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NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND OPENS GREENWAY TO THE HEART OF GLEN COE

- The Glencoe Greenway improves safe and sustainable access into the heart of the glen.
- 3-mile / 5km multi-ability route links key parts of the glen for walkers, cyclists, and other users.
- Completes a 6-mile / 10km circular route between Glencoe Visitor Centre, Loch Triochatan and Glencoe village, a long-held community aspiration.

The National Trust for Scotland has officially opened the Glencoe Greenway, a new traffic-free, shared-use path that will enable local people and visitors to safely walk or wheel into the heart of this world-renowned glen from the west.

The 5km route is now fully open to the public following the completion of a pedestrian underpass below the A82 trunk road, the final element of construction.

More than two million vehicles drive through Glen Coe every year on one of the busiest roads in the Highlands. The Greenway aims to provide an attractive alternative to the car for all those who come to explore this iconic landscape. It is one of a range of measures designed to help address the pressures created by the popularity of the glen.

Some parts of the Greenway have been open since the winter and so far, more than 33,000 people have used the new path system to explore the glen.

This major active travel improvement project has been made possible by a partnership between the National Trust for Scotland, which is the custodian of Glencoe National Nature Reserve, and active travel charity Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly known as Sustrans). Funding has come from the Scottish Government, administered through Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's Network Development programme, and through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, which is managed by VisitScotland.

The £2 million project comprises 2km of new path between the Trust's Glencoe Visitor Centre and the woodland walks of An Torr, on a stretch of the A82 where pedestrians' only choice had been to walk along a narrow roadside verge. It will give visitors the chance to experience the archaeological landscape at Achnacon for the first time. This long-vanished township, once home to the MacDonalds of Glencoe, was one of the locations that witnessed bloodshed during the infamous Massacre of 1692.

The project has also upgraded 3km of existing paths, widening them and reducing gradients to enable a diverse range of users to share the space. To avoid a road-level pedestrian crossing, an underpass bridge has been constructed below the A82 at the

Leac na Muidhe river. Seating and interpretation panels will offer welcome rest points for path users, highlighting history and nature along the route.

The Greenway provides a direct traffic-free connection to the popular 'Caledonia Way' National Cycle Network Route 78, which travels from Oban to Fort William, via Ballachulish Bridge. It also completes the 'Glencoe Orbital Trail,' a long-standing community venture to offer a 10km circular route between Glencoe Village, Glencoe Visitor Centre and the Clachaig Inn. The whole route can now either be completed on foot via traffic-free paths or by bike on the Greenway and the old military road, which has gained 'quiet road' status to make it a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Emily Bryce, the National Trust for Scotland's Operations Manager for Glencoe, said: "The Glencoe Greenway is something we are very proud of. It makes it possible for people of all ages and abilities to get closer to Glen Coe's nature, beauty, and heritage, without having to rely on car travel. This helps to reduce the pressure that popularity can place on this incredible landscape.

"It has been brilliant to see how local people and visitors alike have quickly adopted the Greenway – whether that be children learning to ride their bikes, backpackers safely walking into the glen after arriving by bus, or visitors wandering along to catch a glimpse of our Highland cows.

"The Greenway has already had a massive impact on the number of walkers and cyclists once forced to venture on to the busy A82. We undertook video survey counts in November 2023 and November 2024, before and after the new path opened. In November 2024, there was a 90% decrease in the number of cyclists on the trunk road compared with the previous year, reducing from 1,300 to just 130. Over 2,000 cyclists used the Greenway that same month – even before it was fully open or publicised. This gives us great hope for its future popularity, and the safety benefits it will bring to pedestrians and road users alike."

Philip Long, Chief Executive of the National Trust for Scotland, said: "We hope that the opening of the Glencoe Greenway will encourage an ever-wider mix of visitors to discover this spectacular landscape and its stories, sustainably. In doing so, they will have a chance to see for themselves the work our charity undertakes to care for and share Glencoe National Nature Reserve. We're extremely grateful to the funders, contractors and National Trust for Scotland members and supporters who have made this project possible.

"Constructing 5km of pathways in such a precious setting was no easy feat, but the Glencoe Greenway was meticulously designed to minimise visual and ecological impact through the careful choice of route, materials, landscaping, and surface finish, mirroring the glen's existing low-level path network. Less than a year since its construction, the

Greenway is already blending into its surroundings very well. Our ranger team will now look after this new path as part of a network of 65km in our care in the National Nature Reserve."

Carole Patrick, Director for the National Cycle Network at Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans), said: "We are thrilled to see the opening of the Glencoe Greenway. For the first time ever, people can walk, wheel and cycle on a completely traffic-free route through this iconic landscape.

"We know that safety is the main barrier people face to getting around by walking, wheeling or cycling. This new off-road path will give people of all ages and abilities the confidence to get active, in turn benefitting their health and wellbeing.

"The Greenway also provides an exciting opportunity for more people to experience Glen Coe from a new perspective. And the link to the Caledonia Way and National Cycle Network Route 78 is perfect for those who wish to explore further afield.

"Looking forward, we hope this inspires more improvements for active travel in the local area – to ensure those who visit this historic place can do so in a sustainable and joyful way."

Chair of The Highland Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Councillor, Ken Gowans, said: "The launch of the Glencoe Greenway marks a transformative moment for sustainable travel and heritage access in one of Scotland's most iconic landscapes. With support from funds like the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund this thoughtfully designed route not only enhances safety and connectivity but also invites people of all ages and abilities to experience the natural and cultural richness of Glen Coe. It's a shining example of what can be achieved when communities, funders, and conservation partners come together with a shared vision for a more accessible and sustainable future."

Chris Taylor, VisitScotland Destination Development Director, said: "I'm thrilled that the Glencoe Greenway has come to fruition with the help of Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funding (RTIF). This fantastic traffic-free all-abilities route will really improve the visitor experience at this popular visitor destination. It will allow visitors to access the natural attractions and iconic sites as well as the businesses in the Glen, on foot or wheels and to link up with the popular National Cycle Network route 78 – the Caledonia Way.

"VisitScotland is focused on the responsible growth of tourism and events. To be a sustainable tourism destination, we must encourage the right facilities in places like Glencoe to cater for the growing demands of both visitors and locals and to ensure the best possible experience for all.

"The Glencoe Greenway comes on the back of other RTIF-supported projects in the area, including improved visitor infrastructure and parking through Glencoe and Glen Etive."

Cabinet Secretary for Transport Fiona Hyslop said: "The Glencoe Greenway is a shining example of how we can deliver safer, greener, and more inclusive access to Scotland's most treasured landscapes. This project, supported with £2 million from the Scottish Government, delivers on our commitment to active travel and sustainable tourism, while protecting the natural and cultural heritage of Glen Coe for generations to come.

"We're investing over £188 million in active and sustainable travel in 2025-26 to make walking, wheeling, cycling and sustainable transport easier than before. In doing so, through projects just like the Glencoe Greenway, we can improve health, save people money and protect the climate."

The Glencoe Greenway is part of an ongoing programme of initiatives, developed in partnership with the local community, to sensitively and sustainably improve visitor infrastructure in Glen Coe and Glen Etive. Aiming to reduce the pressure popularity can place on this special landscape, they include a major refurbishment of car and coach parking at the Three Sisters viewpoint, which created a safer, more organised and better-presented facility, along with an upgrade of the Glencoe Orbital Trail.

These initiatives also received funding from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, as well as contributions from Highland Council's Community Regeneration Fund, the National Trust for Scotland, the Glencoe and Glen Etive Community SCIO, and other generous local supporters.

Future goals include extending the Glencoe Greenway even further into the National Nature Reserve and beyond and increasing the choice of car-free travel through the glen with a hop-on, hop-off shuttle bus service. Commissioned by Transport Scotland, a feasibility study is underway to review these options.

ENDS

Images: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/YLaP44t31B>

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.

About Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans)

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is the charity making it possible for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

We work directly with communities to make change happen. Then we evidence the impact to influence policies to push those changes further.

Because people powered movement changes everything. Our health. Our wellbeing. Our world.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is a registered charity in Scotland (SC039263), in England and Cymru (326550) and Republic of Ireland (20206824).

About the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was established by the Scottish Government and the Fund is managed by VisitScotland on its behalf. To date, £18 million of grant funding has been awarded to 74 projects across rural Scotland since the start of the Fund in 2018.