

Mountain Bike Guide Training

Final Report

Project Approach

The Vale of Usk (Monmouthshire and Rural Newport), has a number of mountain biking facilities in and around the region, including the Brecon Beacons. Cyclists are drawn to Monmouthshire to utilise this region's outstanding mountain biking opportunities.

We initially contacted the following Mountain Bike companies:

- Treads & Trails, Llanellen
- Wye MTB, Monmouth
- Black Mountain Cycle Centre, Pandy
- Outdoor Activity Centre, Gilwern
- Gateway Cycling, Abergavenny
- 559 Bikes, Chepstow

We also contacted the following Cycling clubs which operate with volunteers and are often involved with off-road riding:

- Abergavenny Cycling Club
- Monmouthshire Wheelers, Magor

Typically, these businesses provide a variety of services, but with mountain biking it is predominantly guiding & coaching for a customer base that is around 80% drawn from outside of the local area. They are predominately from school groups, private individuals/groups and corporate customers, with customers often requiring accommodation and to utilise local businesses and services. Following these initial approaches, we also contacted other interested parties who were enthusiastic about this project.

The project has provided additional nationally recognised training & further skills training to staff members to enable additional/enhanced activities to be provided to the customers and mountain bike clubs. This has also developed the reputation and professionalism of mountain biking in the Vale of Usk as well as offering more services and a more impressive and memorable experience. A bespoke Vale of Usk Mountain Bike Ambassador course is also available, to address local history, biodiversity, local stories, etc. – adding a new and relevant dimension to the visitor experience.

It was the intension of this project to also include volunteer mountain bike guides from cycling clubs in the Vale of Usk. Also, once qualified the guides would be able to teach and train others, thus perpetuating the professionalism within the industry.

Project's Achievement

We contacted mountain bike professionals within Monmouthshire and rural Newport, offering to pay 80% of the training cost.

We put on a number of training courses, including:-

Outdoor First Aid
Bike Maintenance – 1 day and 2 day
British Cycling Level 1, 2 & 3
BC Coaching Level 1
Cyclocross Level 2
Practical Skills
Downhill Skills

Mountain Bike Ambassador Course – this was a course that focused on tourism and sense of place for the mountain biking visitors. The course would take a full day, the morning would be spent in the classroom and look at access, Public Rights of Way and Environment as well as local flora, fauna and Geology. Welsh place names and local stories were also covered. In the afternoon a practical session would take place, 3 hours cycling with practical application of information covered in the morning session. The idea behind this course is to “add value” to the Mountain Bike Guiding experience for visitors – appreciate the surroundings, as well as the adrenalin kick.

Project's Outcomes

- Increase skills and knowledge levels of guides within the Vale of Usk.
- Increase services available to visitors.
- Widen the customer base at the top end/corporate clients.
- Professionalise mountain biking within Monmouthshire and rural Newport.
- Train future mountain bike trainers.
- Qualifications will allow recipients to coach and train customers.
- Enhance customer experience and make them want to return more frequently thus benefiting wider tourism business community.
- High quality volunteer service within cycling groups in the Vale of Usk.
- Bring the mountain biking profession of Monmouthshire closer together.

RDP: £9,009 **Amount Spent: £8,701**
Match: 20% of course cost

