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Mark Collier, Alrewas Quarry Manager – Materials

PEOPLE

OUR PEOPLE

Five Years of The Park: Building Skills, Safety and Confidence Across the Industry

In 2025, Tarmac’s National Skills and Safety Park (OurPark), marked its fifth anniversary, a milestone that reflects how far the facility has come since its official opening by HRH The Duke of Cambridge in 2020. In that time, more than 20,000 visitors have been welcomed, including apprentices, graduates, Tarmac colleagues and employees from other businesses. It continues to provide practical, hands-on learning that helps people develop the operational and safety skills needed to progress in their careers.

What began as a mothballed quarry near Mansfield has become an industry-leading centre of learning, providing opportunities for people at all stages of their development. OurPark remains central to Tarmac’s commitment to supporting local communities, strengthening the industry’s talent pipeline, and helping individuals gain confidence, qualifications and real-world experience.



A Year of Firsts in Its Fifth Year

Although OurPark has now been open for five years, 2025 continued to be a year defined by important firsts. Celebrating the initial cohort completing the locomotives apprenticeship and welcoming its first external learners on new apprenticeship pathways. It also became a Mineral Products Qualification Council (MPQC) vocational qualification centre and began delivering the MPQC plant operator scheme, all within an Ofsted Excellence rated environment.

These achievements demonstrate how OurPark continues to evolve, supporting fresh learning opportunities and meeting the needs of both Tarmac and the wider sector.

Creating a Place Where People Feel They Belong

At the heart of OurPark’s success is its commitment to people. The facility blends practical training with structured development, giving learners the confidence,

behaviours and attitudes they need to thrive. Matt Gibbs, senior manager for operational competence, reflected on this people-first approach:

“OurPark isn’t just addressing critical industry challenges, it’s doing so with our people at the heart of it. With a strong people-first focus, it equips colleagues with the right attitudes, behaviours and skills to succeed. Many colleagues return as part of their development journey, reinforcing the sense of belonging we foster here.

“Our apprenticeship honours board, now displaying over 150 names, is a testament to this, with over a third of those individuals progressing into leadership or supervisory roles. These apprenticeships provide a strong foundation for careers in materials and construction, and we’re excited to extend these opportunities to organisations across the sector.”

Matt Gibbs, Senior Manager for Operational competence

Celebrating Achievements Across Five Years

Across its first five years, practical training has been delivered that reflects real site conditions, covering quarry operations, building products, contracting environments, maintenance, occupational health and mental health. Its learning spaces, simulators and controlled operational zones enable people to learn what good practice looks like and apply that knowledge safely and confidently in the workplace.

Key moments across its journey include:

2020 – The Park opened by HRH The Duke of Cambridge

2021 – Mineral Product Association (MPA) award wins and the opening of the occupational health room



2022 – Leap Programme introduced

2023 – Ofsted inspection rated Outstanding

2024 – PODP celebration event focused on learners

2025 – External partners begin using OurPark for apprenticeship delivery

These milestones reflect both consistency and ambition, showing how OurPark has continued to broaden the opportunities it provides year after year.

A Shared Resource for the Sector

While OurPark primarily supports Tarmac colleagues, it has increasingly become a shared asset for the wider minerals and construction sector. Through partnerships with employers like Chepstow Plant International, industry programmes such as Minerals Matter, and external apprenticeship delivery, OurPark now plays a growing role in developing talent beyond Tarmac alone.

This widening reach strengthens Tarmac’s contribution to future generations and helps raise standards across the industry, with more people gaining practical skills, recognised qualifications and long-term career pathways.

Looking Ahead

Five years on, OurPark continues to push forward, supporting safety, skills and long-term development across the business and beyond. With a focus on collaboration and people, it will remain a cornerstone of Tarmac’s approach to nurturing talent and supporting the communities in which it operates.

As OurPark enters its next chapter, its purpose remains clear: to equip people with the confidence, capability and practical experience they need to thrive, and to help ensure the industry has the skilled workforce it depends on for the future.