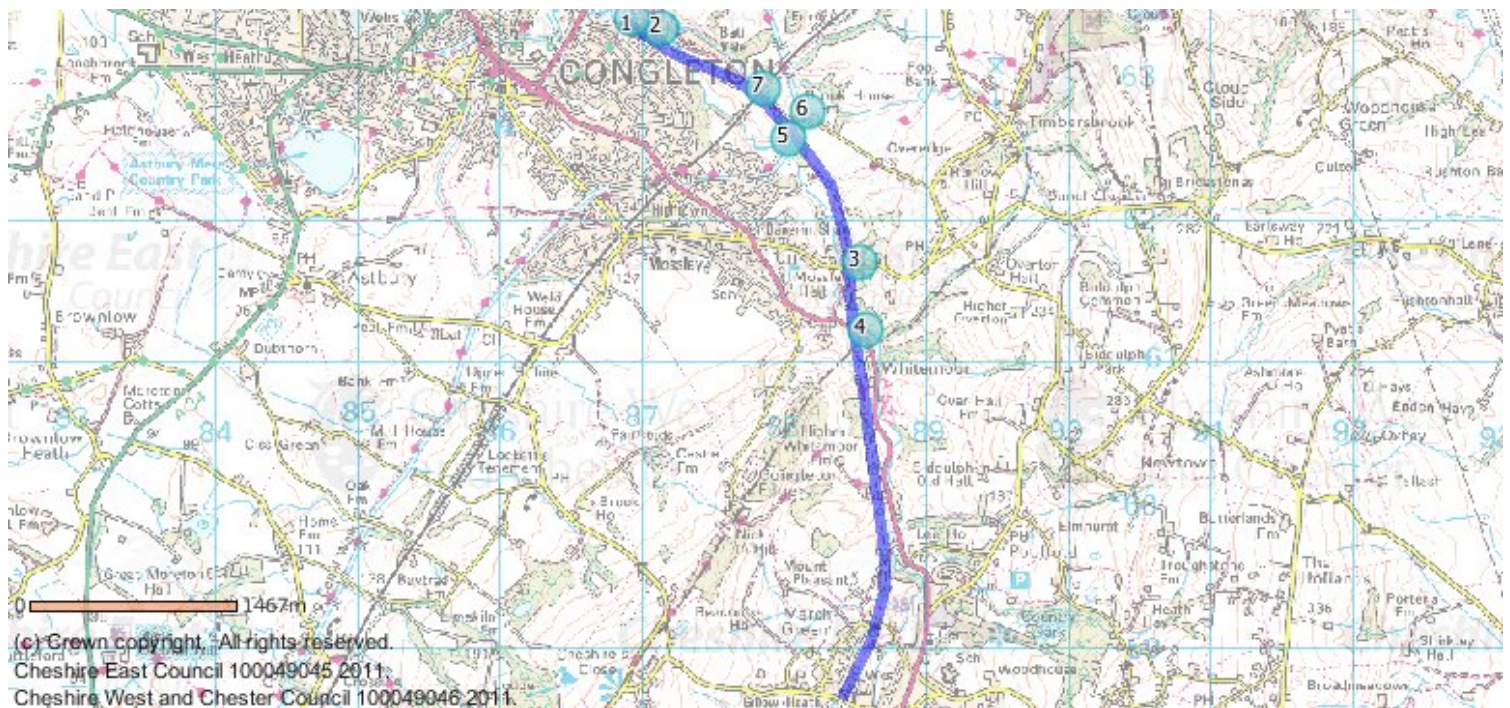


## Biddulph Valley Way

A multi-user route along a disused railway line, with flat terrain and several access points for cyclists. The route continues into Staffordshire but the surface quality may vary.

Grade	Traffic free
Distance	3.3km /2.1miles (Cheshire section)
Time	30 mins (from end to end)
Start	Brook Street Car Park, Congleton
Map	OS Explorer 268
Terrain	Flat with a firm surface of crushed stone.
Barriers	Some gates
Toilets	None on site
Contact	Cheshire East Council Rangers Tel: 01260 297237



## Route Details

The route is part of NCN 55 Telford to Preston and has a firm, level surface of crushed stone.

For over 100 years trains travelled along the Biddulph Valley Way carrying coal from the Potteries to Congleton. Today walkers, cyclists and horse riders enjoy this tranquil route away from roads. Bankside trees cast a dappled shade over a variety of wildflowers. Occasionally a fox may be glimpsed trotting along the track, or look skyward and you might notice a buzzard circling and reeling overhead, searching for a rabbit to swoop down on.

The railway line linked Stoke on Trent to Brunswick Wharf in Congleton, with a branch joining the Macclesfield to Stafford main line at the viaduct.

It was built to transport freight, mainly coal, which came from the vast North Staffordshire coal field. To avoid travelling back to Staffordshire with empty wagons, sand was often transported into the Potteries for industrial use, as this mineral was abundant around Congleton.

A date for completion of the line was imposed on the North Staffordshire Railway Company by the government and failure to meet the deadline meant the payment of a heavy fine. To avoid this the company performed a grand opening ceremony on the 3rd August 1859, although the line was only partially complete. It was a further twelve months before the line was fully open to mineral traffic.

In addition to freight, a passenger service also started running on 1st June 1864, though this was never a financial success and closed on the 11th July 1927. The movement of freight continued for a further 41 years, with the last train leaving Brunswick Wharf in Congleton on the 1st April 1968.

## Directions

Cyclists will enjoy the flat, traffic-free, well-surfaced path of the Biddulph Valley Way.

The Way begins just south of Brook Street (A54), Congleton (1). There is a small car park located at the Congleton end of the track off Brook Street. The Way is linear, following the former Biddulph Valley Railway line, and runs south-east for approximately 3.3km all the way into Staffordshire, where it continues for another 5.5km to finish south of Biddulph (for details of the Staffordshire section, call the Staffordshire Moorlands Countryside Office on 01538 483579).

In Cheshire, cyclists can also access the Way from Bromley Road (2), Reades Lane (3), and Biddulph Road (4) and Brookhouse Lane (5) as well as Brook Street (1).