



A470 Llechwedd to Blaenau Ffestiniog Active Travel Route

Cyngor Gwynedd / Levelling Up / The Welsh Government / North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent

Welcome

Cyngor Gwynedd, The Welsh Government and the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent (NMWTRA) welcome you to this community engagement website for the A470 Llechwedd to Blaenau Ffestiniog Active Travel Route.

We are holding this engagement to present our proposals for a shared-use walking and cycling path from Llechwedd to Blaenau Ffestiniog

Introduction

As part of a wider regeneration effort across the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site, Cyngor Gwynedd has secured significant investment through the UK Government Levelling Up Fund.

The global status of the World Heritage designation is being used as a springboard to regenerate slate communities, attract inward investment, and create high quality jobs for local people.

The aim is for the rich cultural heritage of these communities to be shared and celebrated locally and on the world stage.

'Llewyrch o'r Llechi: Economic Prosperity from our Industrial Past' is an investment programme of Levelling Up projects being administered by Cyngor Gwynedd.

It includes three cultural Hubs, with projects being led by organisations rooted in those communities.

Hwb Dinorwig: The redevelopment of the National Slate Museum, upgrading visitor and volunteer facilities, and interpretation and access in Parc Padarn Country Park.

Hwb Ogwen: Upgrading Neuadd Ogwen, the redevelopment of Yr Hen Bost as a Heritage and Community Centre, and improving walking and cycling links between Bethesda and Chwarel Penrhyn.

Hwb Ffestiniog: Renovating and redeveloping Town Centre properties to become community focal points, and creating a new walking and cycling route between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Chwarel Llechwedd.

Town Centres: Work will be carried out in the three Hub areas to improve town centres including installing public art, improving and upgrading signage, and carrying out small scale infrastructure works and landscaping.

Conservation: Various conservation projects will be undertaken to historic monuments within the three hubs.

At Hwb Ffestiniog, Antur Stiniog are leading on the projects to improve and repurpose town centre properties including Tŷ Abermawddach, Aelwyd yr Urdd, Caffi Bolton and Siop Ephraim.

These properties will provide community assets for youth work, creative spaces, micro-business units, accommodation and office space, along with developing opportunities for nurturing traditional construction skills and supporting local businesses.

Alongside the investments being led by Antur Stiniog, a new walking and cycling route is being developed between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llechwedd Quarry, the location of a number of popular visitor attractions.

The creation of a connecting route between the two sites has long been an aspiration for the local community, to allow safe access to the slate landscape at Llechwedd, and encourage visitors there to visit the town and its businesses. It will provide connections to the railway station, Ffestiniog railway and the bus stops supporting Active Travel and promoting modal shift. As well as constructing the cycle path opportunities are being taken to create additional habitat to improve the environment and reduce the carbon footprint of the scheme.

The investment will enable more people to gain greater understanding and access to the slate landscape and will play a role in ensuring that local people and visitors are able to appreciate and enjoy the World Heritage Site.

In response to the local demand for a safe route between the sites, the project has been included in the Llewyrch o'r Llechi package and is being led by NMWTRA on behalf of Welsh Government.

What are we doing?

NMWTRA on behalf of Welsh Government is working to improve Active Travel along the A470 between Llechwedd and Blaenau Ffestiniog to increase connectivity and provide safer walking and cycling routes for local communities.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act requires local authorities across Wales to continuously improve routes for walking and cycling. The aim is to reduce reliance on single-occupancy car use, and to increase the amount of people walking and cycling on a regular basis.

Active Travel aims to get more people walking and cycling for short journeys to benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and reduce CO2 emissions from private cars.

Cyngor Gwynedd (CG) and Welsh Government have committed to reducing CO2 emissions with the aim of achieving net zero. Transport contributes approximately 30% of Wales emissions and reducing car travel can significantly contribute to this target. This is a Welsh Government Ministerial priority guiding how policies and strategies are taken forward and implemented.

In addition, undertaking more local journeys on foot or by bicycle can have significant health benefits for individuals. Walking and cycling for short journeys can also increase levels of physical activity, supporting both physical and mental health.

Currently, much of our road network is considered unsuitable or unsafe for cycling and many of our footways are too narrow to be used safely by all pedestrians, including vulnerable users.

What is active travel?

Active travel means traveling in a way that makes you physically active, like walking, wheeling, or cycling. It usually means short journeys, like walking to the shops or local school, cycling to work or to see friends and family, or cycling to the train station. Many journeys people make using cars are under 5 miles, so there's real potential to swap the car for walking and cycling.

Deputy Minister Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Climate Change said:

“Walking and cycling provides a practical and vital response to help Wales meet its environmental and health targets.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act puts pressure on us to deliver on high-quality active travel networks that encourage more and more people to regularly walk and cycle for journeys instead of using a car, connecting people with where they live and where they need to go.”

What are the design proposals? (see separate document for consultation drawings)

The concept of the design is to improve facilities and features for pedestrians/cyclists travelling between the Town of Blaenau Ffestiniog and the A470(T) Llechwedd Slate Caverns / Antur Stiniog junction. The overall scheme length is 1.3km.

This scheme involves building a shared use path on the eastern side of the A470, from the A470(T)/Llechwedd Slate Caverns junction 70 metres southwards towards a pedestrian/cyclist refuge island located on the A470(T) centreline. From this point, pedestrians and cyclists would cross over to the west side of the A470(T) on to a shared pedestrian and cycle path towards Rhiwbrydir.

Pedestrians would exclusively use the existing footway on the eastern side of the A470(T) from the refuge island southwards towards another carriageway refuge island crossing point that connects with the shared use path on the eastern side of the A470(T) located on the northern outskirts of Rhiwbrydir village.

Due to the restrictions on the A470(T) road corridor through Rhiwbrydir, it is not possible to build segregated walking and cycling facilities and still maintain 2-way traffic flow and on-street parking.

It was decided to utilise an alternative route by diverting pedestrians and cyclists on to the Class 3 Glanypwll Road and the Unclassified Hospital Road prior to rejoining the A470(T) towards Blaenau Ffestiniog.

The existing footway south of the A470(T) Hospital Road junction, adjacent to the Bro Ffestiniog Rugby playing field would be widened to accommodate a shared pedestrian and cycling path. Pedestrians and cyclists would cross over to the eastern side of the A470(T) onto a widened shared use path towards the A470/A496 roundabout where the scheme terminates.

Photos of existing



Photo 1: A470/Llechwedd Junction



Photo 2: Existing A470(T) footways and boundary walls south of Llechwedd Junction.



Photo 3: Existing A470(T) southward through Rhiwbrydir.



Photo 4: Existing A470(T)/Hospital Road Jct. southbound through Rhiwbrydir showing existing narrow footway.



Photo 5: A470(T) Llwyn y Gell Road Southbound adjacent to Bro Ffestiniog Rugby Playing Field. – proposed cycle track widening in existing grassed embankment location



Photo 6: A470(T) Llwyn y Gell Road Southbound towards A470/A496 roundabout.

Benefits of shared use paths:

Their use is more flexible - cyclists or pedestrians may be majority groups at different times;

The wider widths better accommodate wheelchair users, disability vehicles and bikes; and

Shared use paths are more cost-effective as less signing, street furniture, and markings are required.

Tell us what you think or Contact us

Please let us know if you have any feedback or questions, please use the contact details below:

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