

# Railway Paths & Sustrans: a perfect partnership





# Sustrans a national (UK) charity



- Promotes sustainable transport
- Est, 1977 – nearly 50 !
- Custodians of the National Cycle Network (NCN)
- All govts, councils, communities, health org, schools, volunteers
- Staff 650 – 750; public facing
- Structures 600; Volunteers 4000!



Railway Paths

# Railway Paths a national (GB) charity

- Sister charity to Sustrans, Est, 1998 – nearly 30
- Safeguard former railway land & structures
- Lease land to Sustrans for “greenways”
- Not public facing (at all)
- Staff 7.5 people (10 actually)
- Structures 800; Vols 0



# Sustrans – early years

- 1977 Cyclebag – campaign group Bristol
- Response to 1973 oil crisis / lack of provision for cyclists
- Leased part of former Midland Railway Bristol Bath route
- Used volunteers to build Bristol & Bath Path
- Supported by Avon County Council
- Ad hoc agreement for more former railways



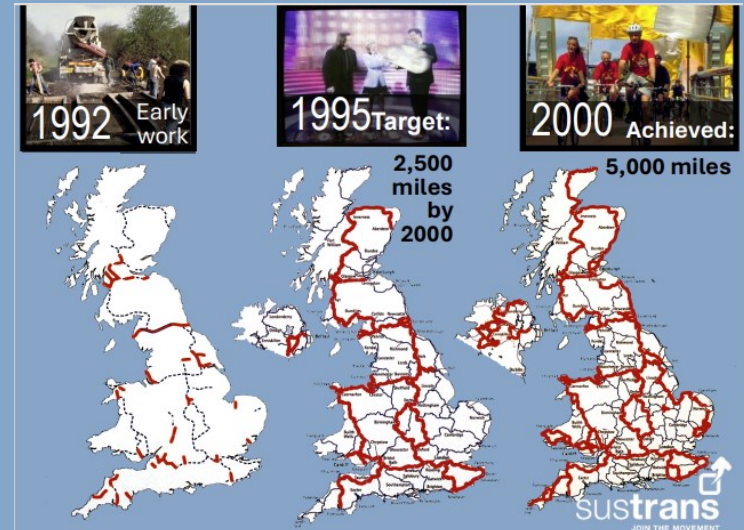
# Sustrans boom time

- 1983 renamed Sustrans – unemployed labour
- Effective community work
- Large grants awarded(1995 £43.5M)
- Sustrans build on successes for 20 years
- Acquired 500 Structures & 100 miles of land



# Railway Paths joins the cause!

- Govt prepared to do a stock transfer
- 1998 Railway Paths created with ...
- 800 structures & 200 miles of land transferred from ...
- British Rail Board (Residuary) now Historical Railway Estate (York)
- Combined 1400 structures, 300 miles (2%)
- NCN = 12,000 miles



# Railway Paths gets going

## Railway Paths

- 1998 The RPL experiment begins
- Dowry, several ex- BR surveyors and a civil engineer
- No HR, Accounts, IT, mapping or Comms
- Engineer – inspected, prioritized, made safe
- Surveyors – generated income & leased land to Sustrans
- Income from rents, sales, leases and easements









# Railway Paths keeps going

Railway Paths

## An Effective Agreement is Created

- RPL own the land but does NOT build cycle paths
- Sustrans win grants & access funding to build the paths
- Sustrans maintains the land and manages the public
- RPL direct structures refurbishment from the project capital from route construction
- RPL maintain structures / manages the decline

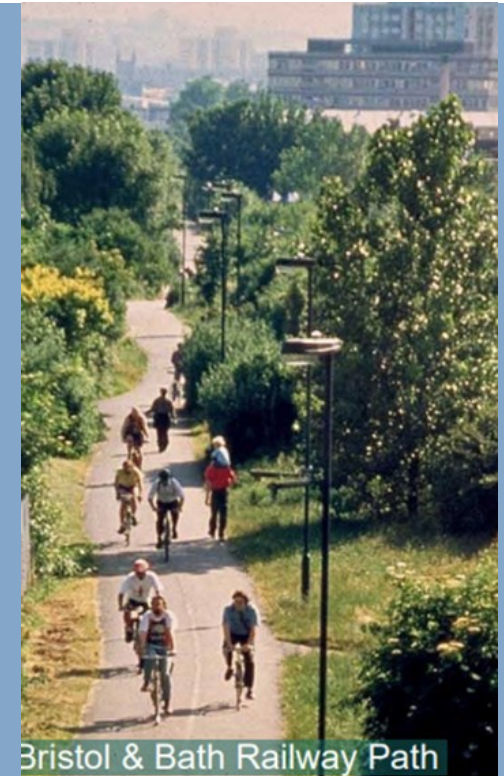
# Railway Paths gets into its stride

Railway Paths

## RPL & Sustrans Land development 1998 - 2025

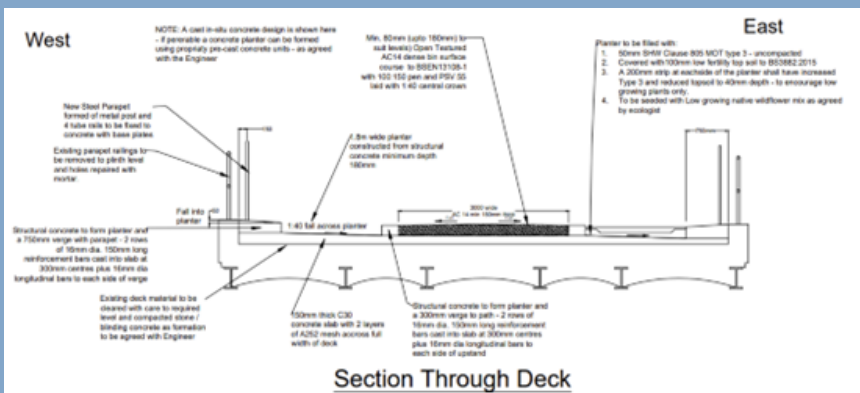
- 200 miles acquired 1998
- 172 miles now formal greenways
- 8 miles currently being developed into greenways
- 6 miles sold (unsuitable)
- 14 miles not developed yet

Includes 638 structures (80%) brought back into to public use



Bristol & Bath Railway Path





# Railway Paths gets into its stride

Railway Paths

## RPL & Sustrans Viaducts 1977 - 2025

- Total formerly disused railway viaducts = 68 (27 listed)
- 54 brick or masonry arch viaducts
- 2 mass concrete arch viaducts
- 12 metallic beam / truss viaducts
- Vary from 5 to 33 spans

# Railway Paths gets into its stride

Railway Paths

## RPL & Sustrans Viaducts 1998 - 2025

- 68 viaducts previously disused
- 59 formal public path
- 9 no formal public path (inc Carmyle Viaduct gone to planning)
- Of which only 4 have no access





Railway Paths









31. 5. 1999





Railway Paths



Railway Paths









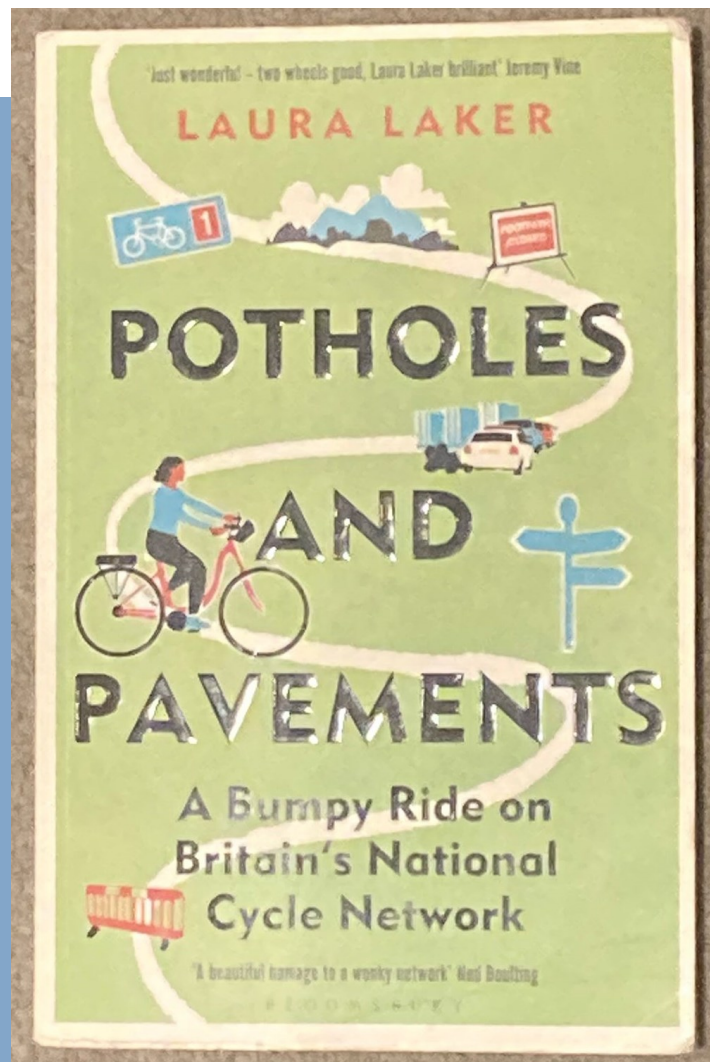
# Railway Paths - challenges

Railway Paths

- **NOT** expansion joints or half joints
- Maintaining sufficient reserves
- Converting remaining assets for public use
- Scour
- Metallic viaducts and over bridges carrying roads
- Touching distance inspection
- Ecology & Bridge strikes
- Carbon

# The History of the NCN

An independent view



- Independent view of NCN
- Respected transport journalist Laura Laker
- A light & easy read
- Available at all good book shops

**Thank You**

**Any questions?**