

# Press Release

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For Immediate Release

## **Celebrations as cycle and pedestrian path wins Lottery funding**

A new coastal cycle and pedestrian route linking Bexhill and Hastings is to be built after winning National Lottery funding.

The scheme, which is being promoted by East Sussex County Council, was part of a winning bid by national cycling charity Sustrans for a £50million Big Lottery Fund grant.

As one of 79 routes nationally, which make up Sustrans' Connect2 project, the Hastings to Bexhill Coastal Connection will take a £380,000 share.

The County Council now has five years in which to spend the funding but it must first find a further £250,000 to make up the estimated £630,000 total cost of the route.

The bid was supported locally by Active Hastings, Rother District Council, Hastings Borough Council, Hastings Urban Bikes (HUB) and Freedom Leisure.

Cllr Matthew Lock, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, said: "I am absolutely delighted and very proud of the hard work the County Council and our partners have done to secure this external funding. This was voted for by the people and in the truest sense is the people's choice."

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“It will mean walkers and cyclists from all over the country can enjoy the glorious scenery East Sussex has to offer without having to worry about being close to passing traffic.

“But the hard work is not over - we will now have to knuckle down and get on with the serious business of securing the rest of the funding as well as designing the pathway and consulting the public about our plans.”

Connect2, including the Hastings to Bexhill section, competed last week against three other organisations, in a national television vote on ITV, the Big Lottery Fund’s: The People’s £50 Million contest.

Work to promote voting for the scheme included:

- a champagne reception organised by HUB and held at Spin City Cycles, Hastings, to mark the launch of online voting attended by MP Michael Foster;
- 70,000 leaflets distributed to Bexhill and Hastings residents this week, as well as leaflets left at all the major bike shops; and
- large banners displayed at all the Freedom Leisure centres in Hastings and Bexhill.

John Grimshaw, Sustrans CEO:

“This is a fantastic Christmas present. We are delighted that Sustrans’ Connect2 has proved itself the peoples’ favourite in the public vote and won the £50million from the Big Lottery Fund.

“We are immensely grateful to East Sussex County Council and everyone who got behind the Hastings to Bexhill Coastal Connection to make their votes count.

“As a massive public consultation exercise Connect2 has engendered a huge amount of goodwill from all sectors. It has confirmed our belief that people want to walk and cycle more when given the right surroundings. But the hard work starts now and there will be

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a huge amount to be done to make sure we fulfil all our obligations to the Big Lottery Fund. Ultimately the real winners will be those thousands of people who will now be able to Connect2 their shops, schools, workplaces and each other every day.”

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