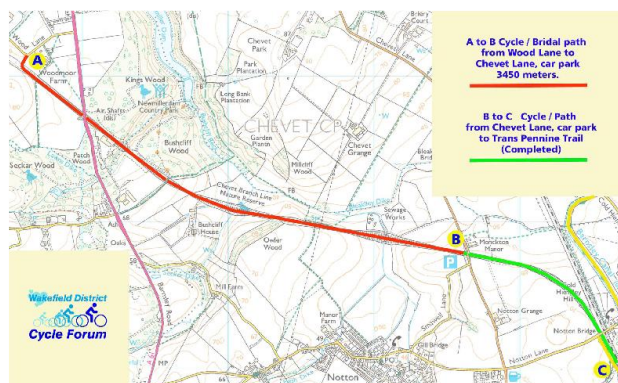


Chevet Branch Line

The construction of the Chevet Branch Line bridleway was the biggest project undertaken by Wakefield District Cycle Forum (WDCF). At over 5 kilometres it was the longest of the 'missing-links' identified by WDCF as crucial to completing a comprehensive network of cycle paths in the district. Completed in December 2014, after nearly 2 years of work, the path extends from Wood Lane near Newmillerdam to Old Royston in Notton Parish.



The project created a new bridleway which has proved a great success with walkers and horse riders as well as cyclists and was surfaced with recycled road materials. This environmentally sensitive construction has not only blended in with the woodland surroundings through which it passes but made the path an all-weather facility, even at times of excessive rainfall such the path experienced immediately after its construction.

Sandy Clark, Chair of Wakefield District Cycle Forum at that time, acted as project manager, in conjunction with David Keighley. He remarked that 'directly managing the construction of a new path is a new direction for the Cycle Forum and was a large undertaking for an entirely voluntary community organisation. We hope to build on this experience and further extend the traffic-free path network in our district'

The new bridleway was constructed with a grant of around £85,000 from the Paths for Communities fund, administered by Natural England on behalf of the UK and European governments. Wakefield District Cycle Forum contributed matched funding of around £11,500 including 274 hours of volunteers' work. Wakefield Council and Notton Parish Council were partners in the project and many other community and business interests were supporters of this ambitious scheme.

The path is part of two highly popular signed cycle routes devised by WDCF. The Wakefield Wheel' a 38-mile trail circumventing the City of Wakefield, and the Wonders of Wakefield, a shorter 21 mile trail visiting important sites in the district such as Sandall Castle and Nostell Priory. The path also provides easy access to the Trans Pennine Trail from the south-west of Wakefield City.

Local landowner Gordon Harrison was one of four landowners through whose land the bridleway runs and WDCF had to gain agreement from all of these landowners. Mr Harrison also agreed to the diversion across his land of a footpath which saves walker from having to negotiate the busy Chevet Lane road. He said of the completion of the project:

'I am very pleased in the end the whole job came good for everyone. I have walked up the old railway line towards Royston with the dogs many times, it is now a much more pleasant walk. I notice there are plenty of cyclists making good use. It is pleasing to see the old railway better used and well improved with the new hard surface. Also it has been a lot safer for walkers without using the main road.'

The official opening of the path took place on Saturday 8th March 2015 and the ribbon was cut by local MP Jon Trickett.

The success of this major project inspired WDCF to continue its programme of completing 'missing links' and was the first of many projects which have made Wakefield a better place to cycle in.