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# BikePark Wales - Phase 2 site development



## What are the projects aims?

The project aim was to improve the visitor experience at BikePark Wales through site landscaping and improved car parking as well as creating a fit for purpose visitor welcome and bike hire centre allowing a swift and professional check-in process. Additionally the project aimed to broaden the market appeal of BikePark Wales beyond the core mountain bike customer to include beginner riders by creating the UK's longest and best beginner downhill mountain bike trail.

## How were these aims achieved?

A new 50 car park and associated landscaping was built  
A brand-new visitor welcome centre with 5 customer check-in points, a custom-built bike hire centre and a classroom for

training beginner mountain bikers was built. This centre now check's in circa 100,000 visitors a year and provides a much smoother arrival on site.

Additionally, a much larger patio area with planting and landscaping was created to provide a great après ride experience.

Perhaps the greatest achievement was building "Kermit" our 5KM long green graded beginner downhill trail. This has opened the thrill of downhill mountain biking to an entirely new audience. The timing has been great as young people look to replace physical assets with experiences and also a move to greater appreciation of exercise and in particular cycling post Pandemic.

## Who was involved?

The project was led by Martin

Astley co-founder of BikePark Wales.

Project management assistance came from TC consult a local Cardiff firm and construction contracts for the major phases were awarded to Back-On-Track (bike trail), Trio building contractors (visitor centre) and E.J. Thomas and son (car park). All are Welsh Businesses. Help and assistance from Welsh Government primarily from Lawrence Manley and Doreen Maynard was first class.

## How was the project funded?

The project was part funded the Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) via the Micro and Small Business Fund.

BikePark Wales brought funds to the project via cash from profits and bank loans.

## Where did you go for help and advice?

At Welsh Government Lawrence Manley and his team were our main point of contact Chris Long and Alyn Owen at MTCBC have always been available to point us in the right direction since we first presented the BPW vision to them in 2009.

TC consult, a Cardiff based construction project management firm offered excellent QC and industry knowledge.

## What has been the greatest achievement so far?

Riding Kermit with my 3 and 5 year old boys, seeing riders try mountain biking for the first time and seeing the look on their faces, knowing they will be hooked for life. The thousands of people that have visited BikePark Wales who always say, *"Wow, it's so much more than I expected"*.

## And the biggest challenge?

Coronavirus has obviously cast a bit of a shadow on this project; we had to down tools in March 2020 mid way through the construction of our new visitor centre. The biggest challenges though have come from the consenting process.

Planning approval, SUDS drainage approval and consent from our landlord NRW delayed the start of this project by 2

Years.

## Any tips for those setting up a similar project?

Expect difficulties at every step of the planning process and double your budget!

## What's next for your project?

Further expansion of our car park, as we are so busy and most excitingly adding some world class and unique to us glamping facilities to the site, the units have been designed by a local architect and look fantastic. They are however, currently tied up in a planning amendment and landlords consenting process.

