

Sustainable Cycle Parking

When choosing a cycle parking product or supplier remember to ask the following questions:

- **What is the design life of the product and how long is the warranty?** (*P.E.T. plastic only has a 10 year lifespan*)
- **What is the maintenance schedule for the product over its life? Is the product protected from corrosion and UV degradation?** (*For best long-term protection from corrosion, always go for galvanised steel and if you want to liven up metalwork with colour, painted finishes are easier to refurbish later than powder coating. Longevity is the key to sustainability and cost effectiveness.*)
- **Are the materials from sustainable sources?** (*The use of British timber such as oak or sweet chestnut supports local timber industries and contributes to sustainable management of forests for biodiversity.*)
- **How efficient is the foundation material and can it be relocated or re-used?** (*It is estimated that cement production creates up to 5% of worldwide carbon dioxide emissions. It also increases surface water run-off, contributing to soil erosion, flooding and ground water pollution. It's not always necessary to cover the whole cycle parking area with a concrete base.*)
- **Is the product efficient to install? Where do the primary materials for the products come from and how far have they travelled? Are the parts manufactured locally?**
- **Are the primary materials recyclable? Does the manufacturer offer an industry route for their recycling?** (*Plastic is expensive to recycle and only 19% of UK waste plastic gets recycled.*)
- **Does the cycle parking need to be covered? Is there a covered walkway or other structure that could be adapted?** (*Most public cycle parking is not covered and as long as you have waterproof trousers or a plastic bag, a wet saddle is not a problem. You may be able to provide more cycle parking spaces if you do not purchase a shelter as well.*)

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Sustainable design and materials

It's possible to purchase cycle parking that is good value, engineered to last and designed and made in the UK from sustainable materials.



An English Oak and galvanised steel bike shelter by HB Designs

Timber

Wood can provide an attractive and long-lasting material for a cycle parking shelter. Shelters can be constructed from timber grown in sustainably managed forests in Britain or Europe. Supporting the timber industry ensures the future of forests, providing habitat for wildlife and recreational environments for people.

At the end of their first life, wood products can be re-used, recycled or used as a carbon-neutral source of energy.

Some examples of sustainable timber products include:

- British green oak: Can be used in its raw state, without industrial processes. It has a lifespan of hundreds of years. Using native oak encourages its replanting
- Sweet Chestnut: Grown widely in Kent. It has a lifespan of hundreds of years and does not need treating. The chestnut timber industry requires management of woodland in a way that encourages biodiversity
- Birch veneer: Can be used to make very big beams and is sourced from sustainable forests in Europe. It has a lifespan of 30 years
- FSC wood : Certified by Forest Stewardship Council as timber from well-managed forests (though not necessarily in Britain or Europe and some may have a short lifespan).

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Groundworks

- Concrete use can be reduced by using pre-cast foundations to ensure the foundation may be recycled or better relocated and reused. Excess concrete can be collected from local building sites and engineered to create foundations that are as small as possible but still perform to the required standard
- Shelters can alternatively be mounted on stone pads
- Geo-textiles and pavers create hard wearing permeable surfaces that are SUDS compliant (Sustainable Urban Drainage systems).

Decoration

- Cycle parking can be designed to look fun and attractive so that it raises the profile of cycling and demonstrates that cyclists are valued
- Pupils can be involved in the design and decorate the area with a cycling mural
- Timber can be coloured with natural pigments
- Galvanised steel does not need powder coating but small parts can be painted for decorative purposes. It can be cut into funky shapes designed by pupils
- Planters incorporated into the structure will allow pupils to grow flowers, vegetables and fruit espaliers.

Habitat Shelters

It's also possible for cycle parking to double-up as an educational and wildlife resource.



Green roof bike shelter by The Grass Roof Company



The Grass Roof Company turn a recycled shipping container into a habitat shelter.

These can be made from sustainable local materials such as chestnut timber and recycled wood with cordwood, straw bale or reed-board panels rendered with a mixture of clay, straw and sand or with lime. It is also possible to recycle and convert an old shipping container and add a green roof! Why not include bird boxes, planters and espalier fruit trees?

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JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Green roofs can be planted up with meadow wildflowers, turf, shingle and coastal plants or sedum depending on what is appropriate locally.

You may be surprised to hear that these structures can be designed so that they are fully fireproof and extremely hard wearing, making damage by vandalism very unlikely. The shelter can be mounted on stone pads, a concrete base or geo-textile with gravel. The latter provides a hardwearing surface whilst also allowing sustainable drainage.

Pupil involvement

Pupils can be included in the design and construction. There are lots of great activities they can be involved in such as splitting straw bales, building cordwood panels, throwing clay render at straw bales (lots of fun!), making bird boxes or creating designs within the clay render or painting ceiling boards.

A learning and wildlife resource

Green roofs are great for wild plants, bees and other insects and birds. The foundations made from wire mesh gabions filled with rocks can also provide hibernacula for reptiles. Food can be grown in planters and pupils can be involved in recording wildlife that they see using the shelter and the plants that flower throughout the seasons. Some companies involve pupils in the design process, using computer packages that allow them to visualise the shelter and where sun and shade will fall on it throughout the day at different times of the year.

Maintenance and longevity

A properly designed eco-shelter should need no ongoing maintenance and should last for 100 years! Green roofs are designed with a drainage layer that absorbs water meaning they will not require watering.

Funding

Due to the pupil involvement and the educational potential these shelters provide, it is often possible to include part of the cost of a habitat shelter within the school's educational budget. Check our website regularly or [sign up to our e-bulletin](#) to be alerted to sources of funding that we hear about.

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Suppliers of sustainable cycle parking

As a charity we can't recommend a supplier to you but below you will find a list of cycle parking suppliers who aim to design and build sustainably. Let us know if you are aware of others.

- **Terra Perma** – green roof wildlife habitat shelters built, with help from the school children, from natural and recycled materials (based in Kent)
www.terra-perma.co.uk
info@terra-perma.co.uk
- **HB Designs** – dedicated to sustainable design of long-lasting cycle parking manufactured in the UK. Pupils involved in decoration (based in Wiltshire)
www.hbdesigns.co.uk
team@hbdesigns.co.uk
01380 840 819
- **Green Roof Shelters** – converted shipping containers or bespoke green-roofed structures which encourage a multitude of plant and animal (based in Essex)
www.greenroofshelters.co.uk
info@greenroofshelters.co.uk
01258 857839
- **Falco UK Ltd** – have started doing green roofs to fit in with surroundings and provide a “sedum” lining that allows plant growth. All products are either 100% recyclable or manufactured from FSC-certified hardwood (from sustainable sources) if preferred
info@falco.co.uk
www.falco.co.uk
01538 380080
- **The Grass Roof Company** – designs and builds shelters with the help of the school children using sustainable materials and native wildlife friendly planting (based in Essex)
www.grassroofcompany.co.uk
enquiries@grassroofcompany.co.uk
01375 643576

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