

Inspired Facilities

Places People Play



Stonehouse Skate Park

CASE STUDY THEMES

- Providing new opportunities for young people to be physically active
- Working with young people to design a new facility
- Providing opportunities for events and competitions
- Reducing perceptions of anti-social behaviour and providing positive informal activities for young people

PROJECT SUMMARY

Summary

Stonehouse Skate Park is a new facility providing opportunities for skateboarders, in line skaters, scooter and BMX riders. The Skate Park was built on the Town Council's recreation ground next to a new youth club.

Facility name	Stonehouse Skate Park
Lead organisation	Stonehouse Town Council
Organisation type	Town Council
Location	Stonehouse, Gloucestershire
Sport	Skateboarding, BMX, In- line skating
Total project cost	£116,770
Inspired facilities funding	£50,000 (43% of total)
Other funding sources	Stroud District Council (Section 106 fund £60,932), Bramhall Trust (£5,000) and fundraising by young people and donations from Stonehouse Community Partnership and Ecclesiastical Insurance (£808).
Tender process	Competitive tender
Contract type	Design and Build
Start and end date	September 2013 - February 2014
Duration of capital works	2 months

Achieved outcomes

- Purpose built Skate Park providing opportunities for young people in a range of sports
- Providing opportunities for young people who are not involved in traditional sport
- Reduced potential for anti-social behaviour
- Providing opportunities for events and competitions



Introduction

Stonehouse is a small town situated 3 miles from Stroud in Gloucestershire, with a population of around 7,700 of which 1,850 are young people. The town's only youth club closed back in 2011 as a result of funding reductions by the County Council. As a result, the need for 'more things for young people to do' was one of the top priorities in the 2011 Community Plan. A young peoples' group (SPL4SH - Skate Park Lobby for Stonehouse) had been established as a result of consultation with young people which placed a Skate Park at the top of their wish list. An initial bid to the Inspired Facilities Fund was unsuccessful but acting on feedback received and further development of the bid, a successful outcome and award of £50,000 was achieved in August 2013.

The Project

The location for the Skate Park was the Oldends Lane Recreation Ground which already had a children's play area and multi-use games area and the Town Council also had funding to develop a new youth club on the site so it was an ideal location to create a focal point for young people to meet. From the outset the SPL4SH group were involved in the project, contributing to the design brief in terms of the features that should be included and were actively involved in the selection of the design and build contract. The SPL4SH group also worked hard to raise funds to contribute to the project alongside Section 106 funding provided by the District Council. Donations were also received from local charities and businesses. The project would not have gone ahead without the investment provided by Inspired Facilities.

PREVIOUS FACILITY: OLDENDS PLAYING FIELD



The Facility

The Skate Park is 27.5 m x 19.9 m in area and was designed and built by a specialist skate park contractor using spray in - situ concrete with input from the SPL4SH group. Four proposals were considered and evaluated in partnership with young people. All contractors were required to pitch their ideas to the young people as part of the selection process.

Specific features include quarter pipes, wall rides, box rails and flat banks. The park has been designed to enable progression from entry level scooter activities for young children to more complex skateboarding and BMX activity. The construction work was completed in February 2014 and the park officially opened in May 2014, upon completion of the landscaping which was delayed by heavy rainfall which occurred in the south west in 2014.

The park is a year round open access facility, it requires no maintenance except for maintenance of the soft landscaping and is built to last for 20 years, with any grounds maintenance provided by the Town Council.

Supervision of the site is informal and provided by the older users, who act as 'Skate Rangers' to marshal and police the park. The nature of the activities on the park means that any formalisation of use would be counter to the ethos of the activities. To date the operation and usage of the park has been as expected with very little misuse and there is strong evidence of the young people taking ownership and responsibility for their facility.

NEW FACILITY



Sports Participation

The participation figures for year one, and the associated targets are shown below.

THROUGHPUT	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Target	NA	1,560	2,080	2,600	3,120	3,640
Actual	0	3,000	No data	No data	No data	No data

As the Skate Park provides open access, it is difficult to track participation, however, the NASS Jam opening event in May attracted 300 users and sampling of usage in the autumn of 2014 suggests a throughput of up to 100 visits per week which, allowing for limited usage in the winter, suggests annual throughput of approximately 3,000 in the first year, including events, which surpassed the initial expectations and highlights how well used the facility has been.

Lead Organisation and Partners

As owners of the playing field, Stonehouse Town Council were the lead organisation for the bid working with Stonehouse Youth Partnership which represented a number of youth organisations in the town. The overall cost of the project was £116,770, the Town Council worked closely with the Sports Development Officer in Stroud to secure £60,932 from Section 106 contributions and local charities and fundraising by young people raised a further £808. The £50,000 award from Inspired Facilities represented 47% of the overall cost and was the key to making the project happen. The application was initially unsuccessful, but following feedback from Sport England and further work to better meet the needs for BMX users the project was approved six months later. The fact that the Inspired Facilities Fund worked in this way was one of the positives for the Town Council. The success of the project has encouraged the Council to also try to develop facilities for Stonehouse Football Club which is adjacent to the Skate Park.

Local Community

A feature of this project is the extensive amount of consultation and lobbying activity undertaken by young people, with support from the Town Council. This included surveys which identified 283 young people who wanted to use the park, the SPL4SH Facebook site with 158 members and events and exhibitions at town galas and events to publicise the project. The Town Councillors involved reported there was overwhelming support for the project from people of all ages who wanted to see new facilities and positive activities for young people. The Council also feels this project has helped it create a much better relationship with its young people and the success of the project has enhanced its reputation within the local community. The official opening in May 2014 was combined with a NASS (National Action Sports Show) Jam event in May 2014 which included BMX, skateboarding and in line skating competitions with live music. This event was supported by the whole community and created a great feel-good factor in the town. It is intended that more events will be run in the future. User surveys with participants showed 85% were satisfied with their visit, and 70% have increased their use of the skate park since it opened, with most citing a desire to participate and the opportunity to socialise as the key motivations. Almost half (48%) would not be participating elsewhere had the facility not been built.

Key Findings

- The project has delivered a high quality facility with significant involvement and partnership working with young people.
- The Skate Park combined with the new youth club has significantly enhanced the offer of positive activities for young people in the area, providing wider benefits for the local community.
- The facility is exceeding all expectations in terms of user throughput and is providing opportunities for young people to take part in a wider range of sport and informal physical activity.
- The project has created a culture of volunteering by young people both in the development phase and in the ongoing operation of the site.

The young people of Stonehouse are very proud of their facility and they have placed a significant amount of content on social media. Links to some examples are provided below:

The Official Opening - NASS JAM May 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LN7HhHLw0M>
<http://bmxunion.com/daily/stonehouse-opening-jam/>

Testing the New Facility - April 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLEkFGaUYbs>

