

Mid Cornwall Metro Walking and Cycling Opportunities

Cornwall Local Access Forum report Dec 2023

The opportunities:

The proposed Mid Cornwall Metro project presents exiting potential for connecting communities between Falmouth, Truro, St Austell and Newquay. This report details ways in which it could also support and encourage active travel access to local public open spaces within mid Cornwall, utilising the Public Rights of Way and multiuse trails network.

The Metro route uniquely connects with the majority of Cornwall's off-road trails network and, if appropriate rail facilities are provided for customers, the Metro could provide an outstanding resource for residents and visitors, providing access to over 70 miles of mainly off-road walking and cycling countryside routes.

It is not normal practise to provide a high level of cycle storage capacity within the rolling stock of the UK railway network. Integrated active travel arrangements are generally not well developed and those wishing to link train travel with cycling are often required to use folding bicycles. Current proposals for the Mid Cornwall Metro rolling stock will provide up to three cycle spaces on each train and that this provision is expected to be pre-booked. This level of provision would need to be improved if full advantage were to be taken of the opportunities to encourage use by families and groups wishing to use the rail system to connect directly between their homes and the off-road trails network.

A section of the Mineral Tramways Trail situated in the valley below Perranwell Station:



The Trails network:

The Cornwall Council Interactive Mapping System identifies 30 routes promoted for walking and cycling within the county, falling into two categories; a) predominantly or exclusively on-carriageway, and b) predominantly off-road. The on-carriageway trails rely heavily on the National Cycle Network developed by Sustrans and broadly can be identified under the Cornish Way and Caradon Trails networks. These trails are predominantly cyclist orientated and largely attract experienced longer distance cyclists.

The network of predominantly off-road trails has been established to provide access to countryside which demonstrate Cornwall's unique environment and historical heritage. They provide walking and cycling routes full of interest both to residents and visitors to Cornwall and the routes are open to a wide range of user groups and capabilities. The major routes, comprising the vast majority of trail length, are: the Camel Trail, Clay Trail, Goss Moor Multi-use Trail and Mineral Tramways Trail. Of these only the Camel Trail is not directly connected with the Mid Cornwall Metro route. The length of trails which do connect directly with the Metro totals over 70 miles and represents 80% of the available off-road trail network in Cornwall.

The Metro Stations connections with the trails:

Connection with the trails may be made at the following stations along the Metro route:

Perranwell > Mineral Tramways

Truro > Coosebean Trail, Old Newham Railway Line Trail, Saints Trail to St Agnes

St Austell > Clay Trail

Par > Clay Trail

Bugle > Clay Trail

Roche > Goss Moor Multiuse Trail

The Mineral Tramways Trails offer people a unique opportunity to access our internationally important mining heritage, which has been recognised by the awarding of UNESCO World Heritage Site Status.

Coosebean and Old Newham Railway Line Trails provide access from Truro Railway Station to Truro City Centre. The developing Saints Trail will initially provide access to St Agnes and the north coast, with possibly further extension along the north coast towards Newquay in future.

The striking and dramatic scenery of the St Austell Clay Trails was created by the 250 year old clay mining industry. The trails have recently been transformed by tree planting and careful environmental management creating a haven for wildlife, and they continue to be enhanced by the establishment of new trails within the area.

Goss Moor Trails give access to the 480 hectare Goss Moor National Nature Reserve. The routes are mostly flat, giving all users easy access to the largest surviving remnant of mid Cornwall moorland.

A flavour of the additional opportunities presented by the Trails:

The older and more developed Camel Trail provides some indication of the appeal and potential for off-road walking and cycle routes in Cornwall. It has a high national profile and signals the way in which Cornwall may develop a distinctive character in providing both residents and visitors active access to Cornwall's unique countryside and historical heritage.

The newer trails are taking this further and developing their own characters. The Saint Piran Cafe and Bike Hire, which can be found a short distance from Perranwell Station at Bissoe, is the base for the Saint Piran international cycle team. The Saint Piran Team compete in the "Union Cycliste Internationale Tour" and are intent on getting an invitation to the Tour De France within the next five years. Together with other businesses set up along the Mineral Tramways Trail, the bike hire and cafe has seen a surge in business over recent years as more users appreciate access to the Cornwall Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.