

## Pewsey 360 Report

Pewsey was fortunate to secure a visit by Dan Allington and Scott Hamlin, two BMX stuntmen on the Sky TV series Revolutions fronted by Diversity star Ashley Banjo. Scott was acting as MC for the King Ramps crew whilst Dan was doing his first demos as part of the King Ramps crew alongside the two pro skateboarders. All of the crew spent time helping our young people improve their skills.

The event was a success in that those attending had a great time and we demonstrated the enthusiasm for a local skate park. I think what may surprise many was the age of those who were keenest! We had around 120 young people attending throughout the day. The majority were under 14 years with only a handful of older teenagers or young adults attending later in the day and very few from the villages of the Vale. In this respect the day was disappointing since the information had gone out to the schools before they broke up including St Johns and Pewsey Vale. The mini bus was not used at all even though 2 routes were published. The costs on the day were around £35 per head for a whole day of activities with Dance, Crafts, Graffiti Art and Beatbox included.



I have long known that those over 13/14 years in Pewsey are just not interested in “doing” anything. Their greatest wish is just for somewhere to hang out with friends where they won’t be pestered by adults. This group are busy “doing” at school and are not interested in “positive activities” outside of the school hours. The best thing you could offer the over 14’s is somewhere to shelter from the rain that is well lit and away from well trafficked areas by adults. Oh and of course a mobile signal!

In order to combat inactive teens we need to catch them at a younger age, before they get a mobile phone, and show them that they are valued within the community by giving them an activity space where they can scoot, skate and bike in reasonable safety. Hopefully they will continue be active as they get older.

Interesting observations from this event were the number of young people who had special educational needs that participated in all the activities. It makes a difference when they are participating in the “doing” instead of being “done to”. Those young people with a reputation for being “hyperactive” suddenly demonstrated a level of focus that surprised many adults who



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knew them. It was also heartening to see the very much younger group being mentored by the slightly older ones who were keen to share knowledge and skills

### Skate Park Plans

There was a steady stream of people looking at the plans during the event. However, not so many would understand what makes a good skate park facility. It is not enough for it to look good. The plans on display were a good start but have a number of issues. Those issues were identified by those more “expert” than the general public and I hope will be noted and addressed. The main ones are:

1. A “drop” of under a metre (3 ft) does not need railings, BUT a fall from such a low height is more likely to cause injuries. It seems counter intuitive but a fall from a greater height down a curved surface has less “impact” as the person rolls down the curve slope. A shorter curve from a shorter height leads to a direct fall to a hard surface. Is this design option just to save money on not having railings? The skate ramp used at the event was nearly 2 m (6 ft) and later in the day the young people were happily scooting down this having realised a fall means rolling down to the bottom. If they are that fearless after half a day a 3 ft drop will be boring after 1 hour!
2. The plan had two sides with drops and two sides with no sides. This leaves areas with sharp edges, a hazard, and a run off area ripe for collisions. Remember on the day the half pipe had netting on the down side to prevent run out at speed. A better option is to go for a bowl shape like a figure of 8 on its side with at least a 2m drop. Plenty of curve to roll down, no sharp edges. If dug into the ground the need for railings is removed I believe. It would need good drainage!
3. The plans had no “street scene” elements - steps or rails which is what most of the Pewsey youth would use in the carparks and local streets.
4. If combining both of these is too costly I would recommend focusing on delivering one element really well and not both “on the cheap”.

This facility is aimed at beginners and intermediates. It therefore has to be incredibly well designed and finished. What looks good to those who don’t skate may well be unusable for those that do! Please take on board the comment from the professionals on the day.

**The Future...**The event was well attended and the feedback positive. I would ask the Area Board and the LYN to put aside some funds for a “jam” to open this skate park. For those of us not familiar with the term this means inviting pro-riders to do demos and work with those less experienced to help them improve. It also involves music and competitions with small prizes. The King Ramps crew have already said they would be happy to come back and try out the new skate park and work with our young people, for a fee obviously. We might also be able to include someone in the Wiltshire Skate Series that uses skate parks around the county for competitions.



*Dan Allington a Pro BMX rider from Sky Revolutions TV Series in Pewsey on Sunday. The MC was Scott Hamlin who was injured in a fall during a stunt on the show in May this year.*

Dawn Wilson