

CASE STUDY



Project:	Park Place, Weston-super-Mare
Client:	Weston-super-Mare Town Council
Project Type:	Splash Pad and Playground
Project Value:	Total £410,000 (Splash Pad £200,000)
Splash Pad Size:	332m2
Total Area:	4000m2

The Background

Working in partnership with eibe UK, SSP Water & Play's innovative design was successful in winning the contract to install a large combination play area in Park Place, Weston-super-Mare. The brief was to create, develop and build a wet and conventional dry play area. A close working relationship was established to refine the design to meet local planning constraints. SSP's partnership with eibe meant that they were able to offer a really exciting play space that combined adventure and splash play, within a fully landscaped environment. In March 2010 the works began to take shape and eighteen weeks later the park was complete.



The main focal point of the site is an interactive splash pad, utilizing a fully recycling approach with the latest technology in water treatment systems. This splash pad offers a range of sprays that are activated by touch-sensitive buttons. The Port beacon, the tallest piece of equipment, emits a rain shower effect while others create tunnels and arches.

The official park opening was held on July 17th with the Mayor and Mayoress who cut the ribbon to much public applause, allowing the waiting crowd to access the new play area. Town Mayor, Councillor Philip Judd said, 'the new facility is a terrific asset to Weston-super-Mare and will further boost the tourism prospects of the town and provide an all year round facility for local residents.' The park continues to provide a successful sensory play experience for all ages and abilities, with plenty of local support and visitors from afar.

Interview with Zoe Clements, Community Development Officer at Weston-super-Mare Town Council



1. Why was the project necessary? What was there before?

The Water Park idea was discussed by Weston-super-Mare Town Council back in 2007. It was to provide children with an alternative play area that would bring the whole family outdoors. Fresh air and activity has been proven to help alleviate depression and break down social barriers.

The Town Council had looked at several locations before North Somerset Council offered Park Place on a long term lease. This site lay on the seafront and would be a part of a much wider seafront regeneration. The land had previously been used as a pitch and putt green but had been left to grow wild.

2. What were your main objectives for the project?

The main objective was to provide a play area that would offer alternative play equipment and provide a water play area.

Weston-super-Mare has one of the longest tides in the world, the sea comes and goes back out very fast so there is only a limited amount of time it can be played in. By providing the splash pad, the Town Council provided access to water play.

The splash pad is seasonal so the installation of the conventional wooden play equipment ensured usage of the park all year round. It was also felt natural planting and areas of natural growth would encourage wildlife, this being another way to engage to children in play.

3. What interested you about the splash park concept and combining it with natural play?

When Park Place was offered to the Town Council, the land lent itself to more than just a water park. There is a dry moat area which creates an alternative level, there are trees on site which the design needed to work round and the size of the site offered a chance to provide something larger and more impressive.

Invites to tender were sent out to companies with the idea of combining both water and conventional play equipment, mainly because the water play would only be seasonal. Designs and ideas were presented to the Town Council and the winning design was developed until the design fitted in with the site and the Town Council's ideas.



4. What alternatives did you consider and why were these rejected?

Other designs were put forward to the Council, all had the same concept but the equipment and layout changed. Park Place lies within a conservation area and it was important to the Council to develop a more natural looking park, so the wooden play equipment of eibe Play fitted in with that. The Splash pad colours are also fairly muted. Some of the more brightly coloured equipment and the steel structure were not seen to be suitable for the area.

5. Has the splash park been well received by the target audiences?

Very much so, in fact people have travelled some distance to visit the park

6. How would you sum up the experience of working with SSP Waterplay?

I enjoyed working with SSP, David Halford from Halford Associates and the lads on site. I found them all very pleasant, helpful and professional.

Testimonials

'Just to write to tell you what an amazing water park you've built in weston super mare. We've just come back from a few days there and we had the best time at the park! My two year old boy had to be dragged out!!! Well done on your water park it was great to explore and FREE!' Jackie Butts

'First I would like to congratulate Weston-super-mare town council on creating a wonderful water park. My three children aged 8, 6 and 2 had a brilliant time today and can't wait to go again. Thank you for this new addition to Weston, we can't wait for all the sea front work to be complete.' Anonymus

'I know that I have often complained to myself and friends about 'councils, and lack of amenities, but I must say that the new water feature, that I took my granddaughter to yesterday, is absolutely first class, what a wonderful time was being had by all the children there. Everyone that I have spoken to has had nothing but praise for it. Congratulations to Weston-super-Mare Town Council. Once again, well done.' Ken Coles



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