare inundation.

2c. Over this section the path follows the pipeline route largely above the line of trees. In all some 5 or 6 ash trees will need to be removed.

2d. Over the next 50-70m the path follows the pipeline route largely above the line of trees. In all some 5 or 6 ash trees will need to be removed.

2e. Here the cross slope is much easier and the path drops gradually down to pass under the railway viaduct. Although there is no sign of run off it would be prudent to include a 300 diameter pipe under the fill as it crosses level to pass over the top of the railway boundary wall.

3a. Here the path passes behind a large tree and will require some earthworks to level off. Approaching Topley Pike Viaduct there is a dip in the ground which should be filled with any material and drained with a 300mm pipe as a precaution although there is no sign of run off at this point.

3b. Under the viaduct there is plenty of room. Network Rail require the removal of all trees in this area.

3c. Finally the path is built into the drystone works approaching the footbridge over the river.

4. The proposed footbridge would cross the river just downstream of the railway bridge, set at a skew to land on the A6 side where the verge widens to 3m.

5. Widen existing path to 2.0m leaving grass verge beside A6 if required.

6. Paint 2.5m wide walking and cycling route on west side of car park road.

7. This existing bus lay-by should be used as the setting down and picking up point for the shuttle bus meeting the regular train service to Buxton. This will be needed for walkers to reach the Monsal Trail the more easily. Ideally this bus would also be equipped with a trailer for cyclists, for family groups and for those less able who might feel that the Woo Dale route is a little far for them. For the return trip passengers would be also picked up here before the shuttle bus turned around via the quarry road.

8. Existing small car park has limited capacity (30) and should not be advertised in the Monsal Trail scheme and reserved for local people.

9. This gravel access road with bridleway status leads to Blackwell Mill Cottages, and has damage from this local traffic. The only solution in the long term is to construct a sealed surface and at the same time introduce a 10mph speed limit as this track will be heavily used by walkers and cyclists once the Monsal Trail is opened.

10. The A6 climbs away up the hill.
9. View looking downstream from opposite pumping station with the river running high. The path would run at the foot of the slope to the left of the picture.

10. Note 2b showing high vegetation in summer

11. Note 2d showing the area the path follows just above the trees

12. View across river at 2e showing new path built 2m above water

13. View under Topley Pike Bridge. The path would go beside the abutment and then cross the river just at the right of the picture

14. View beside A6 at site of end of bridge

15. View of lay-by on A6. River Wye is to left of picture. The existing path is to be widened to take the Monsal Trail leading from the car park in the distance to the footbridge location just behind the photographer.
Details of river bridge and approaches

1. Sketch under Topley Pike Viaduct showing generous space available

   Trees under viaduct to be removed by Network Rail

   Level space next to bridge abutment to make a path.

   Note: the slope down to the footbridge should not exceed 1:20.

2. View of Wye Bridge looking downstream

   Construct short length of dry stone wall to retain rockfill at end of bridge.

   Stonework near river is left untouched.

   Deck of bridge level with top of existing wall

   100 year flood level

   River Wye

   1.8m between balustrade rails over a distance of 10m

   * Water level on the same day the water was 1.1m below Woo Dale Bridge

3. Sketch through path at end of proposed bridge

   100 year flood level

   Normal water level

   Concrete slab footing built into wall and extending as far as required by engineer

   Parapet railings run for 10m to start of bus lay-by

   Crash barrier runs for 40m from Topley Pike Bridge to start of bus lay-by

4. Sketch beside A6 showing path to Wye Dale Car Park

   Widened path to 2.5m with grass verge

   Low wall may need a balustrade over a short section

   2 - 2.5m

For Planning Application
Proposals for 1:15 ramp from end of Monsal Trail to Blackwell Mill Lane

This connection is proposed in order to provide an easily graded connection from the recently opened Monsal Trail to the Blackwell Mill Lane which links to the Topley Pike car park and eventually Buxton. The proposal is for a 3m wide path running at a gradient of 1:15 over a distance of 105m to overcome a height difference of approximately 7m. Although this gradient is quite long, it should be manageable by nearly everyone in wheelchairs, especially those who venture this far from the car park.

The notes and cross sections describe the works as follows:

1. The ramp starts 10 or 15m back from the end of the cutting and excavates down to the solid rock of the original cutting. This will probably result in the path emerging from the cutting into the rock fill embankment about 1m below the current path level.

2. The path should now be excavated out of the embankment as set along the north side as shown here in order to gain a little more length.

3. The path now cuts through the mound of spoil from the railway cutting. This is probably all good rock. This material should all be used to construct the ramp down to the lane on the basis of a balanced cut and fill. The sides of the cutting will be raw rock fill on the north of the path and the original side of the hillside on the south side. The finish could be left as found or treated as agreed with the PDNPA.

4. This one beech tree is the only tree of any significance affected by this ramp. It could be felled, but could possibly be built around and its health kept under observation.

5. The path now continues down to the lane at a gradient of 1:15 by way of a rock bank built from the material excavated in 2 and 3 above and as shown in the cross section.

6. Here the link joins the road and feathers in level. It could possibly be controlled by two large rocks placed across the path to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.

**General note 1**

This final surface of the link path could be in Top Trek provided it can survive intact at this gradient, under trees and north facing. More likely the ramp will require the permanent sealed surface shown here.

**General note 2**

The construction of this ramped link should be treated as part of the Woo Dale connection to Buxton and funded at the same time as that project if possible.
This plan shows the practical works to Church Lane covering tree management, planting and dry stone wall works agreed with the farmer to allow his operations to proceed without hindrance. The works all lie outside the National Park boundary. Church Lane itself is an unmaintained County road.

1. Gate off end of Church Lane with 12ft locked farm gate (keys held by local farmers), a "K" type access control for cyclists and pedestrians and a walk through box for horses.
2. Fence off small area, 0.1ha, and plant a copse of local trees.
3. Rebuild 20m of drystone wall across corner of field, and raise height of internal wall, so as to create small copse area and passing point for walkers and cyclists to stand aside from passing tractors etc.
4. Root out all hawthorns here and rebuild boundary wall over 15m, set back 2m into field to create another passing point.
5. Where there are ash trees on one side of the track, cut back to a single story trunk. Where, as here, there are trees on both sides remove all trees on north side, cut stumps flush and poison.
6. Fence area for works compound. This area to be used for the storage of materials, and will be levelled off at the end of the works using soil scraped off the line of the path down Church Lane and Woo Dale.
7. Install 12ft gate for farm access to field and make good drystone wall.
8. Fence off small 0.1ha copse and plant with local trees.
9. Install 12ft farm gate, locked by farmer.
10. Replace existing 10 foot gates with new and bridleway latches.
Appendix

Impact Assessments together with a summary of the Transport and Socio-economic evaluations which have been prepared for this Planning Application
Appendix: Summary and recommendations of Ecological, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments prepared for this Planning Application

Summary of Ecological Impact Assessment

An Ecological Impact Assessment of the Monsal Trail Cycle Route was undertaken by Andrew McCarthy Associates in July 2010. This assessment included the route running through Wye Dale linking to Wye Dale Car Park. The following is a summary of this assessment, a full version of this report is contained within the Woo Dale to Wye Dale Cycle Link Environmental Statement.

Field Survey

Field surveys were undertaken between April and June 2010 and comprised ‘extended’ Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the whole proposed cycle route and National Vegetation Classification (NVC) surveys of the Woo Dale route. Water vole, otter, bullehead and white-clawed crayfish were also surveyed for.

In summary, the scope of the ecological assessment:

- Identifies statutory designated areas within or adjacent to the site;
- Identifies any rare, notable or protected species or habitats within or adjacent to the site;
- Considers the potential for effects on valued receptors (including Natura 2000 Sites) arising from the Development within and adjacent to the site;
- Describes mitigation of adverse effects within or adjacent to the site; and
- Identifies residual effects taking into account the above assessment.

The principal issues are as follows:

- Direct habitat loss due to land take by the cycle track within the Peak District Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wye Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Indirect disturbance effects, i.e. the displacement of species as a consequence of construction work, or due to the operational phase of the cycle route; and
- The effect of increased public recreation.

The Monsal Trail, Cowlow and Woo Dale route options are mainly restricted to existing tracks, paths or roads. Where there are no tracks, the habitat comprises semi-improved mesotrophic grassland.

Habitats in the wider environment comprise a mosaic of semi-improved, improved and unimproved grassland, tall ruderal vegetation, woodland and scrub. Of particular interest are the calcareous grassland communities which surround the Woo Dale valley and the woodland which is adjacent to the River Wye. Both are listed as an Annex I features of The Wye Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Minimising habitat loss

The proposed cycle route follows existing tracks and paths where possible to minimise impacts on the surrounding ecology. The current footprint of the hard-standing trail along the disused railway track will be the limit of construction activities along this section to minimise habitat loss and disturbance.

Minimising Habitat & Botanical Species Loss

Important flower-rich, buttercup or calcareous communities adjacent to the route will be marked out (and fenced where appropriate) to enable construction works to minimise land take of these areas. In addition, important habitat areas through woodland will also be marked by fencing where appropriate to prevent construction machinery or equipment being placed in these sensitive areas. Where equipment is required to be stored on site, areas of low botanical diversity will be used.

Where flower-rich grassland is to be removed, it will be removed as turves and stored adjacent to the track. Once the track is reconstructed, the grassland will be replaced as the verge aiming to retain the habitat as far as possible. Seed harvesting would also be considered to enable the re-creation of representative communities where appropriate.

Where rocky outcrops require stabilisation, efforts will be made to minimise the extent of disturbance to bryophytes and alpine vegetation placing rock anchors in areas of least vegetation coverage. Where the majority of the vegetation covering the rock face will be unavoidably affected, an ecologist will survey the area prior to works and remove all important plants for storage and re-planting following works, seed harvesting would also be considered. A method statement for these works will be compiled and agreed with Natural England prior to works.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the development will result in limited losses of mainly hard-surfaced and semi-improved habitats which are widespread and common within the wider environment. While more diverse habitats are to be affected, losses will be minimised and enhancements installed where possible. Mitigation will seek to prevent any adverse effect on species present throughout the cycle route and maintain populations in a favourable conservation status, and it is recommended that such proposals are secured by condition of the planning consent. A condition pertaining to the requirement for an Ecological Management Plan detailing the protective mitigation measures and ongoing enhancements as well as monitoring protocols should also be secured by condition.

The assessment concludes that there will be no significant detrimental effects to the sites which are designated for their ecological importance (Peak District Dales SAC) and The Wye Valley SSSI and that the integrity of their qualifying features will remain intact.
BUXTON & MONSAL TRAIL - WOO DALE & WYE DALE LINK

FIGURE 2 - Landscape Designations and Local Policies (PDNPA & HPBC)

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Summary of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed Woo Dale to Wye Dale cycle route was undertaken by Arup in August 2010. Pre-application discussions were undertaken with the Planning Authorities, Natural England and the Environment Agency to present and discuss the project. The following is a summary of this assessment; the full version is contained within the Woo Dale to Wye Dale Cycle Link Environmental Statement.

The principle issues are:
- Part of the route (Woo Dale) sits within the Peak District National Park; this is the highest landscape designation in the UK and confers special protection upon land within it because of its landscape quality.
- The route sits within a landscape designated locally as a Special Landscape Area and a Natural Zone. Both designations recognise the importance of conserving the natural beauty of these areas.
- Introduction and visibility of new built form.
- The choice and visual appearance of new materials.
- The potential impact on the landscape character of Woo Dale and Wye Dale.
- The potential impact of construction operations.
- The effect of increased public recreation during the operational stage.

Minimising Impact on Landscape Character

The majority (4/5) of the 2450m route runs along existing formed tracks designated as Public Rights of Way. At present these tracks are heavily rutted and within Woo Dale itself these meander uncontrolled across the base of the Dale. It is considered the rationalisation of these tracks into a single all weather track would have a minimal impact on the landscape character of the Dale. It would also provide an opportunity to better access this landscape for recreational users, further promoting the aims of the National Park.

A new section of path linking the bottom of Woo Dale to Wye Dale Car Park formed at the base of the Dale slope would be constructed on a low berm; in places this would cut into the slope to form a level area. It is considered that due to the proposed low level of this construction, distance from nearest visual receptors on the A6 (Bakewell Road) and short length that there would be minimal change to the landscape character. Existing vegetation cover would also provide consistent low level screening.

A small cycle/pedestrian footbridge would be constructed across the River Wye adjacent to the existing rail viaduct west of Wye Dale Car Park. This is located at a natural crossing point of the river where the channel narrows. Repairs to the existing canalised river walls would be undertaken to form the bridge abutments with some vegetation clearance required to form the route. It is considered this discreet structure would have minimal visual impact and would be compatible with the existing character of this section of the route.

Mitigating Landscape & Visual Impacts

In order to minimise the potential landscape impacts of the scheme, the following mitigation measures are proposed:
- Construction width of development minimised to a nominal 4m to reduce visual impact of the works. Designated passing places will be operated to avoid unnecessary vehicular overruns.
- Small scale plant used to ensure minimal construction width and reduce visual impact of construction operations. This will also allow the route through Woo Dale to be maintained open during construction.
- No materials to be stockpiled within construction area, materials will be brought onto site as required to allow a rolling construction programme.
- Verges will be reformed using existing turf stripped from construction alignment to speed up establishment and visual integration of the track.
- Natural and locally sourced stone chippings to form path surface dressing, referencing the natural stone walling forming adjacent field boundaries, to better integrate the proposals into the landscape setting.
- Any vegetation or trees lost due to the alignment of the path will be compensated at the nearest practical location within the scheme.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed cycle path will result in a negligible landscape impact as it is considered the proposals are in keeping with the existing landscape character and will generally improve the existing condition of the Public Rights of Way forming the majority of the route. The addition of a new path link between the bottom of Woo Dale to Wye Dale Car Park, whilst appearing as a new built element within the landscape will quickly integrate with the setting; providing better opportunities to experience the Dale landscape. The assessment concludes that there will be no significant detrimental effects to the sites that are designated for their landscape importance (Peak District National Park, Special Landscape Area and Natural Zone).