

THE ISLES QUARRY BIKE TRAIL IS OPEN

BGTC Councillors visited the site over the weekend, met young bikers and witnessed first-hand their enthusiasm and dedication.

Bike Trails like this can never be declared "safe" - the whole point is that it must be challenging, and young people over the past 20 years have built something magnificent and exciting. Skateparks and Pump Tracks are built to very exacting laid down British and European Standards, and can have detailed inspection regimes. But an informal bike track is not designed, it is organic and modified day by day by the riders to suit the riders.

But that doesn't mean to say that the Council is not pursuing every avenue to ensure it is as safe as it can be and to mitigate any risks. Our own Tree Warden, Wildlife Warden, and Councillors will monitor the site on a regular basis, and we are seeking an expert who can establish a long term inspection schedule. Tony Byrne's QPCIC (Quarry Project Community Interest Company) is completely independent of the Council. It has its own Public Liability Insurance in place for the Bike Trails, will manage the site, run training sessions for young riders, and will have a grant scheme in place to provide helmets for riders who can't afford them. We have a Planning Application in progress to regularise the area.

The Council has its own general Public Liability for the entire area, which also covers all our other Open Spaces, assets, and buildings. We have various inspection regimes in place ranging from daily checks by staff up to full RoSPA inspections where needed - public safety is at the very core of all we do as a Council.

But in an era where young people get lost in social media, get involved in drugs, drink, anti-social behaviour and crime, we should be applauding the initiative and enthusiasm of these young people. They are getting fresh air and exercise, displaying a huge capacity for hard work, discovering how important it is to be part of a team, and meeting challenges head-on. They have moved tonnes of dirt and rock, cleared fallen trees, brambles and undergrowth - and they have opened up an area to the public that we barely knew existed.

Well Done to our young people and Tony Byrne