

## The SKELF Bike Skills Park: Updated Feb 2016

### *What is the SKELF?*

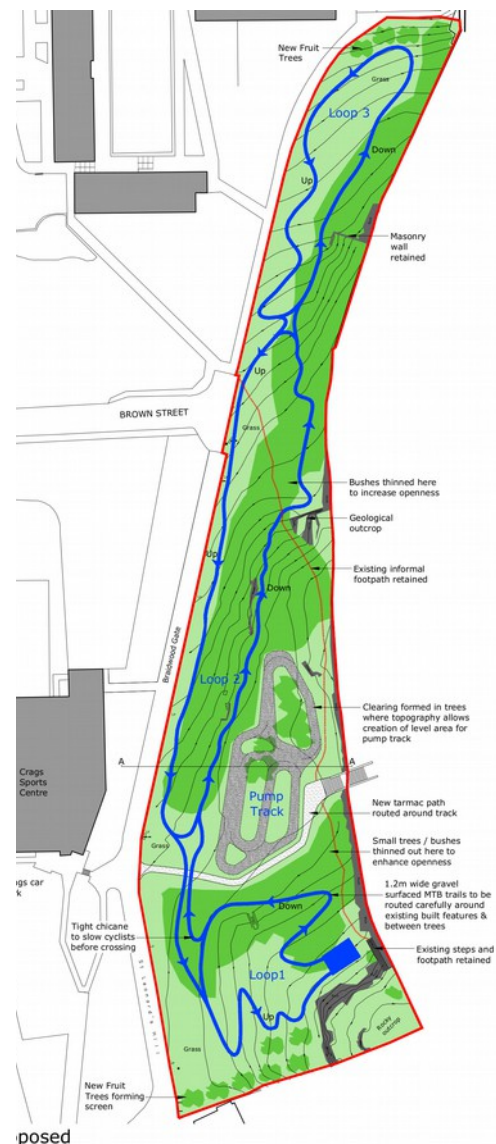
**We want to create an open access bike skills park in the heart of Edinburgh, making mountain biking accessible from within the city.**

The skills park would provide:

- A focus of positive activity for local young people
- A safe place for local schools to run bike skills and exercise programmes
- A place where mountain/BMX/trials bike skills at all levels can be learned in a structured way

We want to build:

- **An 800m Blue Graded MTB Trail** - A 1.2m wide, smooth, blue graded trail forming a continuous loop through the woods, and catering for beginners, younger kids, and cycle proficiency classes
- **Red Graded Skills Development Features:** Located along the Blue Trail these technical trail features allow more able/experienced riders to develop existing bike skills.
- **Pump Track** - A pump track is a small but intense circuit of rolling bumps, table-top jumps, and bermed corners, designed to be ridden continuously without pedalling by using weight shifts (pumping) and gravity, and great for developing skills and improving your technique



## ***Where?***

An area of woodland wedged between the Southside area of Edinburgh and the Western boundary of Holyrood Park (immediately adjacent to the Crags Community Sports Centre). The location of the woods can be seen in the map below:



The woods are:

- Currently classed as amenity green-space
- Self-seeded on ground left vacant following the comprehensive redevelopment of the area in the 1960s
- 0.85ha in area, and owned by CEC Services for Communities
- A significantly under-used resource for the local community (and the city as a whole)
- A source of anxiety to the passing public, as they have become home to a variety of anti-social activities; rough sleeping, underage drinking, aerosol and drug abuse

## ***Why?***

Building an urban bike skills park in the heart of Edinburgh addresses the needs of both the local community in Dumbiedykes and St Leonards *and* the more disparate cycling 'community of interest'.

### **The Local Community:**

Creating a bike park directly address many key challenges in the local community as well as the wider South Central area.

The South Central Neighbourhood Partnership's 2014 - 2017 Local Community Plan has as key objectives:

- Improve the quality of life for the residents of Dumbiedykes

- Work with Young People to improve their access to outdoor spaces and other services
- Take action to make people feel safer both personally and in their community

The more immediate Dumbiedykes community is also one of the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland with particular challenges with:

- High Unemployment
- Poor Health

Finally, the woods themselves are currently a haven for anti-social behaviour:

- Underage alcohol and solvent abuse
- Intravenous drug abuse
- Rough sleeping

Creating a bike skills park would both provide increased opportunities for healthy exercise, and help create opportunities for training/employment.

The bike park would attract people and life back into the woods, making a real asset of a currently under-used resource.

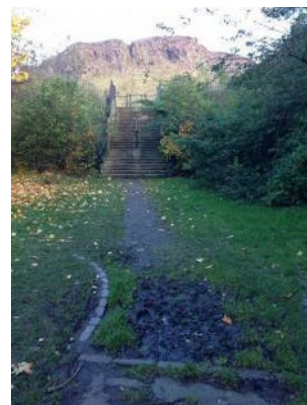
### **Edinburgh needs a bike skills park**

Despite the explosion in popularity in recent years of mountain biking in Edinburgh, there is a serious lack of good quality recreational bike facilities in the city.

The small number of MTB trails that do exist are:

- Well outside the city centre - affecting accessibility, and therefore affordability
- Very limited in scale/extent - consisting of short beginner-grade tracks
- Uninspiring - with no real sense of challenge, people try them once and don't return

Creating a top-class urban bike skills park in the heart of Edinburgh would address these shortcomings.



## ***Who'll Benefit?***

The benefits of the SKELF Bike Skills Park would extend way beyond cyclists, to include the local community, particularly local young people, and school children:

The local community would benefit through:

- Increased access to the outdoors (health, well-being)
- Reduced antisocial behaviour eg rough sleeping, under-age drinking & drug abuse

Local young people would benefit through:

- Learning and progressing their bike skills
- The provision of attractive diversionary activities
- Training opportunities

Local school kids would benefit, specifically through

- Active Schools being able to offer a greater range of after-school & holiday clubs
- The bike park could be used by local schools for PE classes

## ***Who's Involved?***

### **Braidwood Bikepark Group:**

The Braidwood Bikepark Group is a locally-based community group of local residents, cyclists, community educators, and cycling advocates, set up on a charitable basis to create a free, open access bike park at the Braidwood.

The SKELF is the name of the facility, BBG is the name of the group.

BBG is registered with the charity regulator OSCR as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

### **The Project Steering Group:**

- Chair - Conrad Molleson (local musician and resident)
- Secretary - Angus Calder (East Crosscauseway resident)
- Treasurer – Angela Christie (Sciennes Primary)
- Dave Burns (Carnegie Court resident)
- Simon Turner (Manager, Craggs Centre)
- Rich Beard (Bike Station)
- Scott Wilkins ( Manager, Southside Community Centre)
- Christine Angus (Dynamic Earth)
- Chris Hill (City Cycling Edinburgh)

## ***How? - Making It Happen:***

BBG have made steady progress over the last four years, including:

### **Feasibility Study / Outline Design - Completed:**

BBG received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Investing In Ideas Fund to develop a professionally prepared Feasibility Study which incorporated:

- Site Analysis/Appraisal
- Outline Designs for the facility (see plans above)
- Outline Project Costs (estimated at £170k)
- An Indicative Specification

### **Business Plan - Completed:**

Operating a community run and open access sports facility (without financial support from the local authority) will be challenging. BBG commissioned external consultants Community Enterprise to prepare a Business Plan to examine project viability, including:

- Needs Analysis (who will use the park, how often etc)
- Proposed Operation & Management Structures (including the key partnerships with existing Crags Sports Centre)
- Maintenance Regime (split between BGG and CEC)
- Financial Sustainability (realistic means of generating the minimal level of income required to meet maintenance & admin costs)

### **Site Lease - Agreed:**

BBG have worked closely with CEC officers (CEC own the site) to agree a lease for the site based on:

- Use as an open access, free to use facility
- A minimum 25 year term
- Peppercorn rent
- Joint CEC/BBG responsibility for site maintenance

### **Project Funding - 80% Secured:**

To date BBG have successfully secured approx 80% of the £170k overall project costs. This includes funding from:

- The Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund - £76k
- The Neighbourhood Environmental Partnership - £26k
- Tesco's/GroundWorks - £8k
- South Central Neighbourhood Partnership - £5k
- Donated & In Kind Support - £17k

We have four strong funding applications currently under consideration and feel confident the remaining 20% funding required will be secured in 2016.

## **BBG's Next steps:**

Our next steps include:

- Raising the remaining 20% of funding
- Tendering the Project (with specialist MTB contractors)
- Construction

## ***When? The Timeline:***

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| • First Informal Meeting                       | August 2012   |
| • Public 'Launch' Event                        | November 2012 |
| • Council Motion in Support Passed             | November 2012 |
| • Fundraising Begun                            | March 2013    |
| • Site Surveyed                                | May 2013      |
| • Lottery Funding Won                          | July 2013     |
| • Lease Discussions with CEC Begun             | December 2013 |
| • CEC Consultation on Lease                    | March 2014    |
| • Public 'Open Day' Event                      | June 2014     |
| • Feasibility Study & Outline Designs Prepared | June 2014     |
| • COMAS Public Consultation                    | June 2014     |
| • Business Plan Prepared                       | July 2014     |
| • Legacy 2014 Active Places Funding Won        | October 2014  |
| • Draft Lease Missives Agreed                  | November 2014 |
| • Planning Consent Applied For                 | February 2015 |
| • Stall at Dumbiedykes Info Day                | March 2015    |
| • Public 'Open Day' Event                      | June 2015     |
| • Tesco/Groundwork Funding Won                 | December 2015 |
| • Lease Finalised                              | January 2016  |
| • Planning Consent Granted                     | February 2016 |
| • Site Preparation                             | February 2016 |

Anticipated:

- |                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| • Tender                    | March 2016    |
| • Remaining Funding Secured | May/June 2016 |
| • Construction              | August 2016   |



An image of a comparable pump track in Germany

