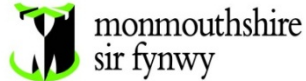


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NP15 1GA

Thursday, 11 April 2019

Dear Councillor

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

Notice is hereby given that the following decisions made by a member of the cabinet will be made on Wednesday, 24 April 2019.

1. **TOURISM, LEISURE, CULTURE AND YOUTH - REVIEW OF COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY** 1 - 28

Division/Wards Affected:

CABINET MEMBER: County Councillor R J W Greenland

AUTHOR: Rachael Rogers, Museums Manager

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01873 854282

E-mail: rachaelrogers@monmouthshire.gov.uk

2. **RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019 -2029** 29 - 182

Division/Wards Affected: All Wards

CABINET MEMBER: County Councillor S B Jones

AUTHOR: Ruth Rourke, Countryside Access Manager

Tel: 01633 644860

E-mail: ruthrouke@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Partnership and External Working	Ward
P.A. Fox (Leader)	Whole Authority Strategy & Direction CCR Joint Cabinet & Regional Development; Organisation overview; Regional working; Government relations; Public Service Board; WLGA.	WLGA Council WLGA Coordinating Board Public Service Board	Portskewett
R.J.W. Greenland (Deputy Leader)	Enterprise Land use planning; Economy and Tourism; Town Centre regeneration; Leisure; Cultural services; ADM development.	WLGA Council Capital Region Tourism	Devauden
R.P. Jordan	Governance Regulatory Committee Standards; Elections, Democracy promotion and engagement; Member Support; Council & Executive decision support; Scrutiny; Law; Ethics & standards; Audit; Whole authority performance; Whole authority service planning & evaluation; Regulatory body liaison; Development Control; Building Control; Community Governance; Community Hubs inc Adult Education;		Cantref
R. John	Children & Young People School standards; School improvement; School governance; EAS overview; Early Years; Additional Learning Needs; Inclusion; Youth Service; Extended curriculum; Outdoor Education; Admissions; Catchment areas; Post 16 offer; Coleg Gwent liaison	Joint Education Group (EAS) WJEC	Mitchel Troy
P. Jones	Social Care, Safeguarding & Health Children; Adult; Fostering & Adoption; Youth offending service; Supporting people; Whole authority safeguarding; Disabilities; Mental health; Public Health; Health liaison		Raglan
P. Murphy	Resources Finance; Information technology (SRS); Human Resources; Training; Health & Safety; Emergency planning; Procurement; Land & buildings (inc. Estate, Cemeteries, Allotments, Farms); Property maintenance; Digital office; Commercial office.	Prosiect Gwrydd Wales Purchasing Consortium	Caerwent
S.B. Jones	County Operations Highways maintenance, Transport, Traffic & Network Management; Fleet management; Waste including recycling; Public conveniences; Car parks; Parks & open	SEWTA Prosiect Gwrydd	Goytre Fawr

	spaces; Cleansing; Countryside; Landscapes & biodiversity; Flood Risk.		
S. L. Jones	Social Justice & Community Development Community engagement; Deprivation & Isolation; Housing and homeless; Social cohesion; Poverty; Equalities; Diversity; Welsh language; Public relations; Trading standards; Environmental Health; Licensing; Communications		Llanover

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

- Giving people the best possible start in life
- A thriving and connected county
- Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment
- Lifelong well-being
- A future focused council

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

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SUBJECT: Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth – Review of Collections Development Policy

MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member Decision – Cllr Bob Greenland

DATE:

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Not Applicable

1. PURPOSE:

To approve an updated Collections Development Policy for the Museums Service

Please note the current Document is titled Collections Development Policy Monmouthshire Museums 2016-2021. As a result of these changes we would like to update its title to Collections Development Policy Monmouthshire Museums 2019-2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To agree the suggested changes.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. Our Collections Development Policy sets out how we will collect and care for our museum collections. The current one runs from 2016 – 2021 and is based on a Museum standard. It was approved by Individual Cabinet Member Decision in 2016 and then as part of the Museum Accreditation process (a UK wide museum standards scheme).
- 3.2. During a review of the Collections Development Policy in December 2018 we became aware that some of our definitions were ambiguous. For example in the section on the overview of current collections;
 - *“Photographs of Abergavenny and surrounding district”*
 - *“Social history material of local interest, relating to Caldicot and the surrounding villages”.*
 - *“The main emphasis is on items that relate specifically to Chepstow and the surrounding district, either in their production, use, origin, ownership or subject matter”.*
 - *“Items with a relevance to the history of Chepstow up to and including the present”.*

and under ‘The policy for agreeing acquisitions’:

- *The basic principle for accepting artefacts is that they should relate to the town and local area surrounding each museum.*

Terms such as ‘surrounding district’ ‘local interest’ ‘relating’ and ‘relevance’ are ill – defined and means it is difficult to be precise about what artefacts should be considered for the collection.

It was agreed between the Museums Manager, the Museums Curator and the Objects Conservator that we needed to review and tighten up these definitions.

- 3.3. The following definitions were agreed and we have included these within our revised Collections Development Policy as a new section at the end of the document - Section 17, titled 'Definition of terms relating to the collection:

Definition of terms relating to the collection:

- The basic principle for accepting artefacts is that they should relate to the town and local area surrounding each museum i.e. they should contribute to the story of Monmouthshire.
- Local area is considered to be any area that sits within the county of Monmouthshire as it stands in March 2019. However the county border of Monmouthshire has changed over time and we hold in our collections items that may currently sit outside the county. There are also items, which due to the historical landscape may form part of a town's story even though they lie outside the town, and in some cases in a different county or even country. It is presumed that we will continue to collect such items if they relate to an existing collection, but any such acquisitions should be discussed with the appropriate museum that lies within that area. Section 7 in the Collections Development Policy already deals with this.
- An object is considered to relate to the town and local area if:
 - It was produced/made in the area
 - It was used in the area by a named person or at a named place.
 - It originated from the area – i.e. was part of a local business, organisation or the built heritage e.g. a cornflake packet from Basil Jones or a fireplace from a local building. NB: This is not a reason on its own to collect it. There should be other evidence of local association alongside.
 - Ownership – a named person with an association to the area owned it. NB: This is not a reason on its own to collect it. There should be other evidence of local association alongside.
 - Its subject matter represents the locality e.g. a painting, poem or piece of music relating to Chepstow Castle. It should either be a work of artistic merit in its own right, or by an artist of note, or it could be a work more important for its content and topographical detail than its artistic worth or authorship.

There are other items that do not fit into the above categories but may be considered for inclusion:

- It illustrates the way people lived in the area. NB: This is not a sufficient reason to collect new items. Whilst in the past it was deemed sufficient, now it is important for museums to collect the stories surrounding the object about the people who owned, used or made it, and what makes it part of (in our case) Monmouthshire's story. However, it may be enough to justify retention depending on certain factors, e.g. condition, context in the collection and suitability for display.
 - Consideration should also be given to whether there is an existing representation of it in the collection. For example it would be appropriate in most cases for only one example of an item to be collected and a further example collected only if we were offered a better example, e.g. a paper item in better condition.
- 3.4. During our review of this document, the question of covenants attached to some collections was raised. To address this point 5.3 has been added under the section Themes and Priorities for Disposal and Rationalisation:

Any items in our collections which are part of a covenant or bequest need to be considered separately.

- 3.5. During this review it also came to our notice that under the section on Monmouth Museum regarding Future Collecting we had made the decision that there would be no active collecting. This was because at the time of writing there was no Curator at Monmouth Museum. As the position has now changed this has been updated as follows:

Monmouth - Future Collecting

- *Archaeology from organised excavations from the local town:*
- *A stronger Monmouthshire wide focus by collecting material relevant to surrounding villages*
- *Items, which tell the story of the 20th century in Monmouth and the surrounding area.*
- *Items with a relevance to the history of Monmouth up to and including the present.*

(Please note at Caldicot Castle we do not operate an active collecting policy. The reasons for this have not changed and are outlined within the Collections Development Policy.)

In line with the changes at Monmouth we have updated the Future Collecting Section for Abergavenny and Chepstow. So the following has been added:

Abergavenny – Future Collecting

- *A stronger Monmouthshire wide focus by collecting material relevant to surrounding villages*
- *Items with a relevance to the history of Abergavenny up to and including the present.*

Chepstow – Future Collecting

- *Items which tell the story of the 20th century in Chepstow and the surrounding area*

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The work we do in the Museums Service holds the wellbeing of our Future Generations and our responsibility for Social Justice at its very heart. It is well documented that participation in cultural life improves peoples well being and this is something we consider throughout our work. By having a better-defined Collections Development Policy we will ensure we are collecting items artefacts that tell the story of Monmouthshire not just for for our current audiences and communities but also for our future generations. In using the Collections Development Policy to decide if we should add to our collections we consider all types of people that form part of the story of Monmouthshire to ensure a full and complete story is told.

We have limited storage space in our museums and staff to care for our artefacts. It is therefore important that we consider what items we add to the collections so that we can ensure that we have the resources in place to preserve them for the very long term future.

Telling the stories of all our communities through the artefacts we collect for future generations is important in making our communities feel connected and whilst we already work closely with our communities there be scope in the future to look at aspects of our communities where we have not got such a good representation of our artefacts. We are looking to carry out a Collections Review of all our collections and this will contribute to this work.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 A more defined set of collecting criteria means the museum service can be certain it is collecting items that will tell the story of Monmouthshire for our audiences today and for future generations.
- 5.2 Considered collecting means we can be more confident that we have the resources in place to ensure that we are able to care for the artefacts for our audiences today and for future generations.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

This is a working document and its suitability will be tested during our decision making process when accepting items into the collection (or not accepting them).

7. REASONS:

It is the role of Monmouthshire Museums to tell the story of our county, not just the main towns but the surrounding villages, and, where it relates to our story, that of the adjoining counties and countries. It is important that we consider carefully the artefacts that we need to tell this story. In addition like museums across the UK our object stores are full and our ability to continually rotate objects via exhibitions is limited. There is also a scarcity in resources in terms of cataloguing and caring for our objects. Responsible curating means assessing very carefully every item that we add to the collection, so we can ensure that we have the means to care for it for the very long term future.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no resource implications.

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet member for TLCY
Enterprise DMT
Head of TLCY
Museums Curator
Object Conservator
Museum Development Adviser – Welsh Government, Museums Archive Libraries
Division

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Revised Collections Development Policy (all changes in red to clearly indicate)

11. AUTHOR: Rachael Rogers, Museums Manager

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01873 854282

E-mail: rachaelrogers@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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Collections Development Policy Monmouthshire Museums 2019-2024

Abergavenny Museum, Caldicot Castle, Chepstow Museum,
The Nelson Museum and Local History Centre, Monmouth



Name of museum: Monmouthshire Museums comprising of:
(Abergavenny Museum, Caldicot Castle Collection, Chepstow Museum, The Nelson Museum and Local History Centre, Monmouth)

Name of governing body: Monmouthshire County Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: TBC

Policy review procedure: Museums staff will review the policy annually. Unless there are any significant changes to be made it will be approved by the governing body in line with Museum Accreditation timeframes.

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: April 2020 (Internal review)

MALD: Museums Archives and Libraries Department, Welsh Government will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Our Vision

To be dynamic museums that play a revitalising role in Monmouthshire's communities, act as agents of social change and promote good and active citizenship. Connecting the past with the present to inform and shape the future.

Our Mission

- To inspire a passion for Monmouthshire its heritage, environment and culture, its people and their stories.
- To stimulate a sense of place that reinforces community identity and resilience.
- To enhance quality of life and contribute to educational, cultural and economic development.

We will do this by:

- Devising enjoyable and inspiring opportunities for learning and discovery
- Creating exhibitions and events that engage, excite and entertain people
- Providing optimum access, real or virtual, to our collections, resources and expertise at and beyond our museums
- Caring for, using and developing our collections held in trust for society and for the benefit of future generations
- Collecting stories and information as well as objects of relevance and interest
- Encouraging personal development through learning and acquiring new skills
- Safeguarding, enhancing and making our buildings and sites accessible and welcoming
- Operating effectively, seeking out new opportunities and innovative ways of working
- Building relationships and partnerships that extend our network and profile nationally and internationally

- 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.**
- 1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.**
- 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.**
- 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.**
- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, or bequest, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.**
- 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons**

2. History of the collections

Abergavenny Museum

The Museum was founded on 2nd July 1959. The idea for a Museum was around from as early as 1903 when it was discussed and minuted by the Abergavenny Free Library Committee. At this meeting permission was given for the library to begin collecting objects. These collections remained at the library until the 1940s when it was said that they were disposed of. The demolition of the historic buildings in Tudor Street and Castle Street during the 1950s once again made people aware of the need for a museum. Alfred Jackson addressed the Rotary Club on 22nd October 1957 and a Committee was formed. Alfred and Ernest Jackson and Duggan Thacker led a group of enthusiastic volunteers and the Museum opened on 2nd July 1959.

Caldicot Castle

When the Chepstow Rural District Council purchased Caldicot Castle from the Cobb family in 1963, they also acquired a quantity of furniture, fittings and other decorative objects which the family has used to furnish the Castle while it was their home (from the 1880s - 1940s).

The "Cobb Collection" also included a considerable costume collection, with some fine examples of men and women's 18th century dress. Another aspect of this collection reflects a major object of interest of the two generations of Cobbs - HMS Foudroyant, both the original, Nelson's flagship, which the Cobbs rescued and restored, and its successor which was used as a training ship on which a number of local boys served. Large objects from the original Foudroyant include the ship's figurehead and a cannon. Smaller items include objects made from salvaged materials after it was wrecked. This core collection became the nucleus of the

Museum's collections. The existing range of the collections attracted more additions - furniture for the Castle, costume and Foudroyant material.

Chepstow Museum

The Museum was established by the Chepstow Society in 1949. The Society itself was founded in 1948 and immediately began collecting with a view to opening a museum. As an organisation which concerns itself with all aspects of the local environment, the collections included some natural history specimens as well as material relating to the history of the town and district and to the everyday and working lives of its inhabitants. The premises occupied by the Museum were limiting - essentially one room above the medieval town arch which spans the High Street. Lack of space and adequate storage facilities eventually led to the decision by the Society in the 1960s to deposit the greater part of the Museum's paper collections in the County Record Office. While this included documents, the deposit also included a substantial quantity of "ephemera" - posters, programmes, billheads etc. At the same time, the large collection of antiquarian and other reference books of local interest were given to the Chepstow Library on condition that they remained in the town. The Chepstow Society transferred the Museum and its collections to the care of Monmouth District Council in 1976.

Monmouth Museum (The Nelson Museum and Local History Centre, Monmouth)

The Nelson Museum was opened in April 1924, following the bequest to the town of Monmouth of Lady Llangattock's Nelson collection on her death in 1923. In 1969 the museum was moved to its present site in the town, at which time a local history display was added.

The local history collections relating to Monmouth and the surrounding area have as their foundation the archives of the old Borough of Monmouth, which ceased to exist in 1974.

3. An overview of current collections

Abergavenny Museum

Since the museum opened in 1959, it has accepted over 25,000 accessions.

The museum possesses over 5,000 photographs of Abergavenny and the surrounding district. These include two important municipal collections of views of the medieval and Elizabethan areas of the town which were demolished under slum clearance schemes between 1957 and 1972. These represent the only record of many of the buildings demolished and have been published in a volume entitled Vanished Abergavenny.

The museum's social history collections are mainly comprised of material reflecting the history and way of life of the town and surrounding district. There are particular emphases on rural life, agriculture and its associated industries and domestic and working life. Particularly significant collections include the contents of a complete Welsh kitchen c.1890, a saddler's shop c.1910-1930 and Basil Jones grocer's shop c.1948-1950 (the Basil Jones Collection totals some 1314 items). The museum also houses the nationally important archive of the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust. In addition the museum maintains collections of books and documents which supplement and illustrate these themes.

As a result of an intensive programme of archaeological excavation between 1962 and 1973 and a further season in 1986, the museum houses extensive and very significant collections of archaeological material ranging from the Mesolithic to post-Medieval. The collections produced by excavations of the Roman fort of Gobannium are of particular importance. The

following is a summary of the museum's archaeology holdings in terms of standard museum boxes (40cm x 30cm x10cm).

General prehistoric collection (published) - 2 boxes

Flannel Street and Castle Street, 1962-1969 (Roman fort) - 30 boxes

Castle Street Orchard Site 1972-1973 (Roman fort) - 52 boxes

19 Cross Street 1986 (Roman fort and vicus) -17 boxes

Roman metalwork from the above sites - 4 boxes

Demolition Finds 1962-1972 (all periods) - 5 boxes

Other sites (all periods) - 20 boxes

Total: 130 boxes

The museum holds around 600 individual items of costume. These include an 18th century open robe and full Regency female wedding outfit. The collection is particularly strong in women's costume of the late 19th century (especially lingerie) and the 1920s.

Caldicot Castle

In addition to the core collection mentioned in the previous section there is a small collection of social history material of local interest, relating to Caldicot and the surrounding villages, including photographs as well as paper material and object collections.

Archaeological material includes Roman pottery from the Caldicot kiln site, finds from the Severn estuary and material recovered from the Castle itself during maintenance work. Excavated material of the most significance, both in its national importance and its impact on the Caldicot collections, has come in recent years from the "lake site" in Caldicot Castle's Country Park. This waterlogged site produced a large quantity of worked wood, as well as environmental evidence, bone, some metalwork and pottery. The impact on the collections for the display and storage of the conserved material will be significant.

The collections at Caldicot Castle are much smaller than those of the other museums in the service. The limitations of the Castle for appropriate display and storage conditions for original material, as well as the seasonal operation of the site and limited curatorial presence, are all constraining factors.

Chepstow Museum

The collections are predominantly of local and social history, 18th 19th and 20th century material. The main emphasis is on items that relate specifically to Chepstow and the surrounding district, either in their production, use, origin, ownership or subject matter.

Works on paper include a very good collection of topographical prints. Chepstow, Tintern and the Lower Wye Valley were popular destinations for artists and tourists from the late 18th century when the interest in the "picturesque" consequently increased the print industry. The small number of original works - drawings and watercolours - is being hugely augmented thanks to Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures grant, as this category is mainly acquired through purchase. There is a good, but not fully comprehensive collection of Monmouthshire maps. Original copies of the local newspaper, the Chepstow Weekly Advertiser, are held for the majority of its life (1855-1902). These are available on microfiche for research as is microfilm of the remainder of the run 1903-1916. "Ephemera", mostly printed material, relating to many aspects of Chepstow life forms a large part of the paper collections. For example, 19th

century material includes election posters, Chepstow Castle pageants and fetes posters and programmes, traders billheads and public notices. Other notable little collections include: items relating to the Severn crossings; to the search in Chepstow for manuscripts by Francis Bacon that would prove he "wrote Shakespeare's works" around 1910; plans and blueprints for ships, bridges etc built by Finchs - the local shipbuilding and engineering company; items relating to the making of the film *Ivanhoe* by the Imperial film company around Chepstow in 1913; advertising material (c1900 - 1960) from a Chepstow shoe shop; collections of several local printers' workshops. (Some of these are complemented by large photographic collections). Active contemporary collecting is adding particularly to the paper collections in this category.

A large photographic collection of locally relevant material, including, ship and bridge building and other local business and industrial enterprises. Contemporary recording of changes to the locality and notable events is another aspect of these collections.

Our costume comprises mainly 19th and 20th century material with local connections. This collection was greatly enhanced by the acquisition of the "Edgar collection" - a large quantity of costume (in addition to a wide range of other items, - the Edgars were active in many aspects of Chepstow life) from the Edgar family home. Continuously occupied since the 1890s, Robert Edgar was a tailor and outfitter in Chepstow and a number of items carry the business label. There were also material swatches and samples and other accessories of his trade. Costume belonging to members of the family, from the 19th century onwards, was also collected.

Objects and furniture includes items that are not specifically local in terms of production and were in widespread use in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, but have a local relevance because of their ownership and illustrate the way people lived in the area. Of more specifically local interest are the items relating to aspects of the town's past industrial and commercial life and people's education and leisure activities. For instance, there is notable collection of longcase clocks by Chepstow makers; tools and models from the shipyard/bridge works; products from the industrial brush manufactory; wine jars from local wine and spirit merchants; equipment and furnishings from a long-established hairdressing business; salmon fishing equipment including a stop-net boat; items produced or customised by other local businesses, shops, dairies etc; sporting trophies and medals;

The history of the museum building itself has also influenced the collections. As the local hospital from 1921 to 1976 (and during the First World War, a Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital) furniture and medical equipment actually used on the premises has been actively collected, as well as collections of instruments and other medical items from surgeons who worked here. This interest also led to active collecting from the other local hospitals in Chepstow (two of which have now closed or been demolished).

"The Beachley Collection". A large body of material was given to Chepstow Museum by the Army Apprentices College at Beachley, Chepstow, when it closed down in 1994. The college had maintained its own "museum". Material transferred to Chepstow Museum was confined to that relating to the history of the College (which had been established some 70 years), and to the boys while they were at the School itself. This is a large body of material, including, photographs, uniform, objects - apprentice pieces, trophies etc; paper - school magazine, programmes, posters etc.

The archaeology collections has grown considerably as the results of local excavations from the 1970s onwards have been processed for publication and deposited in the museum. From within the town itself the majority of the material is medieval and later. Excavations on

Thornwell Farm prior to its development for housing, have given us late prehistoric - Romano British settlement material and some prehistoric burials.

Whilst the collecting policy prior to this one precluded collecting natural history material, items collected by the Chepstow Society still form part of the collections. These include a small number of fossils, butterfly collections, birds' eggs, and stuffed animals. Some, but not all, have a local provenance - including the vertebra of a whale which was washed up on the Severn shore near Chepstow.

Monmouth Museum (The Nelson Museum and Local History Centre, Monmouth)

Nelson

The Nelson Museum collection comprises mainly the material bequeathed by Georgiana Rolls, Lady Llangattock (d.1923) who was perhaps the foremost collector of 'Nelsoniana' of her time, which took in the 1905 centenary of the battle of Trafalgar and Nelson's death. Her wealth enabled her to obtain some of the prime Nelson items which came onto the market, including his fighting sword and an important range of manuscript material, including autograph letters, official letterbooks and ships' logbooks. The Monmouth collection is one of three large public collections of Nelson material in Britain, the others being in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth.

The collection can be roughly broken into four categories: firstly, personal items belonging to, or associated with Nelson; secondly, commemorative material produced during his lifetime; thirdly, commemorative material produced since his death; and fourthly, general naval or social history material relating to the period but with no direct Nelson connection. Within the first three categories a sub-category of 'dubious' items is deliberately identified in the Monmouth collection, and features in the display: this covers the many fake or dubiously attributed relics and mementoes which have been in production since before his death.

The collection is documented according to object type (silver, ceramic, costume, prints, etc). In broad terms, the overall numbers of items in the collection are :- decorative art (silver, ceramic, glass, enamel) 560; costume 84; medals 117; naval equipment 60; models 38, paintings & miniatures 196; prints & posters 1,000; manuscripts 1,000; books 350; miscellaneous 200.

Local History

The material in this archive dates mainly to the 19th century and before, and includes council minutes, court records (quarter sessions, Court of Record, Hundred Court), election records, fiscal records, and a mass of receipts, vouchers and other ephemera from council routine. This local archive is reinforced by a local history reference library, a newspaper archive (Monmouthshire Beacon, 1837 – 1963, and Monmouthshire Merlin 1829 – 1891), and collections of photographs, paintings, prints and maps.

A special collection within the local material relates to the Rolls family, who owned the local Hendre estate and were closely involved with Monmouth. The material is mainly photographic, covering the late 19th/early 20th century period when the family of John Allan Rolls (Lord Llangattock from 1895) and his wife Georgiana (founder of the Nelson Museum) was at the height of social and economic fortune. A significant proportion of the collection is concerned with the Honourable Charles Stewart Rolls, co-founder of Rolls-Royce Motors Ltd., recording his exploits in balloons, early aeroplanes and motor cars.

The museum's object collection relates to the social history of the town and surrounding area. Because of the relatively late development of the local history museum (from 1969), and the emphasis upon the local archives as the basis for that museum, Monmouth's collection of 'traditional' museum objects is limited, particularly in comparison with Chepstow and Abergavenny.

Monmouth Museum also lacks an archaeological collection. Although archaeological investigation of the town has been carried out over many years, particularly by the Monmouth Archaeological Society (M.A.S.), the bulk of excavated material and information remains in the hands of the excavators. The last two decades have seen an intense series of rescue digs in the face of development, during which the importance of the archaeology surviving beneath the modern town has been demonstrated, and as a result of which the work and expertise of the M.A.S. has been nationally acclaimed. The major collecting challenge facing the museum in the future lies in formulating a strategy to deal with the huge backlog of archaeological material which, if it is to be acquired by the museum, requires adequate storage, conservation, documentation and display. Although this collection is of prime importance as a local history resource, the terms of this and previous versions of the Acquisition Policy would preclude acquisition given current availability of resources of space and staffing.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Abergavenny Museum will focus on the following areas. Items associated with Capel y ffin, Llanthony Abbey and the Llanthony Valley. Works of art by local artists and depicting local scenes. Items which tell the story of the 20th century in Abergavenny and the surrounding area.

**A stronger Monmouthshire wide focus by collecting material relevant to surrounding villages
Items with a relevance to the history of Abergavenny, up to and including the present.**

At Caldicot Castle we will not look to actively collect artefacts. The lack of a curatorial member of staff on site has led us to conclude that the responsible course of action is to collect only on a limited and passive basis, with each artefact being assessed on a case by case basis. Feasibility work is planned to look at interpretation plans, exhibition space and storage options and our standpoint on active collecting will be reviewed when this work has been carried out.

Chepstow Museum will continue to pro-actively acquire watercolours, drawings, paintings, prints, journals, antiquarian books and other material relevant to the Wye Tour with the aid of Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures for the duration of that Project. Future collecting of original works will be subject to grant aid availability, but every attempt should be made to continue to build on this collection.

**A stronger Monmouthshire wide focus by collecting material relevant to surrounding villages
Items with a relevance to the history of Chepstow up to and including the present.**

Items, which tell the story of the 20th century in Chepstow and the surrounding area.

At Monmouth Museum we will collect **archaeology from organised excavations from the local town:**

**A stronger Monmouthshire wide focus by collecting material relevant to surrounding villages
Items, which tell the story of the 20th century in Monmouth and the surrounding area.**

Items with a relevance to the history of Monmouth up to and including the present.

Our previous Collecting Policy stated that we would not collect biological or geological material. Items relevant to us would be referred to Newport Museum and Art Gallery who had appropriate curatorial expertise and could act as a repository for material from this locality.

However there is no longer a Curator of Natural History at Newport Museum and as a result they have closed their Natural History Collections. With this in mind we will continue with our policy of not collecting biological or geological material but remain aware of this potential gap in collecting for South East Wales.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal takes place as part of a museum's long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from museum collections. Our approach to rationalisation and disposal is that it will be motivated by curatorial reasons only and we will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons. Our full disposal procedures are listed in section 16.

5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

5.3 Any items in our collections which are part of a covenant or bequest need to be considered separately.

Having had strong Collecting Policies in place for some time, the collections contain, in the main, items which are relevant to our collecting areas. However there are some items from the early days of the museum that now sit outside our collecting policy. A key part of any future collections work will therefore be to look at this. This will be addressed in the Care and Conservation Plan.

6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7 Collecting policies of other museums

7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

Abertillery Museum
Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.
Brecon Museum & Art Gallery
Brynmawr Museum
Dean Heritage Museum
Gloucester City Museum & Art Gallery

Herefordshire Museums
National Library of Wales,
Newport City Museum & Art Gallery
The Usk Rural Life Museum
The Castle & Regimental Museum, Monmouth
Torfaen Museums Trust
Tredegar Museum

8 Archival holdings

All of the museums hold and acquire material that is archival in nature, for example documents and photographs – in paper-based and digital format. In many cases these are associated with artefacts. There are cases where it is the archive only that we hold, these are usually historic collections and in cases of more recent collecting consideration is given to the appropriateness of us holding the items or them being offered to Gwent Archive.

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

Decisions for agreeing acquisitions are made by the professional curator at each site. The basic principle for accepting artefacts is that they should relate to the town and local area surrounding each museum. Further decisions are made based on the care, storage and documentation needs of each item. If an item is available to purchase discussion would occur between the professional curatorial staff as to the appropriateness of purchasing via the Museums Acquisition Fund.

9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10 Human remains

10.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

11 Biological and geological material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected,

sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12 Archaeological material

12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

12.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

13 Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin**
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin**

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14 Spoliation

14.1 The museum will use the statement of principles ‘Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period’, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

15.1 The museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the ‘Guidance for the care of human remains in museums’ issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will

mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

- 15.2** The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2** The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3** When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5** The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 16.6** A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums

Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

- 16.9** The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10** Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from MALD: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales
- 16.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12** Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13** The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15** It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16** Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.

16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

17 Definition of terms relating to the collection:

17.1. The basic principle for accepting artefacts is that they should relate to the town and local area surrounding each museum i.e. they should contribute to the story of Monmouthshire.

17.2. Local area is considered to be any area that sits within the county of Monmouthshire as it stands in March 2019. However the county border of Monmouthshire has changed over time and we hold in our collections items that may currently sit outside the county. There are also items, which due to the historical landscape may form part of a town's story even though they lie outside the town, and in some cases in a different county or even country. It is presumed that we will continue to collect such items if they relate to an existing collection, but any such acquisitions should be discussed with the appropriate museum that lies within that area. Section 7 in the Collections Development Policy already deals with this.

17.3. An object is considered to relate to the town and local area if:

- It was produced/made in the area
- It was used in the area by a named person or at a named place.
- It originated from the area – i.e. was part of a local business, organisation or the built heritage e.g. a cornflake packet from Basil Jones or a fireplace from a local building. NB: This is not a reason on its own to collect it. There should be other evidence of local association alongside.
- Ownership – a named person with an association to the area owned it. NB: This is not a reason on its own to collect it. There should be other evidence of local association alongside.
- Its subject matter represents the locality e.g. a painting, poem or piece of music relating to Chepstow Castle. It should either be a work of artistic merit in its own right, or by an artist of note, or it could be a work more important for its content and topographical detail than its artistic worth or authorship.

17.4. There are other items that do not fit into the above categories but may be considered for inclusion:

17.4.1. It illustrates the way people lived in the area. NB: This is not a sufficient reason to collect new items. Whilst in the past it was deemed sufficient, now it is important for museums to collect the stories surrounding the object about the people who owned, used or made it, and what makes it part of (in our case) Monmouthshire's story. However, it may be enough to justify retention depending on certain factors, e.g. condition, context in the collection and suitability for display.

17.4.2. Consideration should also be given to whether there is an existing representation of it in the collection. For example it would be appropriate in most cases for only one example of an item to be collected and a further example collected only if we were offered a better example, e.g. a paper item in better condition.



<p>Name of the Officer Rachael Rogers</p> <p>Phone no: 01873 854282 E-mail: rachaelrogers@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To approve an updated Collections Development Policy for the Museums Service</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Museums</p>	<p>Date 24th March 2019</p>

1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Page 21

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	A more defined Collections Development Policy will ensure we are collecting items artefacts that tell the story of Monmouthshire for our current audiences and communities and for our future generations. This applies to all types of people.	None	When using the Collections Development Policy to decide if we should add to our collections we will consider all types of people that form part of the story of Monmouthshire.
Disability	As above	None	As above
Gender reassignment	As above	None	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	None	As above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	None	As above
Race	As above	None	As above
Religion or Belief	As above	None	As above
Sex	As above	None	As above
Sexual Orientation	As above	None	As above
Welsh Language	As above	None	As above
Poverty	As above	None	As above

Page 22



2. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!




Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>We have limited storage space in our museums and staff to care for our artefacts. It is therefore important that we consider what items we add to the collections so that we can ensure they are preserved for the very long term future.</p>	<p>Our ability to care for our artefacts in terms of properly cataloguing them so we know what we have and ensuring their storage conditions are correct will continue to be an important part of our work.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>		
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>		
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Telling the stories of all our communities through the artefacts we collect for future generations is important in making our communities feel connected and attractive.</p>	<p>Working with our communities is an important and key part of collecting artefacts for our museums.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>		
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>It is the role of Monmouthshire Museums to tell the story of our county, not just the main towns but the surrounding villages, and, where it relates to our story, that of the adjoining counties and countries. It is important that we consider carefully the artefacts that we need to tell this story. So that we can both tell the</p>	<p>When using the Collections Development Policy to decide if we should add to our collections we will consider all types of people that form part of the story of Monmouthshire.</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	stories of all types of people in all types of areas across the county and that we know we have the resources in place to care for these items for future generations	
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	<i>This includes the protected characteristics listed in Section 1 above, and you can add more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty</i>	

3. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>We have overcrowded museum object stores (like most museums in the UK) and resources are tight in terms of caring for them. At the same time we need to ensure that we are collecting items that tell the story of Monmouthshire for generations of citizens to come. Ensuring that we collect the right things through a clearly defined Collections Development Policy is at the heart of this.</p>	
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Working with museums in neighbouring counties and countries is a key part of our Collections Development Policy.</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>Our role is to tell the story of all our communities in Monmouthshire. We are mindful of this when adding to our collections.</p>	<p>There may be future work to look at aspects of our communities where we have not got such a good representation of our artefacts. We are looking to carry out a Collections Review of all our collections and this will contribute to this work.</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Our crowded stores are an issue and this considered collecting will stop this from getting worse.</p>	<p>A proper considered collections review will help us to prioritise the storage needs of our collections and ensure we can put in place the best resources to care for them.</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>.It is well documented that participation in cultural life improves peoples well being and this is something we consider throughout our work.</p>	<p>Better definitions of what we collect may in turn benefit other museums in other areas and other organisations for whom some items that are offered to us are more relevant to.</p>

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Social Justice	Our role as a museum service is to tell the stories of everyone in Monmouthshire. A well defined Collections Development Policy does this.		
Safeguarding	N/A	N/A	N/A
Corporate Parenting	N/A	N/A	N/A

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

Page 26

- Museums Association Code of Ethics
- Spectrum 5.0 UK collection management standard that is also used around the world. (Collections Trust)
- Collections Development Policy Template – Accreditation Standard (Arts Council England)
- Discussions with colleagues in MALD (Museums, Archives and Libraries, Welsh Government)
- Discussion amongst Monmouthshire Museums Team
- Knowledge of Museum Accreditation Standard (Please note the Museums Manager sat on the UK Accreditation Panel 2012-2017)

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The work we do in the Museums Service holds the wellbeing of our Future Generations at its very heart. It is well documented that participation in cultural life improves peoples well being and this is something we consider throughout our work. By having a better-defined Collections Development Policy we will ensure we are collecting items artefacts that tell the story of Monmouthshire not just for for our current audiences and communities but also for our future generations. In using the Collections Development Policy to decide if we should add to our collections we consider all types of people that form part of the story of Monmouthshire to ensure a full and complete story is told.

We have limited storage space in our museums and staff to care for our artefacts. It is therefore important that we consider what items we add to the collections so that we can ensure that we have the resources in place to preserve them for the very long term future.

Telling the stories of all our communities through the artefacts we collect for future generations is important in making our communities feel connected and whilst we already work closely with our communities there be scope in the future to look at aspects of our communities where we have not got such a good representation of our artefacts. We are looking to carry out a Collections Review of all our collections and this will contribute to this work.

7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Full Collections Review	This is currently being considered following an unsuccessful funding bid of which this was a part of.	Museums Manager
Potential strengthening of community links depending on the results of the Collections Review	Depends on above	Museums Manager

8. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.	Enterprise DMT	26 th March 2019	

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SUBJECT:	RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019 -2029
MEETING:	Individual Cabinet Member Decision
DATE:	24 April 2019
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All of Monmouthshire

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek approval to prepare and consult on a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2019 -2029).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To decide to prepare a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 2.2 To undertake the statutory consultation on a draft plan with the results of the consultation and the final plan being reported to Select Committee and Cabinet.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In October 2007 Monmouthshire County Council published its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This plan has been the means by which the authority planned strategically for the management, development and improvement of the rights of way network in the County. The plan sets out the priorities and objectives for countryside access since 2007 and has provided the basis of all rights of way work.
- 3.2 Legislation now requires that we review the plan and undertake assessments before we then make a formal decision on whether or not to publish another plan.
- 3.3 The legislation and guidance prescribes certain matters that must be considered in the assessments.
- An evaluation to the degree to which the previous ROWIP has been delivered (Appendix 1)
 - The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and future needs of the public (Appendix 2 & 3);
 - The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area (Appendix 2 & 3); and
 - The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems (Appendix 2).
 - An evaluation of the present condition of the network and its record (Appendix 3)
 - Opportunities to contribute to Active Travel objectives (Appendix 3)
 - Opportunities to contribute to Well-Being objectives (Appendix 3)

- Opportunities to contribute to other plans and priorities. (Appendix 3)
- 3.4 The assessments were undertaken being mindful to specifically consider communities or groups of people who do not currently regularly participate in outdoor recreation and to the protected characteristics within the Equality Act. “Local rights of Way” is defined to include all rights of way shown on the Definitive Map, all footpaths, bridleways and all cycle tracks not at the side of carriageways. We are also able to extend the scope of assessments to include Access Land and other provision which is important to our area.
- 3.5 The assessments also include that area of Monmouthshire that falls within the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) as required by guidance. The BBNP are producing their own RoWIP but their plan should technically be an amalgamation of the relevant parts of each of the constituent highway authority plans.
- 3.6 The assessments have been carried out from 2016 to 2019. The “Outdoor Disability and Health Assessment” was carried out by Ridgeway Associates Consulting Limited, using grant funding. It is the only assessment carried out by a consultant. The others were carried out by the Countryside Access Manager.

Issues and findings

- 3.7 The assessments overall show that previous objectives to achieve an up to date accessible definitive map, to target improvements on rights of way so greatest public benefit is obtained and to improve the accessibility of the rights of way network are still key objectives.
- 3.8 The assessment (Appendix 1) on the delivery of the previous ROWIP showed great progress in updating and making more accessible the Definitive Map. Additionally the GP referral walking scheme, development of health walks and the least restrictive access policy to remove stiles was well received. We were not so successful in being able to work with schools and health providers as we would have liked. However the ROWIP was successful in improving partnerships with others and showcasing the benefits that countryside access brings.
- 3.9 The ROWIP also helped to inform and steer the development of policies covering walking, riding and biodiversity. Other strategies that have been able to benefit from the ROWIP are development policies, green infrastructure and the Wye Valley AONB management plan.
- 3.10 Significant income has been generated by a variety of sources, which have provided the main ways in which improvements to the network has been carried out and some paths like Offa’s Dyke Path National Trail and Wales Coast Path have been maintained. In the last 5 years, this has totalled £623,095 of grant from Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Heritage Lottery Fund and European Funding (£1,060,705 since 2011).
- 3.11 However the condition of the network and opportunities assessment (Appendix 3) shows a serious backlog of legal, maintenance & enforcement exists and there is inadequate resourcing to deal with these issues. There is also a lack of routes for horse riders and cyclists. It also identifies other issues now affecting countryside access such as climate change and possible agricultural changes.

- 3.12 Consultations about the review show that communities and volunteer groups would like to work more closely with us regarding maintenance and promotion. There are also opportunities to extend partnership working with others who have similar aims and objectives, to provide improvements and help fund them.
- 3.13 Legislation and the needs of the public have significantly changed since the first ROWIP was published. This gives opportunities to update the statements of action within the ROWIP, to ensure the next ROWIP is centred on the needs of all residents and visitors for the next 10 years. The assessments show that countryside access can contribute positively towards the aims and objectives of the Active Travel Plan and also the Well-Being Plan strengthening our policy to improve access to those with disabilities and also for the mental well-being of residents and visitors. It can also contribute positively to the Environment Act and to local policies such as the Green Infrastructure Policy.
- 3.14 Overall, the assessments show that the last ROWIP was extremely helpful to the management of the rights of way service, providing business focus, additional grant funding and developing new partnerships. Assessments show that the Service is particularly under resourced and making improvements will be difficult. However this was the case in the first ROWIP and if we had not been willing to be visionary, ambitious and make the most of opportunities and partnerships that exist the Service would by now be in serious decline.
- 3.15 The assessments show that greater benefits can be obtained by adopting the approaches within the Well-Being Plan and engaging with the Active Travel Plan. There is also the ability now to take Countryside Access in its full remit, so that it can encompass other responsibilities not just rights of way and to direct policies and actions so that it can take the Service through the next ten years, recognising the issues ahead and therefore maximising opportunities for improvements. It is therefore recommended that a new ROWIP be prepared, that statutory consultation be carried out on the draft plan and the results of that consultation and the final plan be reported to Select and Cabinet.

Consultation

- 3.16 An extensive consultation took place before undertaking the assessment process and during it. Initially an email was sent out to over 500 organisations and interested parties. This included all community and town councils, user groups, other neighbouring local authorities etc. The consultation was also shown in the press and on social media. This was followed up by consulting on the draft assessments which were emailed to 300+ organisations/individuals and publishing three on-line questionnaires (for landowners, the public and organisations) which was also advertised in the press. The questionnaires were available from September 2018 to November 2019, but following issues with the on-line questionnaire this deadline was extended to January 2019. A public workshop attended by 27 people also took place in November 2018.
- 3.17 The Monmouthshire Local Access Forum and Brecon Beacons Local Access Forum have also been consulted on several occasions.

3.18 Appendix 4 provides full details of the consultation process and all results. 14 organisations/individuals responded to the original consultation, plus there was some correspondence from interested parties. 235 members of the public, 17 organisations and 17 Landowners responded to the questionnaires. 27 people attended the workshop. These show support for the ROWIP to be redrafted and views about what should be included and priorities.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The assessments show that a new Plan will maintain long-term planning and management arrangements to ensure that outcomes are sustainable in the future. It will support continued efforts to create a walking and riding tourism product enhancing Monmouthshire as a tourism destination; deliver economic, social and environmental regeneration outcomes to Monmouthshire and to provide improved physical access, volunteering opportunities and activity.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks	Comments
Not proceed to drafting a new ROWIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to future grant Undermine partnerships Makes it difficult to update policies and strategies for countryside access management. WG expects all local authorities to redraft their ROWIPs to cover next ten year period and cover new issues such as active travel which does not appear in old ROWIP 	Welsh Government Guidance says that we would need to publish any reasons why we do not consider there is a need to redraft the ROWIP.
Draft a new ROWIP & consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports appropriate management of countryside access provision within Monmouthshire Supports existing relationships and partnership work Maintains potential access to future funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified 	Meets Welsh Government Guidance.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 An updated ROWIP for Monmouthshire will ensure that the Council has measures in place to effectively protect and improve countryside access to meet the needs of present and future generations, supporting the local economy, providing transport alternatives, health

and well-being benefits to local communities. The plan will contain identified outcomes, which will form the basis for future monitoring.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 Welsh Government Guidance requires all highway authorities to undertake assessments (as per paragraph 3.3) and make a decision as to whether or not, they should draft a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Council from this proposal at this stage. The Plan when prepared will set out costed statements of action and identify partners to help deliver the actions.

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet, SLT, Enterprise DMT (see above and Appendix 4 for consultation on ROWIP assessments)

No further comments received.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1: Summary assessment of delivery of ROWIP 2007 to 2017

Appendix 2: Outdoor Disability & Health Assessment

Appendix 3: Condition of the network and opportunities assessment

Appendix 4: Consultation responses report

Appendix 5: Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

11. AUTHORS & CONTACT DETAILS:

Ruth Rourke, Countryside Access Manager

Tel: 01633 644860 E-mail: ruthrourke@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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Appendix 1 SMDR



Rights of Way Improvement Plan summary assessment of delivery of ROWIP 2007 -2017

Version 3 final (25/03/2019)

Ruth Rourke Countryside Access Manager

countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk

1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In October 2007 Monmouthshire County Council published its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). This plan has been the means by which the Authority identified, prioritised and planned for improvements to the access available in the County. The plan sets out the priorities and objectives for countryside access since 2007 and has provided the basis for all rights of way work.

Legislation now requires that we review the plan and publish another. This report provides an evaluation of the degree to which the current RoWIP has been delivered in Monmouthshire and for that part of the RoWIP for the Brecon Beacons National Park in Monmouthshire.

2 PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES

The RoWIP went through an extensive public consultation process that informed and set our priorities and objectives. A small review of the RoWIP and business plan was undertaken in 2010. As well as continuing with our statutory work the RoWIP and 2008-10 business plan set challenging goals. The top three priorities were:

1. To achieve an up-to-date and accessible Definitive Map and Statement (Chapter 6 in the RoWIP)
2. To target improvements on rights of way so greatest public benefit is obtained (Chapter 7 Maintenance and Enforcement)
3. To improve the accessibility of the rights of way network (Chapter 8)

These objectives are all still relevant, but in light of other policy and legislative changes it would be good to review these and the other priorities in the RoWIP to ensure they are still fit for purpose now and for the next ten years. There is a high desire and need to continue providing schemes of improvement where it is of most benefit to the public. Underlying this there is a recognised need to improve the health of the population and provide for their physical and mental well-being. Furthermore these need to be considered along with BBNP. The current RoWIP is separated for that part of Monmouthshire which falls within the National Park. However, the new RoWIP will have to take into account all of Monmouthshire including that part within the BBNP area. The BBNP should then make their RoWIP from the authority's plans that make up the park.

The following chapters examine the extent to which the priorities, objectives and statement of actions have been achieved for each subject area. A summary of achievements and those targets not made appears at the front of each chapter. This is followed by tables taken direct from the current RoWIP with an additional row stating whether or not action has been achieved, partly achieved or is ongoing.

3 THE DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT.

3.1 TO ACHIEVE AN UP-TO-DATE AND ACCESSIBLE DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT AS A HIGH PRIORITY.

- 3.1.1 ROWIP Statement of Action 6a: We will clear the backlog of Legal Event Modification Orders and thereafter produce regular orders to keep the Definitive Map and Statement up to date, in order that we can produce a new Definitive Map and Statement for the County Of Monmouthshire.

The Monmouthshire RoWIP had a priority objective “To achieve an up-to-date and accessible Definitive Map and Statement as a high priority. The Brecon Beacons in their RoWIP also have “SOA4 Improvements to the Definitive Map and Statement”. Monmouthshire County Council, as Highway Authority, are responsible for maintaining the Definitive Map and producing a new one. The National Park has powers to make orders such as Evidential Modification Orders which amend the Definitive Map and Statement and therefore both authorities must work closely together to keep the Definitive records correct. The Definitive Map and Statement records the location and status of every public right of way. It is therefore the main record from which all countryside access work is undertaken.

The current Definitive Map and Statement has a relevant date of 1st July 1952. It is hand drawn and produced on an imperial scale of six inches to one mile (1:10,560). Original paper copies can be seen upon appointment at the Gwent Record Office and at County Hall. Since its publication there have been many legal orders which have been made affecting the routes shown on the Map and Statement. The landscape has also changed with new roads, housing estates etc. now in existence which are not shown on the Definitive Base maps. Legal changes have to be looked at in conjunction with the Definitive Map and Statement and therefore can be viewed at County Hall with the Definitive Map on appointment.

The Original 1952 Definitive Map, the Draft Definitive Map and modification layers have been scanned, so that it is also available to be viewed (by officers both in BBNP and Monmouthshire) as a digital layer. This also acts as protection in case the paper records are lost by fire and protects against tampering.

To improve its accessibility to the public and others and also in order to up-date the Definitive Map, the Definitive Map routes have been digitised on to a modern mapping base. Several years were spent quality assuring the records so that we were confident enough to publish a “working copy” on the internet (<http://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>). Over 6,000 links were checked along with 666 orders examined and 144 anomalies found. In addition, 99.8% of Monmouthshire within Brecon Beacons National Park has been quality assured, leaving a handful of routes and side roads orders to check and 176 anomalies which will require further investigation to resolve and are currently dealt with as and when opportunities arise. For instance map edge anomalies can sometimes be dealt with at the same time as a diversion order.

The public now have the ability to view current Ordnance Survey Maps at various scales with the different classes of right of way shown on them. They can also view furniture, input issues and print maps. This is a significant step forward in ensuring that staff and landowners working on the ground

have more accurate plans to use, reducing the risk of errors and making the information much more readily available to the public.

It is no longer possible to obtain the base maps required for hand drafting the Definitive Map. Technology has moved along and Welsh Government are now consulting on making changes to legislation to allow a legal digitised version of the Definitive Map in the near future. We are therefore in a good place with regards to this. It should be noted that the access.monmouthshire.gov.uk mapping is regarded as an exemplar in Wales and England. Many other authorities both from England and Wales have come to look at our mapping and database. Exegesis who we employed to make the mapping have even tried to sell it to all the other authorities in Wales and have tried to get National Resources Wales to use it as a National mapping source.

3.1.2 ROWIP Statement of Action 6c: We will continue to process claims according to the agreed review process. However we will seek additional resources to clear the backlog of applications, enabling the authority to comply with its statutory duties.

Additional funding for dealing with outstanding Modification Orders and Definitive Map work has not been found. This is partly due to the fact that this is a statutory function of the Council and therefore it is difficult to attract grant funding.

3.1.3 ROWIP Statement of Action 6d: Using examples of Best Practice from other Authorities we will consider implementing a priority system for dealing with Public Path Order applications in conjunction with the route hierarchy.

As we previously have not had a significant backlog of orders it was not deemed necessary to pursue a prioritisation. However this type of work has now increased and the matter will need reviewing again shortly.

3.1.4 ROWIP Statement of Action 6e: We will maintain communications with development control, development plans, developers and others involved in changes to land use to ensure that appropriate account is taken of public access when considering planning and other proposals.

This is an ongoing area of work. In 2006 there was a change in land charge searches and the increased amount of work has meant there is less resources available for other projects. However, the Countryside Service is part of the new planning process to look at developments that might affect a right of way and is also part of the new Green Infrastructure policy and team. Many of our current Legal Orders come from this process. The BBNP continues to give advice to their planning department regarding any planning application which affects a right of way.

The new Green Infrastructure approach enables Council teams and developers to provide a more cohesive approach to access improvements on development sites and nearby. Section 106 and other planning funding is now being sourced more proactively to benefit the environment and public access. In light of recent changes in the planning process and the Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance a review now needs to take place to see if there is still a need for training planning officers and providing developers with an access development guide.

3.1.5 ROWIP Statement of Action 6c: We will investigate and provide better ways of promoting and making accessible the information held on the Definitive Map and Statement and the List of Streets.

There is now a working copy of the Definitive Map available for the whole of Monmouthshire as explained in 3.1.1. Highways are currently working on digitising their records and making their maps and List of Street publicly available as soon as possible. A draft policy has been produced which will formalise the way in which highways are put on the list of streets and removed from it.

This should be out for public consultation in 2019 and the final policy will be made available on the Council's website.

Monmouthshire CC now has on its website access to all of its current rights of way consultations.

The BBNP also has a defined Statement of Action in its RoWIP "4.6 Compile and publish statutory register of DMMOs". Public registers are required by law to be available on the Council website for searching any deposited section 31 Declarations (where landowner declares what access exists over their land), and Section 53 Modification Orders (claims). Paper records are kept, but until now there has not been the capability to put the records on the Council's website. This is now expected to be done by summer 2018.

4 MAINTENANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

4.1 OBJECTIVE: TO TARGET IMPROVEMENTS ON RIGHTS OF WAY TO ENSURE THE GREATEST PUBLIC BENEFIT IS OBTAINED.

4.1.1 ROWIP Statement of Action 7a: We will develop a hierarchy of routes to target priorities, working practices and resources to not only help meet existing responsibilities and develop proactive work programmes, but to ensure the greatest public benefit is obtained.

The 2007 RoWIP identified a need for a central mapping and database system to be installed which would not only help record issues correctly, but help move rights of way maintenance from a reactive to proactive service. A system called CAMs is now installed and is used by all Countryside Access Staff with the exception of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority who do not presently have such a database.

Using examples of best practice a prioritisation system for maintenance and enforcement issues was drafted. This took two years to develop but with the assistance of Rights of Way Improvement Grant funding which paid for consultants to undertake an extensive consultation (2 workshops, 331 consultations including all volunteers and Monmouthshire Local Access Forum, press and web advertisement and article in Countryside Newsletter sent to 500 people), the final version was agreed on 12th December 2010. A summary of how the prioritisation system works can be found on <https://monmouthshirecountryside.wordpress.com>

The prioritisation system has now been automated so it is part of the CAMS database and gives every issue a prioritisation number. From this number officers can see what it is a high and urgent priority as opposed to a medium or low priority. The prioritisation system has been showcased to all other Councils using CAMS in Wales and has been made available to English authorities on request. It should be noted that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority have not adopted the prioritisation system in the Park and intend to review and publish a prioritisation system in 2018.

4.1.2 ROWIP Statement of Action 7b: To continue to promote the Council's and Landowner/occupiers responsibilities and responsible countryside access use.

The Council has continued to promote responsible countryside access through as many means as possible. The Countryside Service has maintained a presence at the Usk Show and/or Monmouthshire Show every year. We have put the A-Z Policies and Protocols on the Council's

website and have maintained a presence at NAFW. Advice is given to landowners who request it on an on-going basis.

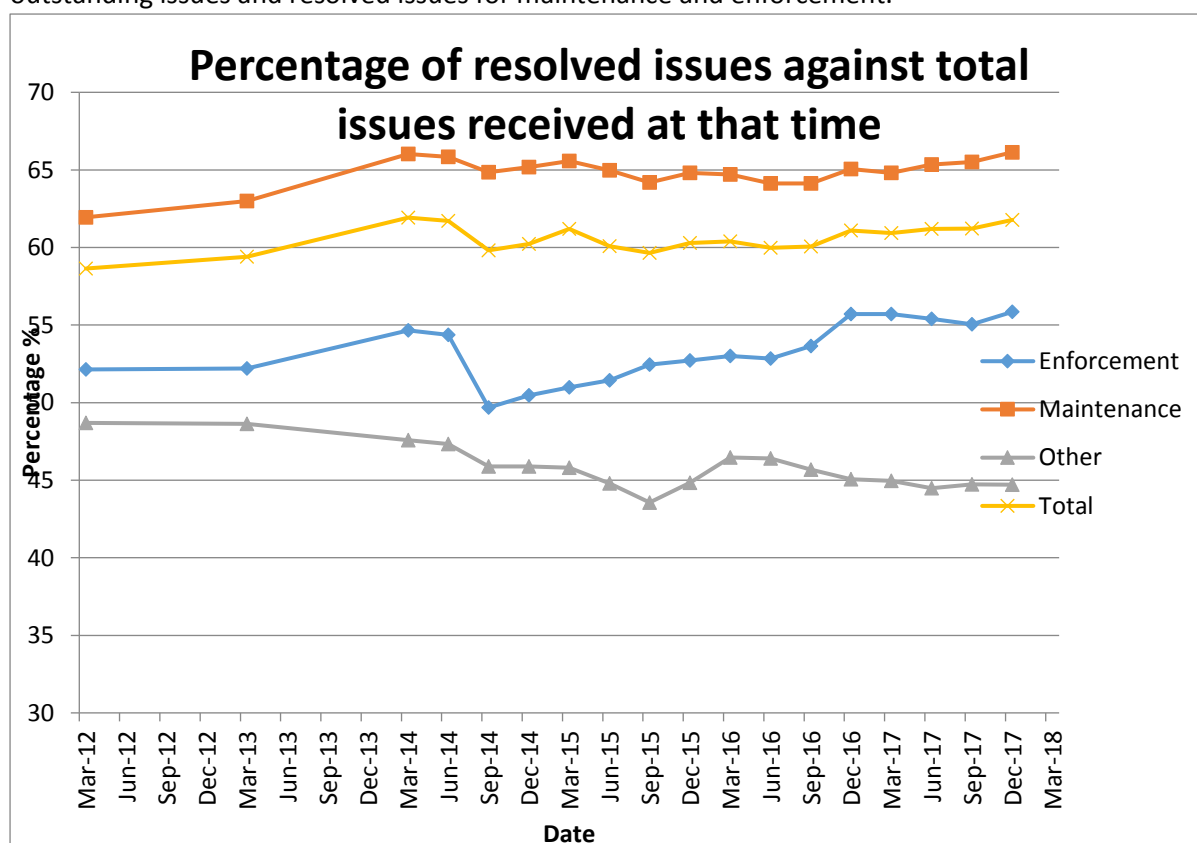
In addition Monmouthshire County Council have produced a Public Rights of Way Biodiversity Action Plan and Technical Guidance and a Countryside Access Design Guide. Public rights of way can also be seen by landowners and occupiers on our interactive countryside map.

The A-Z of Policies has not been up-dated yet, as legislation is about to change again and the review of the RoWIP is a good time to assess what policies need to change and whether we need any new ones.

4.1.3 ROWIP Statement of Action 7c: To achieve 80% of the Public Rights of Way network as open, easy to use and well signed by 2017.

Unfortunately this target has not been achieved in the National Park or other parts of Monmouthshire. However, parts of the network in Monmouthshire particularly in the Wye Valley area are now better signed and maintained than in 2007, but others are not. This is partly because it is easier to draw funding for this area than other parts of Monmouthshire. The resources available for maintenance has fluctuated and it is only in the last year with an additional Field Warden and extra hours being allocated that the amount of maintenance has begun to be more than “holding the fort”.

Until 2012 the Performance Indicator was a survey of 5% of Monmouthshire. After that Monmouthshire County Council changes its performance indicator to one of showing the amount of outstanding issues and resolved issues for maintenance and enforcement.



However there has been significant investment made into surfacing paths and installing bridges which has had a big impact on users and reduced the backlog of work in these areas. In addition the prioritisation system has meant the Field Officers could focus on those routes where the biggest problems lay and have resolved a large number of the “high” priority issues.

Prior to 2007 little work was being undertaken on bridges. The Council had no data on what type of bridges we had, their condition or even where they were. Objectives of Monmouthshire's ROWIP are:

- To ensure adequate resources for the implementation of the objectives with in the ROWIP plan.
- To target improvements on rights of way to ensure greatest public benefit is obtained

In addition various statements of action have the following targets to achieve these objectives:-

- 11C researching the full cost of addressing the backlog of infrastructure and surfacing issues
- 7c To achieve 80% of Public Rights of Way network as open, easy to use and well signed by 2017

There was therefore a clear identified need for the establishment of a programme of inspecting bridge sites and establishing a programme of bridge replacement in accordance with safety and rights of way hierarchy.

Thanks to Volunteer surveyors we now know the location and type of most bridges and there has been a large programme of surveying bridges to identify their condition. In addition Rights of Way Improvement Plan funding has paid for a Bridge Management Plan (2013) and training for staff and volunteers to survey bridges (2014). The results of the Bridge management plan was reported to Monmouthshire's Select Committee who ensured additional funding was available for essential bridge work in 2014/15. Grants have also been used to replace and maintain bridges. The Hendre Bridge has been replaced with a combination of MCC funding and Rural Development Plan funding. Bridges on Offa's Dyke have been surveyed and maintained or replaced with National Trail Grant funding and the Rights of Way Improvement Grant has funded 65 new bridges, repaired others and paid for 258 surveys.

Wherever possible new bridges have been installed with assistance of volunteers. The surveys undertaken have also identified where improvements could be made to make the bridges and footpaths they are on more accessible. In addition the Field Officers also redesigned our footbridges so that the posts at either end of the bridge were higher than previously used. This has enabled least restrictive access gates to be hung on the footbridges level with the decking.

Bridges have been identified as one area in which there are clear public benefits from undertaking the work. It is vital that all bridges on Public Rights of Way are safe. An unsafe bridge could result in injury to a user or an enforced closure of a section of a path or a promoted path. It is therefore important that any decay or damage to a bridge is addressed before the situation becomes critical.

Signage on rights of way is known to be valuable providing assurance to visitors and residents that routes are public. Promoted paths in particular need to be well signed and waymarked. Grant funding has been used to install new waymarking and destination fingerposts on the Three Castles Walk, Usk Valley Walk, St Tewdrigs Trail and Wye Valley Walk. In addition special stickers have been designed for all the Pathcare routes and these are kept refreshed by Pathcare volunteers. There have been at least 58 volunteers trained to undertake waymarking on Monmouthshire's behalf and recently such issues are being given to community groups to do. Generally fingerpost issues are dealt with along with other issues on a path.

Clearance is undertaken on promoted routes but only Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and the Wales Coast Path receive grant funding towards this activity on a regular basis. The RoWIP Grant has been

used: Improvement Projects have almost always involved opening up and surfacing bridleways, restricted byways and replacing stiles with gates to improve access for all.

The only downfall is the lack of staff resources to identify and cost improvement projects so that there is a number of them ready to go should grant or other funding opportunities arise.

European funding was sought aiming at extending the bridleway network but unfortunately although the project was successful in creating and promoting some circular routes these were confined to linking existing routes and creating circular promoted routes as landowners, including the then Forestry Commission Wales would not co-operate in creating new bridleways. A change in legislation may be necessary to resolve this issue.

4.1.4 ROWIP Statement of action 7d: Secure an increase in the numbers of local volunteers involved in the maintenance of countryside access

There is one, part time, employed volunteer co-ordinator in Monmouthshire. We were initially very successful in continuing funding for this post though a variety of grants and the post is now core revenue funded. Volunteering is seen as an important activity and essential for the future maintenance of promoted routes in Monmouthshire. It has come up as being very important during the first round of consultations on this review. Therefore, the new RoWIP will continue to seek funding to maintain and expand the volunteer co-ordinator role.

Monmouthshire has 1656 km of rights of way outside of the Brecon Beacons National Park, through a varied, historic and beautiful landscape. There are an estimated 2 million visitors to Monmouthshire spending £150 million and supporting approximately 3,000 FTE equivalent jobs in the County. Monmouthshire's Destination Development Plan therefore identifies walking as one of the key products in Monmouthshire for promotion. A Walking Product Development Strategy has been developed (with funding from RoWIP 2012) as a result which identified "*there is a substantial willingness to volunteer to help develop and maintain the access network for walking.*"

The Countryside Access team has continued to develop and provide support to volunteers and community, friends and local "Pathcare" groups including developing new green infrastructure management plans for Castle Meadows Abergavenny, with friends group and Caldicot Castle Country Park. Currently the Countryside Access Team promotes a range of countryside access management opportunities to approximately 140+ individual volunteers and is working with 12 community groups.

By Community Groups we mean Community or Town Councils, Walkers are Welcome, Local Ways Groups (i.e. Raglan Local Ways) and any other constituted group of dedicated volunteers responsible for a given area. A community Engagement Strategy was produced to assist the Volunteer co-ordinator work with more groups.

An issue identified though is that there needs to be more staff time to train and supervise groups so that they can become independent. Groups flounder when there is no active leader in a community and so it is important that this matter is also addressed.

The bridge management report, produced in 2013 with the assistance of ROWIP funding, identified a range of specific measures for inspections of bridges and in particular identified that those bridges thought to be in good condition, could be inspected by trained volunteers. But only certain categories such as sleeper bridges and small kit bridges. 10 staff and 10 volunteers have been trained and volunteers have been undertaking their inspections from March 2015. Many volunteers have also been involved with repairing and installing new bridges.

Volunteers also continue to take an active role in maintenance through assisting with inputting records into CAMs, surveying, pathcaring and assisting the Field Officers with maintenance projects.

Tourism Officers have trained volunteers as tourism ambassadors and many volunteers enjoy helping with activities and events like bat walks, or Offa's 40th birthday and Wales's coast path opening.

One of the biggest opportunities for volunteering has been through the GP referral scheme. Health walks have become very popular and it is increasingly important for assistance from volunteers to run health walks and also identify new routes and improvements.

There are now three Walkers Welcome Groups and these volunteers were trained and now run an annual walking festival.

A Saturday task group undertakes conservation and rights of way work. However some groups like Treadlightly have been enabled to work on their own on such things like road improvements.

Many of our volunteers also work with wardens within BBNP and some of our Pathcare routes co-inside with their promoted routes. Both authorities are therefore trying to look at ways of sharing resources and working proactively with volunteers.

Monmouthshire produced a Walking Tourism Strategy and Walkers Welcome Groups identified in this that they would like a toolkit to give them more advice on what they could do themselves. Rural Development Grant Funding was used to produce a website with the toolkit on it. However one of the failures of the RoWIP was to deal with the technical issues of maintaining it once staff developing it disappeared. Other information for volunteers has also been produced like Ambassador Training and Offa Festival Toolkit.

5 THE NEEDS OF THE BLIND, OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE AND OTHERS WITH MOBILITY PROBLEMS

5.1 PRIORITY 3, OBJECTIVE: TO IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

5.1.1 ROWIP Statement of Action 8a: To support health walk and riding initiatives and to provide guided walks for those with health or disability issues

A healthy footsteps walk was produced with assistance from Raglan Doctors Surgery and the local school. This has proved extremely popular. Therefore, a series of Health Walks have been produced in the main towns of Monmouthshire, but these are popular and there is a need to identify more and to promote them more widely. We also need to work more heavily with the Health Board in order that these walks can be disseminated to Doctors Surgeries and other health professionals so there is maximum benefit to residents and tourists.

Grant funding was also used to set up a GP referral walking scheme aimed at moving people on this scheme out of leisure centres and into walking. This scheme proved extremely popular and was expanded rapidly to all leisure centres in Monmouthshire. There is now a waiting list.

Volunteers have been trained and now run the GP referral scheme in conjunction with Leisure Services, but there is a need to identify and train more volunteers who can assist with this, to

identify routes and to ensure those on the Leisure Centre GP referral scheme are encouraged to participate.

5.1.2 ROWIP Statement of Action 8b: continue to take all reasonable steps to remove unnecessary barriers from public rights of way and access land by applying the principle of least restrictive access and using the most accessible choice of furniture wherever possible

The least restrictive access policy has been heavily implemented. Access furniture as a result has improved considerably over the past few years across the network. Gates have increased and the number of stiles has decreased. Monmouthshire was the first Authority in Wales to make the whole length of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail stile free. Condition surveys on all the regional routes have been used to carry out improvements to the surface, camber and furniture on these paths also so that they are also more accessible. Day to day maintenance work also has regard to least restrictive access and making paths accessible to as many people as possible.

The development of a Countryside Furniture Guide has helped spread best practice to contractors and landowners and others installing furniture in Monmouthshire. The guide and furniture we have developed is now being used by Scotland and other authorities in England and Wales. However a new British Standard was published in 2017 and Monmouthshire's guide will need to be revised now to take into account any new requirements.

The BBNP have delivered webpages where there is accessible access but this still needs some work in Monmouthshire. However, our interactive mapping contains routes including their surface and geography which enables people to choose routes which are more suitable to their needs.

Information is kept on what furniture exists on the rights of way network but CAMS does not allow any meaningful searches to be made at the current time and there is a need to change this so we can undertake better monitoring of improvements to the network.

5.1.3 ROWIP Statement of action 8d: We will review the directional and other information provided along promoted routes; particularly the Offa's Dyke National Trail and seek to involve our partners in other long distance walks to consider producing information and maintaining such paths in a manner that will enable more users to enjoy the paths or parts of them (see also statement of action 4d in rowip).

As in 4.3.2 we have removed all the stiles on Offa's Dyke Path in Monmouthshire and all but one bridge has been replaced with accessible furniture. The Usk Valley Walk is also stile free now. The Quality standards for Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and the Wales Coast Path contain standards for producing information and maintaining the routes in an accessible a way as possible. The BBNP has therefore also been replacing stiles with gates on the National Trail.

There is no formal written policy for the other regional routes to be managed in the same way but authorities in Wales generally are well aware of the Equality Act and Well Being Act and so should be making these routes more accessible as opportunities arise without the need for a formal policy.

6 HEALTH BENEFITS OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

6.1 OBJECTIVE: TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO INCORPORATE WALKING, RIDING AND CYCLING INTO THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES.

6.1.1 Statement of Action 3a: Assist local partners in developing health programmes that support schemes such as the health walk initiatives to provide guided walks or rides for those with health or disability issues

As outlined in 5.1.1 a GP Referral Scheme was organised from the Leisure Centres. The report produced when this scheme was first produced concluded that it would be beneficial for MCC to continue to invest in walking for health, though at a reduced level to:

- Develop the existing walking groups to provide a sustainable exercise opportunity for GP Exercise Referrals
- Work with Abergavenny Walking for Health Group to provide an exercise option for “social walkers”.
- Make health walk route information available to a wider audience through MCC and other websites.

The report then went on to make a number of recommendations to move the initiative forward in a way which would be manageable considering existing resources. The conclusion from the project was there was a demonstrated demand for walking amongst GP referral patients and others, and that providing programmes of led walks and information on routes can help to encourage people to walk for health.

It also showed that it takes several years for volunteer walking for health group members to become self-sufficient and that some form of external support is required for some time. It also showed that there was capacity available to provide this support through groups like Ramblers Cymru (who can provide training and insurance), Walkers are Welcome Groups, Leisure Centre staff and volunteers.

6.1.2 ROWIP Statement of Action 3b: We will identify partners in schools and colleges (starting with those with Travel Plans) to work to promote the health benefits of countryside access to pupils and students, testing innovative ideas when possible.

This has not been achieved through the present RoWIP due to lack of resources and may well be something can be achieved through providing information for others to deliver it through Monmouthshire’s Well Being Plan.

6.1.3 ROWIP Statement of Action 3b: We will identify partners in schools and colleges (starting with those with Travel Plans) to work to promote the health benefits of countryside access to pupils and students, testing innovative ideas when possible.

Staff resources are not available in the Countryside Service to deliver this although opportunities remain particularly at Usk Agricultural College and through other parts of the Council.

6.1.4 Statement of Action 3c: We will work with partners/colleagues in the healthcare profession, Age Concern and Adult Services to target different groups, particularly older people, people with mental health difficulties and other disabilities to promote walking, riding and cycling as a good option for improving personal health.

Talks are now occurring with the health board due to the new Well Being Act being implemented.

7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM BENEFITS OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

7.1 OBJECTIVE: TO MAXIMIZE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

7.1.1 Statement of Action 4a: We will highlight the economic benefits of Countryside Access in Monmouthshire

There has been surveys on the Coast Path and National Trail showing economic opportunities exist for businesses to develop and grow along the routes. The National Trail report showed that many businesses would not exist without the trail. More needs to be done to look at the value overall of the rights of way network though.

It is important to monitor the usage of paths particularly promoted routes like Three Castles Way and Usk Valley Walk. These are long distance routes one of which runs over three Counties. In order to seek appropriate funding to continue to maintain and improve the path and to implement good practice, monitors are required. Additionally grants nearly always require some form of monitoring data in their conditions. However monitoring long term with a professional company providing the reports can be expensive. With reducing resources in mind Countryside Services looked for a sustainable, modern system that would work in a wide range of environments, be easy to install, have a long battery life with no maintenance requirements and be easy to download information. The system chosen has no extra licence requirements for the database and it can be held on Monmouthshire's server making it more easily accessible to all officers that need the data. It has been in use for two years now and more counters are added to the network as opportunities to purchase more counters arise.

7.1.2 Statement of Action 4b: To identify and develop local circular routes around towns and villages linking to health, tourism and heritage initiatives and particularly seeking the creation of bridleways and cycle ways.

The development of local circular promoted walks is now provided by volunteer groups and communities and a toolkit was developed to assist with this. The Destination Development Plan recognises that there is a need for more focused walks for instance for dog walkers and it needs to be explored how best this can be achieved.

Five bridleways routes were achieved through a Regional Development Plan Grant called Tourism Trails. But landowner co-operation is required if there are to be any more.

7.1.3 Statement of Action 4c: To secure improvements to the coastal access in line with the objectives of the Wales Coastal Access Improvement Programme.

The Wales Coast Path is still seen by Welsh Government as worthy of international promotion and although reduced there is currently still an annual grant maintenance and improvement programme. Works are therefore continually ongoing on the Wales Coast Path as required.

7.1.4 Statement of Action 4d: To maximise economic opportunities by securing a permanent long distance trails budget and ensuring a quality of standard is applied and maintained on the National Trail and other long distance promoted routes in Monmouthshire.

Monmouthshire works with the National Trail officer to produce a three year cycle of works improving the National Trail and applies the Quality standards to all work on the trail. The trail is

also monitored by volunteers who pathcare the route and report any issues as they arise. The trail generally is therefore in a good state of repair.

8 TRANSPORT BENEFITS OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

8.1 OBJECTIVE: TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE USE OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK FOR PURPOSEFUL JOURNEYS.

8.1.1 Statement of Action 5a: We will work with County Council colleagues to raise the profile of the contribution of rights of way for purposeful journeys

This is ongoing as we work closely with green infrastructure colleagues, planners, schools, youth and highways. It is something which has become more meaningful as grants are drying up and there is a need to work more closely together where we have mutual benefits.

8.1.2 Statement of Action 5b: We will identify routes on the network for improvement to encourage pupils and students to walk or cycle to school

This has to date been achieved only through individual projects for instance through working with colleagues on the development of the new Raglan School where several paths to the Doctors Surgery and school have been improved. There is no officer time available to achieve more than this currently. However, it is something that community groups and volunteers could identify for us and which we could work better with the Highways Department who receive grant funding for improving safe routes to school

8.1.3 **Statement of Action 5c: Working with colleagues in the Highways Section and subject to the provision of additional funding, we will seek improved accommodation for vulnerable users where PROW link with the adopted highway network**

Wherever brought to our attention we seek to get Highways to take appropriate action.

8.1.4 Statement of Action 5d: (see also Statement of Action 4b) The County Council will continue to work with our partners to enhance and develop an off road long distance and circular bridleway/multi purpose network.

This has proved difficult with existing legislation and without landowner co-operation progress is extremely slow and limited.

8.1.5 Statement of Action 5f: The County Council will work with interest groups and its partners to provide a quiet network of county unclassified roads for vehicular and other users and seek to prevent the illegal use of non-vehicular paths.

Highways have worked on a small scheme of improvements with the assistance of Treadlightly but not much has occurred in the life of this RoWIP due to lack of staff resources. However a potential project to look at all issues involved and how access can be improved in Wye Valley has been put together recently and we are waiting to see if funding becomes available to further these statements of action.

9 PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

9.1 OBJECTIVE: TO IMPROVE AND INCREASE THE RANGE OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS INFORMATION

See www.visitmonmouthshire.com

Statement of Action 9a: To improve and increase the range of information on and about countryside access and its benefits (particularly for horse riders, cyclists, disabled users, carriage drivers and motorists).				
Task id	Task	Target		
	Undertake a review of current information (including signposting at view points, roads etc) and develop an interpretative plan for Monmouthshire, ensuring that all promotional information is as accessible as possible and targeted to the relevant audience. Not achieved however small review took place at Tintern as part of Overlooking the Wye Project.	2009 - 2010	LAF, AONB	
	All leaflets and books should incorporate as standard information about the gradients and furniture to allow users to make informed decisions over their possible use of any trail. New walking module on Visit Monmouthshire has capability to include some of this information.	2010 onwards		
Statement of Action 9b: To improve Countryside Services web presence				
Task id	Task	Target		
9b	Undertake a comprehensive review and update of the Countryside Service web site. Include a wider range of information for the public and establish direct links with associated websites. Make all free guides available to download from the website. Review in progress and countryside section has been	2007 ongoing	MCC IT Section	

	rewritten. Visitor facing information moved to Visit Monmouthshire site.			
9b	Create an electronic database on the website so that details of closures, traffic regulation orders etc. in Monmouthshire are available to the public. Achieved	2009		
(Also see Statement of Action 3c and 7d) Statement of Action 9c: To improve communication with Service Users, Volunteers, Community and Town Councils.				
Task id	Task	Target		
3c and 9c 7diii	We will seek to facilitate a revitalized programme of community and voluntary countryside action by improving information for volunteers, delivering training and promotional material and seeking to increase volunteer involvement. Volunteer involvement increased to 140 active volunteers. Training delivered as specified in 7diii. Newsletter produced periodically. Social media presence obtained. Several community groups established.	2009 ongoing	As specified in rowip	CCW Min Grant Programme
9c (ii)	We will continue to provide and facilitate accessible activities and education programmes to promote awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the countryside through the countryside activity and events programme Achieved. Ongoing.	2007 ongoing	CCW	CCW Min Grant Programme
Statement of Action 9d (see also Statement of Action 4b): In conjunction with volunteers and partners, we will seek to review and repromote Pathcare routes and any new circular/ other types of routes as they come into existence.				

9d	To review, in 2007, those routes currently being pathcared and ensure that Volunteers are given appropriate training and that the route is recorded adequately on the Internet or by other means. All volunteers given appropriate training or access to it. All Pathcare routes bar 12 are promoted. The remaining 12 will be put on the Internet before the walking Festival in October 2010. Pathcare routes also being promoted in volunteer's newsletter and where other publicity opportunities arise.	2007/ 2008	Volunteer Co Ordinator & Countryside Access Officer	CCW Min Grant Programme
9d(a)	Engage with partners, community groups and volunteers to review non-pathcared routes and seek appropriate funding and methods of re-promoting these routes plus any new circular community walks/rides. Future project	In conjunction with hierarchy	Volunteer Co ordinator, User Groups, Volunteers, LAF and as specified in ROWIP	

10 LINKS TO OTHER PLANS AND STRATEGIES

10.1 OBJECTIVE: TO PROMOTE THE WIDER BENEFITS OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS, IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPLEMENT THE AIMS OF THIS PLAN.

Statement of Action 10a: We will promote the rights of way network as a mechanism for helping to achieve other appropriate internal and external aims described elsewhere in this plan.				
Task id	Task	target	partners	Resources identified
10a1	To promote the potential benefits of the rights of way network in increasing	ongoing	As specified in ROWIP	

	sustainable tourism in Monmouthshire Ongoing			
10a2	To promote the potential benefits of the rights of way network in improving health, physical activity and social well-being of users and potential users Ongoing	Health boards put up on countryside sites in 2007.	As specified in ROWIP	
10a3	To promote the potential benefits of the rights of way network as an important resource for underrepresented groups to be able to visit the countryside. Ongoing			
10a4	To promote the potential benefits of the rights of way network as an important mode of sustainable transport, increasing the numbers of local journeys that can be made on foot and bicycle. Ongoing		Highways and as specified in ROWIP	LTP, LDP etc
Statement of Action 10b: To further develop appropriate partnerships with organizations and individuals that can contribute to the objectives of this plan and add value to the rights of way network				
Task id	Task	target		
10b	To work with volunteers to help maintain, improve and promote the rights of way network 130 volunteers actively working to achieve aims of 10b. Approximately half of these have had training within last three years. Most of the rest have had on the job training in the past.	Ongoing	As specified in ROWIP	ROWIP, Axis 3, CCW Main Programme

10b	To work with Community and Town Councils and Community Groups and other initiatives to help maintain, improve and promote the rights of way network. Ongoing	See also 4b, 8a,7a, 7d,	AS Specified in ROWIP	ROWIP, Axis 3, CCW Main Programme
10b	To work with government and non-government agencies, voluntary and other organizations where it will assist to maintain, improve and promote public rights of way and other forms of countryside access. Ongoing	See also 4b, 8a,7a, 7d,	As specified in ROWIP	ROWIP, Axis 3, CCW Main Programme, RDP
Row management review	To review and achieve a new delegation agreement and management arrangements with BBNP. Achieved January 2018	BY 2009/10	BBNP, Legal Services	
Row management review	To improve Member training and communication including preparation of annual report Ongoing as new members arise	To prepare an annual report from 2008/09	Countryside Manager and Countryside Access Team Leader, Legal Services	Existing staff
Row management review	To review decision making process and delegation powers Reviewed in 2008 but will now need to be done again as legislation has changed again.	Review delegations & implement training for row panel during 2008/09	BBNP, Legal Services, Countryside Manager and Access Team Leader	Existing
Statement of Action 10c: To work with internal and external partners to ensure the development of the rights of way network maximizes its contribution to wider landscape biodiversity, visitor interpretation and educational objectives.				
10c	To continually promote the benefits of countryside access through existing and new partnerships Ongoing			

10c	To continue to review and respond to consultations on any new or revised policy/strategy document. Ongoing			LTP, LDP (2008)
10c	To regularly update countryside access management procedures and undertake staff training to ensure the future development of the rights of way network needs reflect other relevant policy aims. Ongoing			

11 RESOURCES

11.1 OBJECTIVE: TO ENSURE ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROWIP.

Statement of Action 11a: To secure additional resources from internal and appropriate external sources that help to make improvements both within and beyond our statutory duties

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan was successful in improving partnerships with others and showcasing the benefits that Countryside access provision brings. It was also instrumental in bringing in an additional funding from a variety of sources. £537,184.13 was obtained directly from Welsh Government Rights of Way Improvement Grant.

The RoWIP has helped to inform and steer the development of policy covering walking and biodiversity. Other strategies that have been able to benefit from the RoWIP are Development policies, green infrastructure and Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

The authority has taken strives to record all furniture especially bridges and is continually seeking to improve its assess management records in order to show what budgets are required and to take opportunities when they arise to grant fund improvements.

12 CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of lessons that can be learnt from the 2007 RoWIP. Certain actions will always be ongoing but others need revising. Some have not been achievable. This first RoWIP was primarily written with the expectation that the Countryside Service would deliver the majority of it. The new RoWIP will have to be adapted to ensure it encompasses all the needs of the public and fits with other organisations policies in order that partnerships can be developed to deliver multiple benefits to the public.

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FINAL REPORT

Outdoor Disability & Health Assessment For Monmouthshire & Environs

Prepared by



Ridgeway Associates Consulting Limited

Strategy – Research - Communications

For



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

April 2017

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
1. Project Overview – Background & Methodology	3
2. Recruitment and Approach to Consultation	4
3. Outcomes of Consultation with Stakeholders	5
4. Outcomes of Consultation with Service User Groups	9
5. Conclusions & Recommendations	15
Appendix i – Core Discussion Guide	20
Appendix ii – Project Participants	22
Appendix iii – Social Prescribing Leaflet	23



1 Project Overview – Background & Methodology

1.1 Background

In November 2016 Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) appointed Ridgeway Associates Consulting Limited to undertake an assessment of opportunities available for disabled people and others who do not use the outdoors to gain from the health and recreation benefits offered by walking within the County's rights of way network.

Addressing the objectives identified in MCC's brief for this project has involved a programme of desk research relating to existing outdoor walking opportunities, work that included consultation via in-depth telephone interviews to gain feedback from the extensive range of stakeholders identified in discussion with the Council's project group. Additionally, field research has been undertaken with groups of current service users to gain first hand views on the suitability of outdoor walking opportunities available to and used by them.

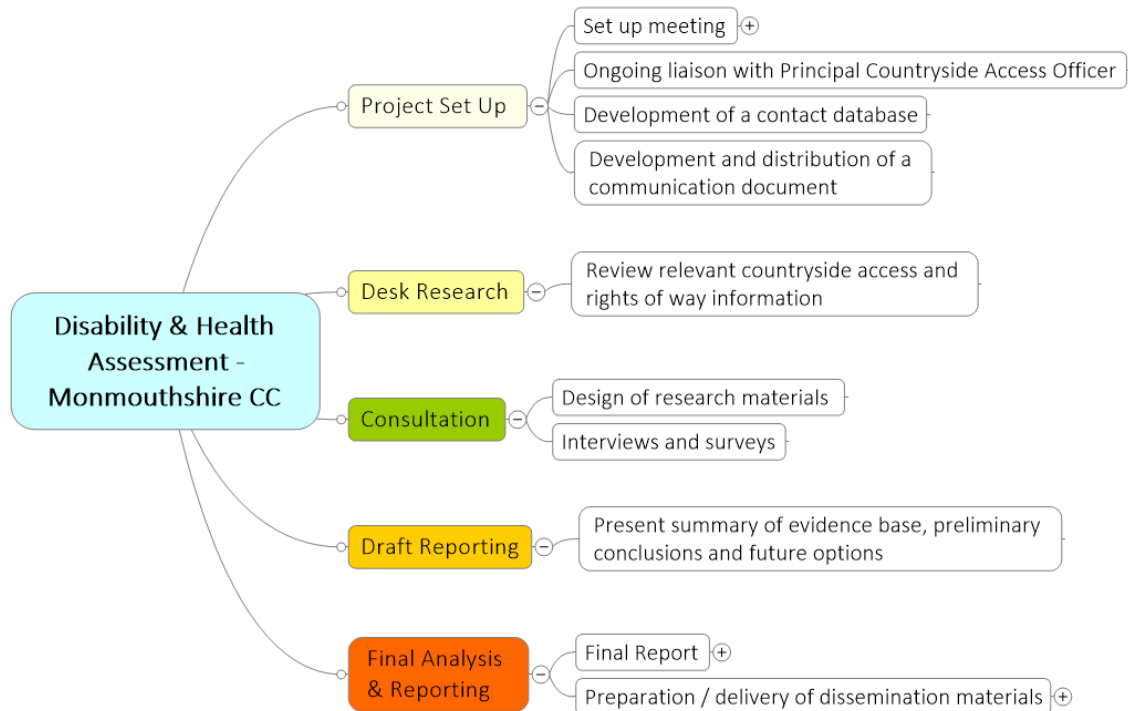
In terms of overall focus the consultation work has concentrated on respondents' opinions and experiences concerning:

- The nature of current outdoor walking opportunities
- The awareness and use of these opportunities
- Accessibility to these resources
- Resource gaps / barriers to access
- Aspirations in terms of achieving improvements in awareness and use of the County's rights of way.

1.2 Outline Methodology

In responding to the brief Ridgeway proposed a methodology comprising a combination of desk and field research with a view to understanding current outdoor walking opportunities and highlighting gaps in provision and issues with accessibility. The information gained through these processes has been used to create an evidence base to support the development of conclusions and recommendations.

The diagram below illustrates the methodology proposed and the cascade of processes undertaken.

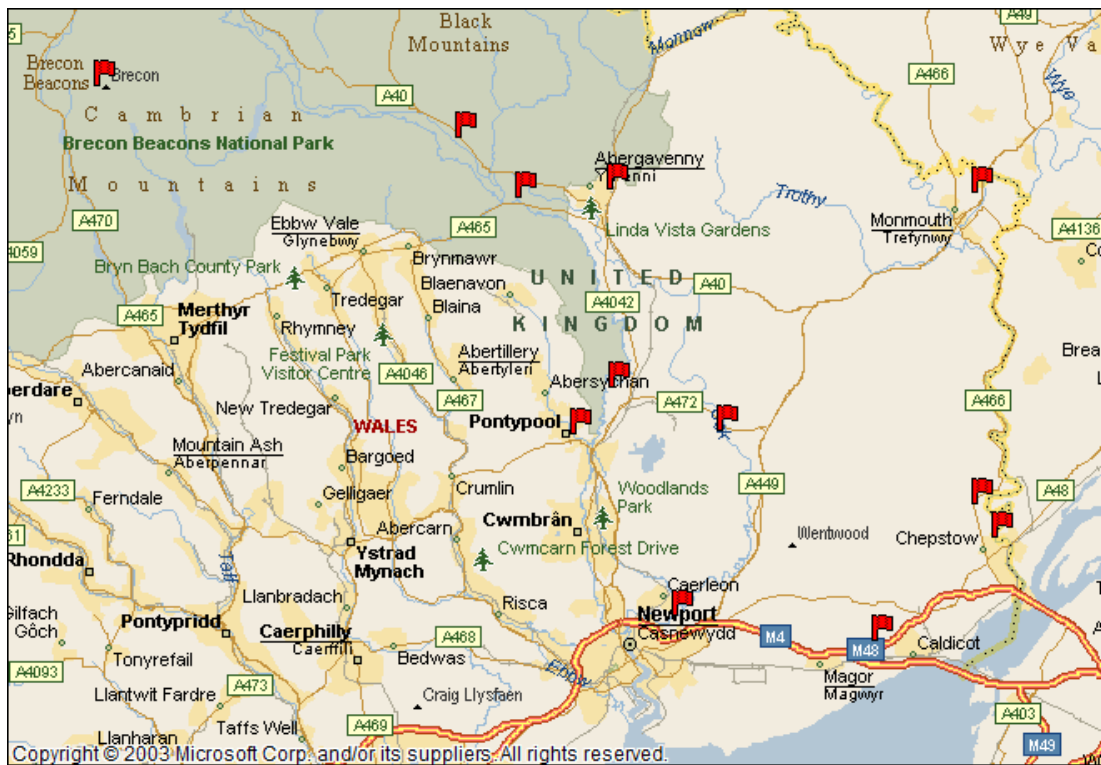


2 Recruitment and Approach to Consultation

The Ridgeway team met with Ruth Rourke and Matthew Lewis on 2nd November 2016 to undertake the project set up exercise. Following a detailed briefing and discussions relating to the management of the project it was agreed that Ridgeway would provide a contact database to be initially augmented by the Council and then further developed by Ridgeway. A communication document and press release giving background to the project were subsequently developed by Ridgeway and approved by the Council.

The press release was circulated by the Council and this led to a number of relevant organisations contacting Ridgeway directly. The communication document served as an introductory guide during the consultation phase. In order to support the consultation processes Ridgeway devised a core topic guide for use in telephone interviews, discussion groups and email-based dialogue with respondents.

Initial interviews were held with contacts agreed with the Council and these were augmented with additional respondents which were found as a result of our initial investigations or via desk research. Consultation involved contact across the County, the Brecon Beacons and adjoining locations with representation of some form in the area of question. The map below shows the geographical spread of interviews and discussion meetings. A full list participants can be found in Appendix 2.



3 Outcomes of Consultation with Stakeholders

Based on information provided by the Council's project leads and identified by Ridgeway a Stakeholder contact database was developed and this formed the basis of a programme of in-depth telephone interviews. The key purpose of this activity was to gain views on the suitability of current outdoor walking opportunities and to identify measures that could be taken to address barriers to use / any gaps in provision and stimulate greater engagement with 'Healthy Walking' opportunities.

A semi-structured discussion guide was used to support this consultation exercise and this document is included as Appendix 1 to this report. Importantly this discussion guide provided a consistent structure across the interviews while, at the same time, offering scope for respondents to raise additional topics based upon their specific roles and operational experience. The key themes that emerged from the stakeholder interviews are summarised below.

3.1 Stakeholder Consultation Outcomes – Key Themes

i. The general nature of resources available

The findings below demonstrate the diversity of views that were encountered during the consultation with stakeholders and those highlighted below generally reflect the views expressed by more than one stakeholder respondent:

- The opportunities provided by designated Access Land within Monmouthshire and the land managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are particularly valued given their suitability for all ability access
 - Also, appreciated is the provision of car parking, toilets, waymarked routes and the information posted on the NRW website
- It was emphasised by others that there is a wide variety of resources available within the County with the range including mountain, river, canal, woodland and coastal walks.

- There was recognition amongst some stakeholder that good work had been done to make certain paths accessible to disabled people and some of these stakeholders stated that they had received positive feedback from disabled, older people, those with Learning Difficulties and, youth groups. For example, in terms of the Brecon Beacons National Park, the reservoir walks were mentioned as being well used and of value.
- By contrast a minority respondents indicated that while Monmouthshire’s outdoor walking provision is generally good, but where it falls down is in terms of the accessibility limitations that exist for some service user groups. Within this it was recognised that budgetary constraints are a particular challenge.

ii. Awareness and information sources

This topic also produced a diverse range of responses and the key themes are highlighted below:

- There is a perceived lack of awareness of the outdoor walking opportunities available caused by limitations in current information channels, for example:
 - Not everyone is computer literate and, for those who are, internet services in parts of the County are poor
 - Displays of leaflets placed in GP surgeries and other venues could be better organised by topic
- In essence, it was stated that a lack of information can make outdoor recreation appear ‘the unknown’ which can deter potential walkers
 - It was, however, considered by others that a lack of information is not a general problem and is minor by comparison to other issues such as an absence of motivation to take exercise
- Solutions to the perceived information shortfall included:
 - More leaflets promoting what is available placed in prominent community venues
 - Marketing initiatives using TV & radio – for example via programmes such as ‘The Walking Weatherman’ programme on Welsh TV
 - Better maps or DVDs highlighting the features of walks
 - A marketing campaign across village newsletters/magazines
- One respondent emphasised that disabled people represent a broad church which can make it difficult to cater for their respective needs in terms of information giving
 - However, it was added that some trail guides for walks for disabled people have been produced, e.g. for the Monmouthshire & Brecon canal, rail line walks and guides for riverside walks in the Wye Valley
- Several respondents mentioned ways of overcoming some of the issues mentioned above, and these included:
 - A recent programme of facilitating walks for groups who did not use the countryside had proven very successful. In this instance, when engaging with people from BME communities and disadvantaged backgrounds, service users responded well to the concept of exercise after accessing some of the outdoor walking opportunities available.

iii. Accessing resources

The key themes that emerged on this topic are as follows:

- Two main factors were identified as hindering accessibility, i.e. 1) terrain and 2) stiles and gates. While the first issue is to some extent a given, for the second the landowners hold sway because they look for solutions that are ‘stock proof’ as they are liable for the problems that can occur if their livestock strays on public roads

- As a result, stiles tend to be the preferred solution and a further reason mentioned as supporting this is a tendency among the public to leave field gates open

- Accessibility can also be an issue if people rely on public transport and this can be a particularly challenging problem for disabled people
- As with many other rural areas public transport services are generally perceived as being poor in the County. However, MCC does run a community transport scheme called Grass Routes which provides minibuses for hire. However, our research has shown that there are positive and negative views on the effectiveness of this service
- There was a view that accessibility and general maintenance for many outdoor walks is good, apart from ‘the odd broken stile’. However, it was frequently mentioned that a general lack of transport to out of town walking opportunities represents a major accessibility challenge for many people
 - This said, physical accessibility considerations were seen by some respondents as being only one contributory factor deterring outdoor walking. In this regard, it was suggested that often low confidence levels about using the countryside can be an impediment to making the first moves to accessing outdoor exercise opportunities.

Note: the above view about confidence levels can naturally point to the value of walking groups such as those within the County’s FIT4life programme where there are trained walk leaders who undertake risk assessments in terms of matching walks to the capabilities of group members. Also valued is the companionship that develops within these groups, something particularly appreciated, among those who live alone and would not walk by themselves.

iv. Barriers to accessing resources

As might be expected a wide range of opinions arose during the consultation with stakeholders. The key themes to emerge in this area are highlighted below:

Physical Barriers

- There was a clear view that inadequate transport services present the most significant accessibility barrier overall to service users and, of importance to disabled groups, public transport buses will only take one wheelchair at a time
- However, it was accepted that in general terms accessibility is good for the fit and for those with sensory impairments who can be led. Nevertheless, this is often not the case for wheelchair users because of the design of ‘kissing gates’ and stiles and unsuitable pathway surfaces
- It was also accepted that budgetary challenges mean that not all suitable routes can be made fully accessible. It was also stated that careful targeting should be used in allocating scarce resources.
- Additionally, it was emphasised that stiles don’t just represent barriers for the disabled, they affect many other groups, e.g. older people, parents with young children and those unused to climbing obstacles. However, as stated above landowners are generally in favour of stiles because they are ‘stock proof’
- Other views concerning barriers that can make entire routes unusable included:
 - Obstructed, challenging or damaged stiles
 - Missing or damaged footbridges across fast flowing streams
 - Footpath obstructions erected by farmers and landowners

- It was also stressed that physical barriers are an inherent feature of Monmouthshire's historic towns. However, overcoming these is often dependent on the confidence and capabilities of service users
- It was emphasised that different groups face specific challenges in terms of barriers, for example:
 - For the visually impaired and the older population minimising risk is a major consideration
 - For wheelchair users country pathways need flat hard surfaces with gates that are wide enough and can be easily opened by the user

Of note: it was suggested that the current design of 'kissing gates' used is not suitable for wheelchair users, although variations with sufficient mobility space are available

- A major barrier faced by some service users is the lack of toilet facilities, particularly in small villages along walking routes
- In terms of forming walking groups for people with lower capabilities the point was made that there should be more effective signposting from the National Exercise Referral Scheme to 'FIT4life' walking groups, a move that could support the formation of additional groups
- In terms of pathway characteristics and opportunities it was suggested that there should be:
 - Dedicated bike trails
 - Shorter routes for disabled people
 - Innovative solutions to encourage younger people to take exercise
- Inadequate transport services to and from walks, sufficient car parking and the availability of toilets on site represent barriers for some Groups who could possibly otherwise use the resources.

Non-physical barriers

- An important reflection that arose during the consultation was that not all barriers are physical in nature. For example, it was mentioned that:
 - A lack of motivation (inertia) can be an issue
 - The perception that the outdoors can be a threatening place (e.g. the thought of sharing space with livestock). This can be a particular challenge for wheelchair users on routes when they find themselves looking up at cattle
 - The cost of reaching sites
 - The time it takes to reach a suitable walk
 - Concerns about reaching local walks, i.e. using narrow country roads to reach footpaths can be dangerous
- In terms of inclination, it was mentioned that the desire to use walks is often there but where barriers are perceived to be great people will find a reason not to follow through and try the outdoor routes available to them
- It was also perceived by some respondents that local people don't always appreciate what they have available to them in terms of the countryside and often parents do not set a good example by taking their children to walk routes available there
- A stakeholder remarked that the lack of use of outdoor resources is a question of inclination and this comes down from parents, often. It was added that Monmouthshire is 'a bit behind' in terms of having available, sustainable activities, although individual Geocaching and cycling events have helped. What this respondent would like to see offered in terms of a sustainable 'product' is a programme of Park Runs (over 2.5 to 5.0 km) but, so far, suitable venues have not been found.

v. Aspirations

Asked about the future, stakeholders offered the following views and suggested areas for action:

- All sections of society should be involved in a debate on this outdoor resources topic. However, it is not just down to the Council or, for example, the Local Service Board (LSB). It should also involve executives from Monmouthshire's public service organisations, but this would need pushing to gain their buy-in and support
- There is a need to sell the benefits of outdoor walking for those who don't currently participate. There is a need to think carefully how to raise awareness and influence people to take advantage of what is available and suitable for them
- Monmouthshire County Council should:
 - Install and maintain toilet facilities in more locations
 - Work effectively with walking groups to repair damaged stiles
 - Replace stiles with metal kissing gates where possible
 - Replace missing and damaged waymarks and footbridges
 - Take prompt action to remove obstructions to public footpaths
 - At the same time members of walking groups should continue to:
 - Remove natural obstructions such as brambles when assessing a walking route
 - Notify MCC of obstructions
- Natural Resources Wales and other managers of Access Land should work to provide high quality facilities for walkers and cyclists suitable for a wide range of abilities and commit to maintain them to a standard where they can be safely enjoyed by all users
- Work should be undertaken to establish links with local communities close to villages and towns and involve landowners, schools and communities. It was noted that this approach has been tried in Raglan where the actions undertaken included:
 - Identifying and promoting their 'Healthy Footsteps Route'
 - Taking out stiles
 - Labelling gates
 - Providing 'Banana & Apple' seats for children
 - Arranging Charity walks
 - Gaining permission from landowners to go across fields rather than use a busy road

Note: In essence: the community takes ownership of the footpath and, for example:

- *Become path care volunteers*
- *Clear brambles with secateurs*
- *Report fallen trees and other hazards.*

4 Outcomes of Consultation with Service User Groups

This key element of the research undertaken involved engagement, face-to-face, with groups of walkers who regularly use a range of walks in their localities as summarised in 4.1 and 4.2 below. However, in terms of engaging with respondents who do not currently belong to walking groups recruitment presented a significant challenge. For example, a leading RSL in Monmouthshire undertook to assist with this through a number of measures, i.e., by circulating Ridgeway's news release through their social media channel and, in their residents' magazine. Additionally, staff who work closely with the Association's Residents' Panel and Residents'

Disability Group undertook to encourage respondents to come forward. Unfortunately, these initiatives did not produce sufficient interest in joining a discussion group.



4.1 FIT4life Walking Groups

The above represent well established outdoor walking opportunities, formed under the guidance of the County's Exercise Referral Scheme and are part of the *Let's Walk Cymru* programme for those wishing to improve their health and wellbeing through outdoor exercise within regular walking groups. Importantly these groups each have their own trained leaders who carry out risk assessments and safety measures generally. This includes matching the suitability of walk programmes in terms of members' capabilities and factors such as the condition of stiles / gates / paths and seasonal weather.

There are four FIT4life groups in Monmouthshire, one in each of the four towns with leisure centres, i.e. Abergavenny, Monmouth, Caldicot and Chepstow. Groups meet one day a week at these centres for a mutually agreed walk, either starting from the town or from another point reached by car-sharing. Overall there appeared to be no lack of motivation among the walkers present and as mentioned in the outcomes below it was the companionship gained from being part of a regular walking group that was especially valued by members. As an extension to the social side of walking it was noted that members made contributions on a regular basis to fund events such as Christmas Lunches and birthday celebrations.

Contact with the four groups was facilitated by MCC's Exercise Referral Co-ordinator and it was agreed that Ridgeway would join in on a walk with each group to gain an appreciation of the range of routes undertaken and to hear views along the way from a group leader and service user perspective. On the day, each group comprised between 12 and 14 members and there were generally slightly more females compared with males. By observation ages ranged from the mid/late 60s to 80+. In terms of capabilities the majority of health conditions revealed by members concerned breathing and heart related issues and in a few cases members needed one or two walking poles to complete the walk.

As for the walks, themselves, these included:

- A route from Skenfrith along the Monnow Valley (Abergavenny)
 - This route had a significant number of wooden stiles
- Brockweir – from Tintern Old Station (Caldicot)
 - In general, it was a well-defined walking route with short hill sections which were rough underfoot
- Whitestone - part of the Wye Valley walk (Chepstow)
 - This was a very well-defined route parts of which, used narrow public roads – there were no physical barriers in the form of stiles
- A circuit from Monmouth town.
 - This was a 1.5 mile loop circuit path starting in the town centre and is understood to be typical of the range of walks used by this group.

The key themes that emerged from the above exercise are given below.

FIT4life Group Consultation Outcomes

- **The range of resources:**
 - From conversations with the groups there was a consensus view that there is a good range of walks available to suit members’ respective fitness aspirations and capabilities:
 - In one case, however, the point was made that even more routes could be available for them if the stiles currently present are replaced by ‘kissing gates’ to resolve what are currently accessibility barriers
- **The benefits:**
 - Beyond the enjoyment and health advantages gained through walking the other benefit to emerge as being particularly valued by most members, many of whom live alone, is the companionship and social interaction that has developed within their groups
 - It also appeared that, overall, this factor has a strong bearing on group sustainability

‘Exercise can reduce your risk of major illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer by up to 50% and lower your risk of early death by up to 30%.’ Source: NHS livewell
- **Sustaining walking groups – new initiatives:**
 - In one case a point raised was that a regular flow of new members is needed for sustainability and, potentially, the formation of additional FIT4life walking groups
 - It was added that, currently, a majority of group members join through hearing about the opportunity via word of mouth and that more could be done by the County’s Exercise Referral Scheme in signposting people to outdoor fitness groups and ramping up the promotion of available opportunities

Of note, in terms of the above, a new initiative undertaken from within one walking group has involved the design and production of a leaflet summarising their Fit4Life programme and providing contact details for further information: The aim is to place this leaflet in prominent positions to catch the public’s eye. This said, it was emphasised that for progress wider marketing channels should be developed, given that resources for this can be found.

4.2 A Mixed Disability Discussion Group - Adults

This consultation event was arranged by the Monmouthshire Disablement Association. The original aim was to gather around 12 respondents drawn from: a visually impaired group; a wheelchair users group and an organisation who assist young people with learning and other difficulties. However, as it turned out, only 5 respondents were able to attend, i.e.:

- A blind person who had recently acquired a new guide dog (the guide dog trainer accompanied her)
- A wheelchair user with MS
- A person with significant physical disabilities who relied on a rollator mobility frame
- A person with the condition ME
- A keen walker with breathing difficulties.

The discussions that followed were moderated using a guide broadly similar to the one used for stakeholder consultation. The respondents also took the opportunity of highlighting issues of particular significance to their individual circumstances in terms of accessing pathways. The key points that arose are summarised below.

Disability Group Discussion Outcomes

- More effort is needed to encourage disabled people to take outdoor exercise since a lot of energy is required for them to cope with their everyday lives and this is often not fully understood
- There should be more communication from the outset with disabled people when improvements to outdoor paths are planned
 - The aim here is to ensure that their views and practical needs are taken into account
- Better signage should be introduced for disabled people and, in particular, the partially sighted
- Weather and its effects can cause the disabled significant problems and using some paths can become dangerous for them due to slippery mud forming on surfaces
 - A review in this regard by the Council could help to identify measures that can be taken to resolve the issue through more appropriate path surfaces and associated drainage
- Steep inclines in towns emerged as creating accessibility problems, particularly for wheelchair users
- Cyclists can be a problem on all routes - they can frighten disabled people as many don't use bells and cycle past at speed
 - Also, mountain bikes erode paths and can make them dangerous
 - Dedicated cycle routes could help in the above respects
- Limited transport services to the countryside pose problems for disabled people and, once there, access for wheelchair users in particular is often limited:
 - One example mentioned was that buses used to run up to the Brecon Beacons National Park but this service has since ended through lack of funds
- Zebra crossings should take account of side roads and the benefit of dropped kerbs to wheelchair users
 - However, for the blind, dropped kerbs represent a hazard since they remove the reference points needed for those who use a stick to guide themselves
- In terms of making improvements such as the ones identified above it was suggested that the Council concentrates on 'bridges and little else' and this 'soaks up the budget'.

4.3 A Mixed Disability Discussion Group – Young People

This opportunity was facilitated by the support team at Building Bridges, a Big Lottery-funded youth club project established in 2013 with the aim of helping young people aged between 14 and 25 with additional needs to socialise in a supportive setting and consider their work-related options. This consultation was undertaken among around 18 service users attending their regular weekly Building Bridges youth club evening. A range of disabilities was evident among the group and, given that most were busily engaged in indoor sports and socialising, it was agreed that the most effective approach to hearing views on outdoor walking was to seek discussions on an opportunity basis, guided by the duty Project Worker and his assistants.

The above approach worked and led to engagement with a fair cross-section of the disability group plus two of the younger volunteers present. As a basis, after a preamble, the following questions were used to seek feedback:

- Do you take part in outdoor walking, either as part of a regular group activity or on an informal basis?
- If you do take part, what do you think about the kind and quality of outdoor walking routes available generally and particularly in your local area?
 - Here we're thinking about what works well in terms of getting to and undertaking a variety walks or if, for example, transport can be a problem, or if there are any particular aspects that make the walks difficult to do, for example stiles or rough ground?
- If you don't take part in outdoor walking are there any main reasons why?
 - For example, do you prefer to spend your leisure time in other ways?
 - Or do you feel that there is a lack of walking opportunities arranged for younger people?
 - Or do you just feel that outdoor walking isn't for you?
 - But in general what things do you think could be done to attract more younger people to take part in regular outdoor exercise?
- Are there any other points you'd like to raise?

Discussion Feedback

- Several service users said that they walk regularly but not on an organised group basis. In these cases the arrangements were to walk with a friend from the youth club or a relative or, in one case, the individual's Personal Assistant
- In terms of the kind of walks undertaken two particular examples were identified as being valued, one being the route to Eagles Nest and the views from there over the Wye Valley; the other being the Devil's Pulpit walk from Brockweir
- However, a range of general views emerged about the accessibility and suitability of walking opportunities known to respondents, for example:
 - Transport to and from walks was not generally regarded as a problem
 - Similarly, stiles and gates were not seen as representing barriers
 - However, one respondent felt strongly that the poor condition of pathway surfaces on walks, particularly in and around Usk, was a distinct barrier to use. In this case it was added that limited information served to restrict the range of walks that could be considered

- For another respondent key reasons limiting walking are the barriers of unchecked brambles and overgrown pathways
- One other potential barrier identified was ‘Parents!’ – here the respondent explained that his parents ‘always worry’ when he plans to walk
- Among those who said they did not engage in outdoor walking the main reasons identified were:
 - The activity is viewed as something for adults and not a young persons’ thing
 - It is not clear what is involved and what is available
 - Time is limited because of school and if you also have a weekend job
- The question about what could make walking appeal to more younger people produced the following ideas:
 - Make use of social media channels to provide information and encourage involvement
 - Offer Pokemon Go walks (Pokemon Go has been recently updated)
 - A regular programme of Geocaching events
 - Sponsored Walks – with specific themes – e.g. a ‘Onesie Walk’.

5 Conclusions & Recommendations



Overview

The consultation undertaken with stakeholders and service users for this project captured a comprehensive range of views on the series of discussion topics adopted for the work (see Appendix I for the discussion guide used). The key themes that emerged are set out in Sections 3 and 4 above.

As can be seen these findings identified some outdoor walking arrangements that work smoothly, notably those involving established groups with trained leaders. At the same time a range factors that represent barriers for current and potential service users were emphasised by other consultation respondents. Conclusions and recommendations relating to these areas are given below.

However, an overarching conclusion that can be drawn from the consultation evidence base is that Monmouthshire is far from being 'joined up' in terms of addressing the barriers to and maximising the potential of its outdoor walking opportunities, notably to help combat declining physical activity among its population and attendant poor health through obesity. Put another way, while there are worthy individual initiatives in operation, there is currently no central structure – or finance – to promote cohesion in terms of plans and priorities that could lead to more effective outcomes.

Perhaps signalling a move in the above direction is that MCC is understood to be investigating the possibility of setting up an Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) comprising a charitable and business arm to promote and deliver services. If realised, an enterprise of this type could provide focus for a rolling marketing campaign perhaps using the press, radio and TV to sell the benefits of outdoor exercise through local features and case studies. Importantly, a more commercial style operation should be able to generate surpluses and opportunities to access external grants which could perhaps fund improved accessibility and maintenance levels across

the County's rights of way. These aims could also involve a range of partnerships and agendas to, for example, create active play facilities for younger people and host 'Living Well' themed projects, implemented using existing support and health services to motivate disadvantaged groups and the wider public to be more 'health literate' and to join in on outdoor exercise, perhaps for the first time.

As things stand, however, this research project highlighted potential areas for improvement that could be considered for action in the nearer term. These are discussed below under the following core headings:

- Information Sources and Awareness
- Further Measures to Increase Engagement
- Physical Barriers
- Non-Physical Barriers
- Issues with Transport
- Additional Research Possibilities

A. Information Sources and Awareness

Although there is a wide variety of outdoor walking routes available in Monmouthshire, from the consultation undertaken for this project it is concluded that information, in both printed and electronic forms, illustrating and promoting the opportunities available is limited and often unseen by the public. This does not seek to criticise individual information-giving initiatives which in themselves are worthy. Rather, the intention is to highlight the need for a more co-ordinated approach to communications. It is therefore **recommended** that MCC considers a forum to clarify the current extent of information sources and consider options and actions to generally raise the profile of the County's outdoor walks product.

In terms of the above, the production of leaflets can be viewed as wasteful since they become outdated and can be lost amongst the profusion of other promotional literature in community venues. As a result of this MCC have moved towards more electronic media and this is a trend that will no doubt continue, perhaps in the form of partnerships to establish web-based platforms hosting information. However, while this direction may suit those who are computer literate and have a good internet signal it would work to exclude those who do not have or cannot use a computer, tablet or smart phone. In terms of addressing this gap it is **recommended** that consideration is given to developing a focused set of paper-based media for those not using on-line services and seeking community partnerships to help ensure that this material reaches the intended client groups. Additionally, consideration should be given to engaging with relevant organisations to ensure that appropriate hard copy material is made available to meet the needs of other minorities, e.g. those with visual impairment and those from ethnic groups.

Radio & TV can also play a useful role in promoting healthy walking and TV and Radio programmes can be used to illustrate the enjoyment and greater wellbeing that could be gained by those who currently lack the motivation to walk or have concerns about the countryside in terms of perceived physical hazards generally and sharing space with livestock. In this latter respect, it is **recommended** that consideration is given to seeking some form of exposure to help ease concerns – perhaps in the style of BBC’s *Sunday Country File* programme and BBC Radio 4’s *Open Country* which often showcase outdoor pursuits, undertaken by their presenters often including diverse range of groups.

B. Further Measures to Increase Engagement

From our research, there appears to be scope for wider measures to support greater interest and participation in outdoor walking. It is therefore **recommended** that the following possibilities are assessed within MCC and, as appropriate, pursued as potential partnerships:

- The identification of a methodology for setting up wider community led ‘Healthy Footsteps’ routes and easy to follow ‘step by step’ guidance utilising, for example, the related experience gained in Raglan. It is suggested that these groups would be ‘formal entities’ and so could apply for grants in their own right. This could be a ‘quick win’ if a working group was established to take the idea forward and publicise the approach to local communities.
- Work with other organisations to promote sponsored walks. For example, The British Heart Foundation website has relevant information on what is currently available and MCC could capitalise on this platform to encourage new walking opportunities in the County while at the same time supporting a worthwhile charity (see <https://www.bhf.org.uk/get-involved/events/walks-and-treks>).
- Identify and promote technology driven measures that would appeal to younger age groups. One possible approach could be to offer Geocaching programmes while surveys or discussion groups in schools and colleges could help identify what would make outdoor walking appear ‘cool’.
- Building on the MonDean Walking Festival concept and working widely in local areas to replicate similar events across the County.
- Investigating the scope to build on programmes of specialist walks to address people’s interests in, for example, wild flora, birds, fungi, butterflies
- Whilst there is an established programme for training leaders of the County’s FIT4life walking groups we understand there are other training schemes available. It may therefore be worthwhile to map these opportunities and consider how they can be better promoted to attract more prospective volunteers to help build capacity in the sector
- Another point related to the above that emerged during our research is that a more structured approach could be taken to signposting or even referring people from the Wales National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) to the FIT4life walking groups. Beyond offering a pathway to further health promoting exercise an added potential benefit

would be more candidates to help sustain current walking group memberships and form further groups using a similar model but catering for different ability levels and interests. This said, it is also noted that in some areas schemes known as ‘Social Prescribing’ have been set up where the GP refers patients directly to exercise and other activity opportunities and perhaps this model could represent a solution to the above referral gap if it was replicated more widely in Monmouthshire. As well as signposting people to activities with health benefits social prescribing has been shown to reduce social isolation and outcomes suggest that this works to reduce visits to GPs and hospital admissions, to the benefit of NHS budgets. For example, in Berkshire, ‘Reading Voluntary Action’ run such a scheme with referrals made by GPs, practice staff, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. Their website provides useful, detailed information about how the scheme is operated and those who can benefit from it (see <http://rva.org.uk/social-prescribing/>). In addition, a leaflet for potential users of the service can be found in Appendix 3 to this report.

C. Physical Barriers

Some features along walking routes were identified as limiting participation among service user groups, notably disabled people and those unused to climbing obstacles through age, mobility and/or health conditions. In the main the barriers mentioned were stiles/broken stiles, unsuitable pathway surfaces and, particularly for wheelchair users, ‘kissing gates’ with insufficient space to manoeuvre past the swinging gate element. The impression was also gained that there is a lack of co-ordination/funding to prioritise and resolve accessibility problems reported by walkers and a review of current practices is **recommended**.

D. Non-Physical Barriers

One main factor identified in this area by respondents is that many people lack the motivation to engage in outdoor walking and the reasons for this, beyond plain inertia, can be through limited or no experience of what is involved, together with concerns about the idea of being out in the countryside, perhaps in remote locations. Other suggested factors that may deter engagement in outdoor exercise involve the cost and time it can take getting to suitable routes. In terms of potential solutions, this topic is considered as part of ‘*Information Sources and Awareness*’ above.

E. Issues with Transport

For those who may be keen to walk but do not have transport or someone to drive them opportunities to reach countryside walks by public transport are severely limited. Additionally, these individuals are likely to be among society’s most disadvantaged and socially excluded groups and could arguably benefit most from outdoor activities. To help address transport issues MCC introduced a community transport scheme called Grass Routes. However, comments from some consultation respondents suggested that there are

drawbacks affecting the successful operation of this service, notably in terms of a maximum journey distance of 15 miles and because of difficulties in recruiting sufficient volunteer drivers, an issue that has been compounded by new regulations, including the requirement that volunteer drivers must be under the age of 70. Given the acknowledged value of community transport schemes a review of the Grass Routes service is **recommended** to establish the extent of any challenges faced and, if appropriate, the scope for solutions.

More generally on the Transport topic, we originally raised the possibility of setting up a public transport forum to evaluate the scope for some integration of local bus routes to offer improved access to walking opportunities. However, it was concluded that success would be unlikely given that previous attempts in this direction fell down on operational cost grounds, the impact of waning public support generally and, frequent changes of bus operators.

It therefore **recommended** that an approach with greater potential would involve supporting the development of local Community Car services operated with volunteer owner/drivers. An example here is the scheme recently set up by the Bridges Centre, Monmouth, for which there is an ambition for expansion, given external funding. This service is worthy of note here given its stated aim of providing '*...flexible transport for people who have difficulty accessing public transport or face barriers using taxi services or existing community transport services*'. Another potential avenue that has been suggested is to explore ways of enhancing the appeal of local walks to reduce the need/inclination to travel, an approach that could perhaps benefit from the wider improvements to travel routes and facilities for walkers and cyclists to be funded under the Wales Active Travel Act.

F. Additional Research Possibilities

It was recognised at the outset that arranging face-to-face meetings to hear views from hard to reach groups can be challenging and, for this project, we have experienced difficulties in this direction, due in part, to the short timeframe available to undertake the field research. Our approach was to seek a series of discussion events, however, success was limited to the meeting with a mixed disability group summarised in Section 4 above. It is therefore **recommended** that a combination of postal and internet-based surveys are carried out with, for example, the visually impaired and the partially / profoundly deaf. In addition, links should be made with charities / community groups to involve members from, for example, the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research and The Bridges Monmouth.

Additionally, as noted above, it is recognised that obesity among younger people is a growing challenge, although we understand that where groups have been set up to take school children on walks these have proven successful. It is therefore **recommended** that contacts are made with both primary/secondary schools and within further education to establish views on using the countryside for walks and recreation and how pupils and their families could be encouraged to do more.

Appendix I – Core Discussion Guide

MCC Outdoor Disability & Health Assessment Initiative –Discussion Guide

INTRODUCTIONS

The Council have commissioned Ridgeway to undertake research to evaluate the opportunities available in the County for disabled people - and others who don't use the outdoors - to gain health benefits and enjoyment of outdoor walking and recreation.

Importantly, we are consulting with a wide range of individuals and organisations across the County who can contribute views to our findings, including those concerning gaps in recreational activities and any barriers to accessing current opportunities.

I'd therefore welcome your thoughts on a range of topics and please rest assured that none of the views you express will be attributable to you. i.e. CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS – GUIDED BY MRS CODE OF CONDUCT

Respondent Name:	Title:
Organisation Name:	Tel No:
Organisation Address:	
Date of interview:	
Email address:	
What are your views on the nature of outdoor resources available to the people of Monmouthshire? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probe for a countywide perception and then local areas 	
What are your views on the accessibility of these outdoor resources? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider Transport, parking, physical barriers etc. 	
What are your views on the suitability of these outdoor resources? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider are they the right thing in the right place for people of all kinds of groups locally 	
What of the main reasons in your opinion why the resources are not used more by people in general? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider physical barriers, lack of awareness, social barriers, lack of inclination, lack of confidence, 	
What of the main reasons in your opinion why the resources are not used more by people with disabilities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider physical barriers, lack of awareness, social barriers, lack of inclination, lack of confidence, 	
You have highlighted the following GAPS and BARRIERS	
GAPS	BARRIERS

<i>Summary from above:</i>	<i>Summary from above:</i>
How do you feel these can be addressed?	
Solutions to GAPS	Solutions to BARRIERS
Thinking about the answers you have given - If there was one thing that could radically bring people of all backgrounds to make more use of the outdoor resources available in MCC what would it be?	
What aspirations do you feel that the community should have for the future in terms of the provision of outdoor resources?	
As appropriate ask about prospects for group discussions - e.g. with existing/potential service users	
Are there any other points you would like to raise?	

Thank and Close

Appendix ii – Project Participants

Over 50 organisations were contacted and invited to participate in this project and a full list of the organisations who responded and took part is shown in the table below with the main contact engaged with. Additionally, a significant number of individuals were also interviewed during the various service user activities in which Ridgeway participated.

Organisation	Contact Name
Abergavenny - walking the way to health	Liz Barnes
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	Julian Atkins
CAIR The Monmouthshire Disablement Association	Jenny Barnes
Chepstow walkers welcome & Walking for Health	Helen Kenneally
Crickhowell U3A	Gerda Fewster
Disability Sport Wales Officer	Mark Foster
Disability Wales	Rhiannon Hicks
Green Infrastructure and Countryside manager, Monmouthshire County Council	Matthew Lewis
Gwent Association for the Blind/ gelligaer group	Keith Donovan
Gwent Outdoor Centre - Gilwern	Ian Kennett
Head Warden (Events, Education and community projects)	Mark Langley
Lower Wye Ramblers	Mr Thomas
LSB (Local Service Board) Development Manager	Sharran Lloyd
Melin	Michelle Brewer
MHA	Natasha Jones
Monmouthshire Exercise Referral Co-ordinator & FIT4life walking group leads (all four towns)	James Cook
Monmouthshire Voices	Pennie Walker
National Exercise Referral Scheme	Nicholas John
North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity, Abergavenny	Penny Nurse
Principal Countryside Access Officer	Ruth Rourke
Public Health Wales/ Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board	Gemma Burrows
Riding for the Disabled	Ed Bracher
Rights of Way Officer, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	Eifion Jones
Salvation Army Abergavenny	Craig Oliver/Sarah Oliver
U3A Caldicot and District	Mrs Ford
Whole Place Manager - nominated by Sharran Lloyd	Debbie McCarty

Appendix iii – Social Prescribing Leaflet



The graphic features a large stylized number '4' in blue and purple. In the top right corner is the logo for 'READING VOLUNTARY ACTION' with a green cross icon. The main title 'Social Prescribing' is in white on a blue background, with the subtitle 'Linking you with community activities to improve your health and wellbeing' below it. At the bottom is a photograph of two women standing outdoors in front of a brick building.

READING VOLUNTARY ACTION

Social Prescribing

Linking you with community activities to improve your health and wellbeing



A photograph of two women standing outdoors in front of a brick building. The woman on the left is older, with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a purple top. The woman on the right is younger, with dark hair, wearing a blue floral patterned top. Both are smiling at the camera.

How can social prescribing help me?

Social Prescribing could help if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Feeling socially isolated/looking for more social contact
- Wanting to improve physical health
- Lacking confidence
- Needing to find some practical support and information to improve your situation



Linking you with community activities to improve your health and wellbeing

Bill's story

Bill has been feeling depressed since his wife died (he was her full-time carer). He is prescribed an anti-depressant but would like to get out of the house and to regain some purpose in his life.

The Social Prescriber has the time and skills to help Bill find a range of activities and services available in the local community.

For Bill this might be:

- a health walk for exercise, fresh air and company,
- joining the local Men's Shed or Timebank to share his skills with others or
- being put in touch with Cruse Bereavement for some emotional support.



What happens next?

Once your GP has made a referral, you can contact us by phone or email. (The full details are overleaf) We will arrange a time to see you at your doctor's surgery.

The first appointment with a Social Prescriber will last around an hour. You will be encouraged to look at things you would like to change using a simple tool called the Wellbeing Star.

This can help you identify areas in your life where local activities and support could help you feel better, more confident or more able to manage a medical condition.

The wellbeing star helps to indicate where you are in your life and the areas to work on such as self-esteem

"It was good to find a non-medical person that I could talk to and explore ideas with. She came up with some suggestions and I was encouraged to try some activities that I had stopped doing."



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Appendix 3



Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) Condition of the Network and Opportunities Assessment Report 2017/18

VERSION 3 final (14/12/2018)

Ruth Rourke Principal Countryside Access Manager

Countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk

This document is available in Welsh and alternative format on request.

1 CONTENTS

Title	Page
2.0 Introduction	3-5
2.1 Aims and Objectives	3
2.2 Production of Assessment	4
3.0 What is Monmouthshire Like?	5-7
4.0 What Countryside Access Provision is there and What Opportunities does it provide?	8-15
4.1 Public Rights of Way	8-11
4.2 Permissive walking and horse riding routes	11
4.3 Horse Riding and Carriage Drivers	11
4.4 Countryside Sites, Green and Blue Spaces	11-12
4.5 Common Land and Village Greens	12
4.6 Open Access Land	12
4.7 Woodlands	12-13
4.8 Outdoor Education	13
4.9 Cycling	13-14
4.10 Running	14
4.11 Watersports	14
4.12 Agri Environment Schemes	14
4.13 Other types of existing access	15
5.0 Extent to which the rights of way and other access provision meets present and future use	16-21
5.1 Public Rights of Way	16
5.2 Mobility/Health	16
5.3 Cycling	16
5.4 Horse Riding and Carriage Driving	16-17
5.5 Open Space	17-19
5.6 Participation Rates	19-21
5.6.1 Barriers	21
6.0 Other Issues affecting countryside access in Monmouthshire	22 – 24
6.1 Climate Change	22
6.2 Fly-tipping	23
6.3 Agriculture & BREXIT	23
6.4 Development Pressures	23
6.5 Quality of Life/ Connection to Landscape & Biodiversity	23-24
7.0 The Condition of the Rights of Way Network and its Record	25-40
7.1 Resources	25-26
7.2 The Definitive Map and Statement	27
7.2.1 Accessibility and up-to-date Definitive Map & Statement	27
7.2.2 Registers/Land Charges	28
7.2.3 Planning Applications	29-30
7.2.4 Legal Orders	30
7.3 The Condition of the Network – Maintenance & Enforcement	30-38
7.3.1 Signage	32-33
7.3.2 Surface Vegetation	33
7.3.3 Stiles & Gates	33
7.4.4 Bridges	35-37
7.3.5 Enforcement	37

7.3.6 Volunteering	38
8.0 Promotion & Economic Benefits	39-40
9.0 Opportunities to Contribute to Other Plans such as Active Travel	41-50
9.1 The Well Being & Future Generations Act 2015	41
9.2 Active Travel (Wales) Act	42-43
9.3 Environment Strategy 4 Wales	43
9.4 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016	45
9.5 The Equality Act 2010	45
9.6 Climbing Higher (2005) and Climbing Higher (2006)	46
9.7 Creating an Active Wales 2009	46-47
9.8 Planning Policy Wales	47
9.9 Outdoor recreation and Access Enabling Plan 2015-2020	47-48
9.10 Monmouthshire Corporate Plan 2017 – 2020	48
9.11 Green Infrastructure (GI)	48-49
9.14 Severn Estuary Strategy 2015-2020	49
9.15 WVAONB Management Plan 2015 -2020	49-50
9.16 Brecon Beacons National Park Plans	50
10.0 Glossary	51
11.0 Bibliography	52-53

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Monmouthshire County Council approved the current Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) on 3rd October 2007. This plan is the means by which Monmouthshire County Council identifies, prioritises and plans for countryside access service delivery and improvements to rights of way in the county. Legislation now requires that we review the plan and publish another.

Guidance from Welsh Government on reviewing RoWIPs is that **the new RoWIP should be expanded to cover cycle ways, access land and other provision which is important in our area. In addition guidance says this time we must include within Monmouthshire's RoWIP all of the area in Monmouthshire that falls within the Brecon Beacons National Park.**

This assessment report covers the following topics:

- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and enjoyment of the county.
- An assessment of the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public.
- The condition of the rights of way network and its record (Definitive Map and Statement)
- An evaluation of the degree to which the current RoWIP has been delivered.
- Resources available to meet people's needs
- Cycling and opportunities to contribute to Active Travel objectives
- Opportunities to contribute Well-Being objectives
- Opportunities to contribute to The Equality Act 2010
- Opportunities to deliver to other plans and objectives

There are separate reports on the following:

- An assessment on the delivery of the previous RoWIP
- Policy Review
- Outdoor disability and health assessment by Ridgeway Consultants
- A report on the consultations carried out in this review

The Countryside Access Service provides a statutory service to the residents of Monmouthshire and its visitors. In order to provide a good service it is important to seek continual improvement. This assessment report aims to highlight the positive and negative issues facing the countryside service in order that we can ensure the new RoWIP is based on sound evidence and will meet the present and future needs of our residents and visitors.

The conclusions drawn from this report and the other assessments will be used to formulate the priorities and actions in the new ROWIP for Monmouthshire.

2.2 PRODUCTION OF ASSESSMENT

The approach adopted in developing this report has included:

- Information from the Public Service Board Well Being Assessment which was recently produced following extensive engagement with contributions from 1400 people in Monmouthshire. This also examined a wide range of evidence and data about what works now and future trends and issues.
- Wide consultation using publicity, questionnaire surveys, direct requests for information to a wide variety of consultees, individual and public meetings.
- A detailed analysis of the current condition of the Public rights of way (PROW) network with particular regard for maintenance and enforcement
- A detailed analysis of the current records regarding the Definitive Map and Statement.
- Identification of resources available and required
- Research of national, regional and local policies and plans
- Review of Countryside Access Management Policies and procedures
- Identification and review of other issues affecting countryside access
- Research and review of evidence regarding the present and future needs of the public (publications, websites, leaflets etc.).

3 WHAT IS MONMOUTHSHIRE LIKE?

Monmouthshire lies in the southeast corner of Wales, sharing its border with England to the east and North. It is a large rural county, covering 850 square kilometres of countryside with an estimated population of 92,476 half of which live in the main towns of Abergavenny, Monmouth, Usk, Caldicot and Chepstow.

The County has a distinctive identity arising from its location in the borderlands between England and Wales. Given its location the County is easily accessible from both the rest of Wales and England.

Monmouthshire's greatest asset is its landscape and natural environment. Monmouthshire has rich and diverse landscapes stretching from the flat open coast line of the Gwent Levels to the Black Mountains and World Heritage Site in the Brecon Beacons National Park and the picturesque river gorge of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Beauty. The breath-taking natural scenery here has enthralled visitors for centuries, including painters and poets from Turner to Wordsworth. The work undertaken to inform Monmouthshire's Well-Being Assessment shows the "pull" people feel to the county and the unparalleled access it can offer to awe- inspiring environments.

Monmouthshire has major biodiversity and nature conservation resources, a number of which are internationally or nationally recognised such as The Severn Estuary. This is designated as a Special Area for Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a RAMSAR site (wetland of international importance). The former Countryside Council for Wales, now Natural Resources Wales LANDMAP sets Monmouthshire's landscape baseline amongst the highest in Wales. The Landscape and countryside of Monmouthshire is therefore important in contributing not only to the health and well-being of Monmouthshire's residents but in supporting the tourist economy.

Welsh Government statistics for September 2016¹ show a small projected increase to the overall population in Monmouthshire to 92,500 (currently 89,000) in 2039. It shows an expected decrease in 0-15 year olds from 15,000 in 2014 to 14,200 in mid-2029. It also shows a decrease in the working age population of 15-65 from 57,000 to 52,500 in 2029. However the over 65 age population is expected to increase to 29,800 from 21,300 and over 85's to further increase from 2800 in 2014 to 5,200 in 2029.

Overall people in Monmouthshire live longer than elsewhere in Wales and are healthier. However Monmouthshire has an increasingly aged population. Daffodil Cymru projects an 87% increase in Monmouthshire's population aged 65 and over with dementia by 2035. This is above the increase projected across Wales of 72% and the second highest in Wales. There is also an increase in the number of children recorded as obese. These are trends which could put significant pressures on the local authority and health board.

Monmouthshire is reliant on the public sector and services for employment. Tourism accounts for 12.1% of jobs, higher than the Welsh average. Public administration,

¹ Open stats wales 29 sept 2016 SFR 129/2016

education and health sector accounts for the largest number of jobs, whilst retail, hotels and restaurants also accounts for 27.4% of jobs.

Tourist expenditure in 2015 amounted to £186.64M supporting 2,744 full-time jobs. As many as 82% of these jobs were generated directly through visitor expenditure, with the remaining 18% being supported through the supply chain and further rounds of expenditure within the economy including employee spend. Tourism spend supports the most employment in the accommodation and food & drink sectors. In addition, a significant number of self-employed people in Monmouthshire earned a living from tourism².

There is a reliance on car ownership due to the rural nature of the county. Public transport remains a problem with travel times on public transport considerably longer in parts of Monmouthshire than elsewhere in Wales. Poor public transport was highlighted as an issue by the Countryside Access and Disability Assessment report.

There is a strong sense of community and volunteering base in Monmouthshire. This is particularly seen within Countryside work and an expressed wish for volunteering opportunities to be expanded and supported. Estimates show Monmouthshire has the highest rates of volunteering in Wales.

The Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy 2018 has the vision:-

“Monmouthshire has a well-connected multifunctional green infrastructure network comprising high quality green spaces and links that offer many benefits for people and wildlife. The network’s integrity and connectivity is maintained, protected and enhanced in a planned and managed way, which recognises the interdependency and multi-functionality of landscape, heritage and biodiversity elements. Investment in green infrastructure underpins the County’s ongoing economic, social and environmental success by supporting sustainable growth, improving quality of life and place, delivering ecosystem services and tackling climate change. Monmouthshire is a green and healthy place to live, with an increasingly coherent and resilient ecological network of wildlife habitats, helping conserve biodiversity.”

Draft GI Strategy Objectives

- 1 Improve Health & wellbeing
- 2 Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience
- 3 Strengthen Landscape character & Distinctiveness
- 4 Increase Climate Change resilience
- 5 Support Sustainable Economic Development

The Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan summary of the objectives are:-

“In order to meet the Section 6 duty, Monmouthshire County Council shall undertake work and change current procedures to achieve the following objectives, so long as

² STEAM Survey 2015

it is consistent with the proper exercise of Monmouthshire County Council's functions as a Local Authority. The objectives have been developed to maintain and increase the resilience of our ecosystems by increasing scale and extent, connectivity, condition, diversity, and ability of ecosystems to adapt. All objectives apply to both marine and terrestrial habitats as required by the Act.

Objective 1 : Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

Objective 2 : Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action

Objective 3 : Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience

Objective 4 : Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

Objective 5 : Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Objective 6 : Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery

Objective 7 : Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review"

In seeking to achieve the ROWIP due consideration will be given to these duties and requirements the Council is obliged to deliver.

4 WHAT COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS PROVISION IS THERE AND WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES IT PROVIDE?

This section describes and assesses the opportunities available from local rights of way and other types of access provision to Monmouthshire's residents and visitors, for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and enjoyment of the countryside.

The Countryside Access provision in Monmouthshire is extensive. Monmouthshire is the gateway to the Brecon Beacons National Park and has canals, rivers, market towns, food festivals, castles, dark sky discovery sites, walks, horse riding routes, walking festivals, vineyards, mountains, gorges, caves, hills, Priors & abbeys, Wales Coast Path, paragliding, museums, paddle boarding experiences and more traditional past time sites like golf courses. There is therefore no shortage of opportunity to access the countryside in Monmouthshire for exercise and enjoyment. Information for visitors and residents can now be found on Monmouthshire's tourism website: www.visitmonmouthshire.com

Countryside access contributes to the delivery of well-being objectives as outlined in Chapter 9.

4.1 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)

"Local rights of way" is defined to include all rights of way shown on the Definitive Map, all other footpaths, bridleways and all cycle tracks at the side of carriage ways. The scope also extends to include access land and other provision which is important to our area.

The Definitive Map records minor highways known as public rights of way. These minor highways are protected by the same highway legislation as the wider highway network. However they are distinguished from other all-purpose highways in the way they are recorded and can be used. This is dependent on what their status is. PROW are broken down into four levels of status:

- Footpath, a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot only.
- Bridleway, a highway over which the public have a right of way on foot as well as equestrian and cycling rights.
- Byway open to all traffic (BOAT), a PROW open to all types of users, including use by horse drawn and motor vehicles, but which is mainly used for the purposes for which footpaths and bridleways are used.
- Restricted byway (RB), a new category of highway introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), over which the public have a right of way on foot, horseback, bicycle and horse-drawn vehicle. Under the CROW Act, all PROW which were designated as a Road Used as Public Path (often denoted as CRB's or CRF's on Monmouthshire's Definitive Map) were re-designated as Restricted Byways (unless one of the provisions in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act applies).

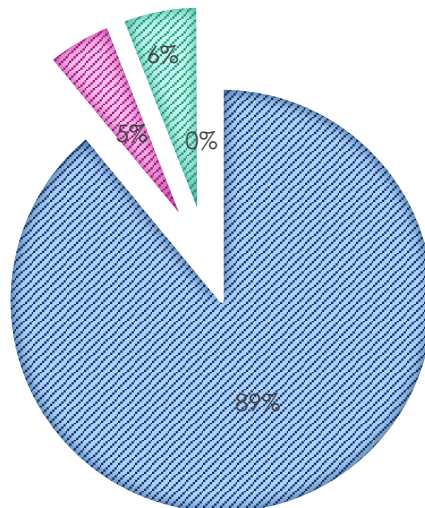
There are 2,164.83 kms of rights of way in the County of Monmouthshire and 1609.6kms³ of other public highways (roads). However an agreement is in place for the 505.78kms of public rights of way in the Brecon Beacons National Park to be maintained by that Authority. Monmouthshire pays an annual sum to the National Park Authority for this work.

Table 1 Extent of highway network in Monmouthshire (including BBNP) 2018

Status of Path	Km in Mon	Km in BBNP	Total km in all of Monmouthshire	Percentage of total type of RoW
Footpath	1490.118	437.188	1927.306	89%
Bridleway	82.454	26.862	109.316	5%
Restricted Byway	84.95	41.73	126.68	6%
Byway	1.528	0	1.528	0%
Total km	1,659.05	505.78	2164.83	
Total km of other Highways (A, B, and other roads shown on list of streets)			1609.6	
Total PROW in Wales			33,200km	6%

% OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

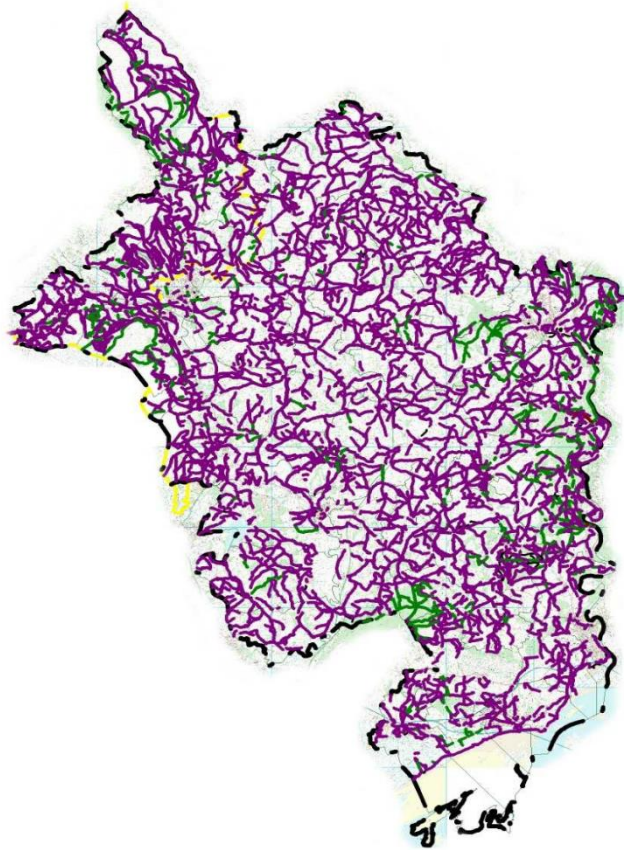
■ footpath ■ Bridleway ■ Restricted Byway ■ Byway



³ <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Transport/Roads/Lengths-and-Conditions/roadlength-by-typeofroad-year>

The amount of Bridleways has increased from 71km in 2007 to 82.45 km in 2017. This is probably because of legal changes to the Definitive Map and the Tread and Trot project.

Under the provisions of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 Public Rights of Way are recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement. The map



here and Table 1 shows the high density of rights of way that exist in Monmouthshire. It also shows the highly fragmented and limited bridleway, restricted byway and bridleway network. Footpaths are shown as purple lines and other routes in green.

There are however 459.3km of County Unclassified Roads "C" roads (many of which are not surfaced) which provide access to all types of users and are essential links to the rights of way network. They are particularly useful for cyclists, carriage drivers and horse riders.

Monmouthshire has many promoted routes but the most well-known are the Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, both of which attract grant funding

because of their status and importance to the regional and national economy of Wales.

The Wales Coast Path was opened in 2012. It is 870 miles long in all and a total of 2.8 million visitors walked the route in 12 months to June 2013. 14 miles, or 22km, of The Wales Coast Path runs from Chepstow to Magor. It is maintained by Monmouthshire County Council in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales, other local authorities and Welsh Government. The path is promoted by Welsh Government internationally and was voted by Lonely Planet as the top destination to visit in Wales.

The 870 miles of coast path links with Offa's Dyke Path National Trail to create a 1030 mile continuous walking route around the whole of Wales. The Wales Coast Path also links to other routes in Monmouthshire such as the Wye Valley Walk, Tewdrick's Trail and a whole host of smaller local circular routes.

The county is also well covered with five other promoted long distance routes, all with the exception of the Monnow Valley Walk are promoted by Monmouthshire County Council and or the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

1. The Wye Valley Walk
2. The Usk Valley Walk

3. Three Castles Walk
4. St Tewdricks Trail
5. The Beacons Way
6. The Monnow Valley Walk

256.4km of PROW are promoted routes. We also have a series of health walks and 30 pathcare walks which are locally promoted routes (see promotion and publicity).

There is opportunity for other walks to be developed. The Cambrian Way and Monmouthshire Way are routes where discussion is underway with individuals and the Ramblers Association to promote and manage the routes in the future. Local Groups are developing and maintaining circular walks.

4.2 PERMISSIVE WALKING AND HORSE RIDING ROUTES

In addition to public rights of way recorded on the Definitive Map there are also permissive paths this is where the landowner allows, by his consent, certain users to use a route on his land either as a footpath or bridleway. These are not that common and are not usually recorded but we are aware of 4,174m of permissive footpaths and 3,381m of permissive bridleways. A large percentage of the Usk Valley Walk and Wye Valley Walk are on permissive routes. The disadvantage of permissive routes is that they can be closed at any time and they are usually not maintainable at public expense.

4.3 HORSE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVERS

Despite the lack of bridleways, byways and restricted byways the county has some superb facilities for horse riders at the Broome Event Centre, Chepstow Race course and Coleg Gwent. There is also now a series of promoted bridleway routes known as the Tread and Trot Trails.

Horse drawn carriages are permitted on restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. Carriage drivers in Monmouthshire advise that they principally use quiet roads of which Monmouthshire has quite a few. There is opportunity to make more use of county unclassified roads as "quiet lanes" which would benefit more recreational users by looking at how these routes are signed, managed and promoted.

4.4 COUNTRYSIDE SITES, GREEN AND BLUE SPACES

Research shows that access to green space is important for the health and wellbeing of residents.

There are 11 Countryside Service sites including one country park (Caldicot Castle) in Monmouthshire which provide access for walkers to picnic, kite fly etc. Other county council small holdings also allow further countryside access opportunities.

Monmouthshire has 44 Historic Parks and Gardens, which have been identified as having a Special Historic Interest, covering 1,910 hectares.

There are 3 landscapes of "Outstanding Historic Interest" (namely parts of Blaenavon, the Gwent Levels and the Lower Wye Valley) –and one landscape of

Special Historic Interest, (the Clydach Gorge) within the Monmouthshire area identified by CADW in the Registers of Outstanding and Special Historic Interest In Wales.

To the east of the county The Wye Valley AONB is a popular tourist destination which attracts significant numbers of walkers, cyclists and day trippers for its scenic beauty, ecological, geological, historic and cultural attributes.

Chapter 4 looks at "Open Space" provision (parks, play areas, allotments etc.) in Monmouthshire and whether that provision needs improving.

4.5 COMMON LAND AND VILLAGE GREENS

Common land is owned, e.g. by a local council, privately or by the National Trust. There is normally a right to roam on foot over it. However some common land has different rights, so for example the commons in Glascoed can also be used for horse riding. There is an estimated 3,853.587 hectares of mainly rural commons in Monmouthshire. Additionally we have 24 village greens which can be used for sports and recreation, e.g. playing football or walking your dog. Many greens are privately owned and maintained by local community councils but some may be privately owned.

4.6 OPEN ACCESS LAND

Walking is still the most popular and growing form of recreation and the CROW Act 2000 has attempted to address this by introducing areas of designated "Open Access" land for enjoyment on foot.

Open Access land is defined as mountain, moor, heath, down land and common. In Monmouthshire (outside of BBNP) there is about 150 hectares of mainly rural commons which are designated as Open Access. In addition National Resources Wales (NRW) have dedicated 3,550ha of their woodlands as open access in Monmouthshire. Access Land is shown on Access Maps produced by Natural Resources Wales and is shown on their website. Access Land is also shown on some Ordnance Survey maps.

4.7 WOODLANDS

The Woods for People project created a UK wide inventory of accessible woodland and it is known from this, that in 2014, 43% of woods in Wales were publicly accessible. The Woodland Trust has undertaken a major analysis of woodland access provision and deficit across the UK. The project, named "Space for People" suggests that in 2016 23.6 % of the Welsh population live within 500 metres of a wood of 2 hectares or more and 80.6% live within 4 kilometres of a larger wood of 20 hectares or more⁴. The main activity undertaken in woodlands according to the Wales Outdoors Study is walking. There is however scope to extend other activities

⁴ Forestry Statistics 2017
<https://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forstats2017.nsf/0e01ca232ca463ed802570a60054c205!CreateDocument>

such as horse riding or cycling more formally over woodlands in Monmouthshire if landowners agree.

4.8 OUTDOOR EDUCATION

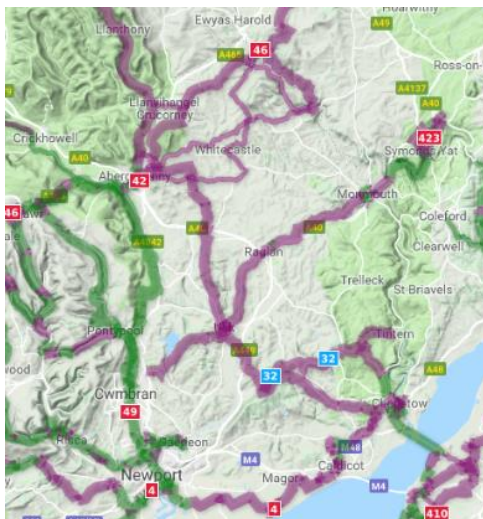
Monmouthshire has an outdoor education service with three sites at Gilwern, Talybont and Hilston Park. In Monmouthshire Gilwern Outdoor Centre can accommodate large groups of around 80 people and is set in 15 acres of grounds. There is a bouldering wall, climbing tower, woodland and large meadow for camping. As it is not far from Clydach Gorge it can also provide caving experiences.

Hilston Park in Monmouth is a listed country house just 10 minutes from the River Wye. It is also therefore ideal for people who like to canoe, fish or walk parts of the Wye Valley Walk. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail is also not far away.

Other private companies also offer opportunities to participate in caving, climbing, canoeing, kayaking, hill walking, camping, raft building, fishing and other adventure pursuits.

4.9 CYCLING

Cycling in Monmouthshire is very popular with lots of quiet lanes to follow. We have two of the long distance routes of the National Cycle Network starting in Chepstow: the Celtic Trail (220miles traversing the southern edge of Wales heading west across the Newport Transporter Bridge), and Lon Las Cymru (185 miles heading north through Brecon Beacons to Snowdonia). The map⁵ below shows the National Cycle routes available in Monmouthshire.



We are home to the prestigious Abergavenny Festival of cycling⁶, which includes on its programme family rides as well as events which provide the opportunity to watch professional riders, including the annual Velothon giving all the chance to ride the route of champions.

Monmouthshire is also home to “tumble” – a legendary 6km 10% gradient climb (listed as one of the greatest cycling climbs in Britain). In addition Sustrans have and are developing routes through Monmouthshire. The Peregrine Way between Wyesham (Monmouth) and Symonds Yat is popular and they are looking to extend this route to Redbrook. The cycle way from Llanfoist to Clydach has been completed and an extension is planned to link the Heads of The valley cycleway at Beynmawr. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal also provides a cycle route from Llanfoist to Goytre.

⁵ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map>

⁶ <https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/things-to-do/cycling-in-monmouthshire.aspx>

In 2014 a series of "Tread and Trot" routes were made available. These are multi-purpose mainly off road routes suitable for cyclists, horse riders and walkers.

All of the cycle routes in Monmouthshire can be downloaded at <https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/things-to-do/cycling-routes-in-monmouthshire.aspx>

4.10 RUNNING

Whether you enjoy a gentle jog or long distance events running is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and is becoming more and more popular. There are plenty of places where it is possible to run such as Country parks, village greens and commons, Open Access Land, footpaths, bridleways and byways, woodlands and nature reserves.

There are many organised running events in Monmouthshire but these all require permission from the landowners involved.

Parkrun has a popular parkrun at Rogiet Countryside Park that runs every weekend and the Severn Bridge parkrun has also recently started.

4.11 WATERSPORTS

Llandegfedd Reservoir operates a brand new water sports centre. It offers land and water based activities from team building, windsurfing, dinghy sailing, paddle boarding, kayaking, raft building and environmental studies.

Monmouth Canoe offer canoeing on the river Wye for families, youth and adult groups in Canadian canoes and single Kayaks.

Close to Monmouthshire is the National Diving and Activity Centre at Tidenham Quarry in Chepstow⁷. Here you can experience a complete SCUBA diving package for beginners through to professionals with speciality diving courses for both the sport diver and recreational diver. Depths range from 1-82m making this the deepest inland dive site in the UK.

4.12 AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES

63 farms in Monmouthshire were within the Tir Gofal agri-environmental scheme, which in many cases included additional permissive access. This scheme has now been replaced with Glastir which also includes the provision of permissive access. However it is not known how extensive this additional access is in Monmouthshire. Many permissive routes under Tir Gofal are known to still exist but these are not mapped. The Welsh Government promotes Glastir access on its website through a mapping system called Lle Map. This also shows the Wales Coast Path, National Trails and Open Access Land.

⁷

<https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1291730&rgn=Monmouthshire&catid=28&feature=1000>

4.13 OTHER TYPES OF EXISTING ACCESS

There are 100 scheduled ancient monuments in Monmouthshire including 8 castles, some of which are only accessible by public rights of way.

Other public and voluntary bodies provide access opportunities within the county. A true gem and a favourite for walkers, cyclists and nature lovers is the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. The navigable section is 35 miles long. This is managed by The Canal and Rivers Trust.

The National Trust look after mountains (Sugar Loaf & Skirrid), meadows, woodlands (St Marys Vale), waterfalls and traditional hill farms across Monmouthshire as well as a medieval castle (Skenfrith Castle) and a naval temple (The Kymyn). This not only allows for a diverse range of landscapes to be accessible but it also provides opportunities to understand and enjoy Monmouthshire's biodiversity, stories, heritage and culture. It also gives opportunities to volunteer.

A National Nature Reserve is a site which is protected and managed by Natural Resources Wales and is a great place for those who enjoy geology and or wildlife. You can find more information about the individual sites on their website. National Nature Reserves are places with some of the very finest examples of wildlife habitats and geological features.

Natural resources Wales manages three National Nature Reserves in Monmouthshire. These are:-

- Craig Cerrig Glesiad a Fan Frynych National Nature Reserve near Brecon (described "as a wild and craggy place home to some arctic survivors by NRW")
- Beacon View, Wye Valley near Monmouth (Recovering heathland and woodland with historic viewpoints across the Wye gorge and river, Bristol Channel and the Old Severn Bridge "Breath taking).
- Coed y Cerrig National Nature Reserve near Abergavenny

Natural Resources Wales have a free app "PlacesToGo" which can be downloaded on smart phones and shows all the walking routes on their managed land along with information on their recreation facilities.

Other accessible countryside sites are managed by Gwent Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and other public and voluntary sector land managers.

Geocaching is a treasure hunting game using maps and global positioning system (GPS) enabled devices. The aim is to navigate to a specific set of GPS co-ordinates and then attempt to find the Geocache hidden at that location. If you find a cache you can record your visit and swap treasures. There are lots of geocache routes in Monmouthshire. There are special coins hidden on Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and also on the Wales Coast Path. Some of Monmouthshire's sites and promoted routes like Offa's Dyke National Trail also offer geocache sites. The Geocaching Association of Great Britain has links to websites that list geocache sites.

5 EXTENT TO WHICH RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER ACCESS PROVISION MEETS PRESENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE USE

This chapter examines where there might be insufficient access provision in the County now or in the future, for whom and the reasons for any this.

5.1 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

As identified in 3.1 there is a high percentage of footpaths in Monmouthshire providing for Walkers. However the bridleway, byway and restricted byway network are limited and highly fragmented. This means that provision for horse riders, off road cyclists, carriage drivers and vehicular users is limited.

Overall the density of footpaths is extremely high, the only obvious gap in the footpath network is at the Hendre Estate where no public rights of way were registered at all. Llangdeffedd reservoir has recently opened up a permissive footpath around the reservoir which is extremely popular but this is not open all year round.

There is also a need for small footpath/bridleway creations where development takes place to create links into the existing network and there have been many requests for improvements to existing paths such as along the Wye Valley Walk from Monmouth to Rockfield Church so that it is easier for disabled people to access the route.

There is potential for old railways like the ones at Usk and Caldicot to become multi-purpose paths. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and Active Travel Maps should provide a means of recording information on routes for improvements.

5.2 MOBILITY/HEALTH

It is recognised that there is limited countryside access for those with mobility or health issues. This is discussed in more detail in the separate assessment by Ridgeway Consulting Limited entitled "Outdoor Disability and Health Assessment" and in the assessment reviewing policy.

5.3 CYCLING

Cycling is a growing activity both for events, professions riders and recreational riders. Increasingly families in particular are looking for multi-purpose routes on which to teach their children to ride bikes and to ride together safely. Opportunities exist through the Active Travel Plan to extend cycling and this is discussed in Chapter 7.

5.4 HORSE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING

The British Equestrian Trade Association's National Equestrian Survey 2015⁸ says there are 19 million equestrian consumers in Britain with a range of associated interests. This

⁸ <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/industry-information/market-information.php>

figure has remained fairly constant over the past 20 years. The economic value of the equestrian sector stands at £4.3 billion of consumer spending across a wide range of goods and services each year. This has increased from £3.8 billion in 2011. There has been a decline in regular riders, from 1.6 million in 2011 to 1.3 million in 2015. However, there has been significant growth in the number of riders aged between 16 and 24, rising from 368,000 in 2011 to 403,000 in 2015. An estimated 3 million people have taken a riding holiday in the past 12 months. Older riders, of 55 and over, are more likely to do this.

From these figures it can be seen that horse riding is still a popular activity for residents and tourists and important for the local economy. However Monmouthshire has more road accidents than other parts of South Wales and opportunities for off-road horse riding are limited. There is a recognised demand for longer off road rides and accommodation for horse and riders.

Carriage driving is limited in Monmouthshire as many of our restricted byways are too narrow for use. Carriage Drivers report that they use predominately use the county's smaller roads or private land.

5.5 OPEN SPACE

There are significant economic benefits to having greater access to green spaces. Proximity to high quality green space, like parks, increases property values by 2.6%-11.3%;¹⁰ and every £1 of public spend on green space projects levers in £4.20 of private sector investment, boosting regeneration.¹¹

Additionally there is evidence to show a disconnection from nature could be detrimental to health and well-being, educational outcomes and pro environmental behaviours⁹. It is particularly important that children have contact with the natural world. Some types of green space can provide provision for this interaction.

Access to the natural environment benefits people's mental and physical health and sense of well-being and contributes to the quality of life. The potential cost savings to the health service from improved access to green space are significant. For example, if every household in England were provided with good access to quality green space an estimated £2.1 billion in healthcare costs could be saved¹⁰.

Proximity of local green spaces in walkable distance has a positive effect on longevity regardless of social economic status or age according to a longitudinal study in Japan. This investigated the association between older people's longevity and the existence of nearby green spaces in which they could walk. The five year survival percentage of older people who lived in an area with walkable green spaces was significantly higher than that of people living in an area without such spaces¹¹.

⁹ Natural England, Connection to Nature First Edition 14 July 2016

¹⁰ Green dementia (a literature review of the benefits and barriers facing individuals living with dementia in accessing the natural environment and greenspace), Natural England 21 November 2013

¹¹ Green dementia

The former Countryside Council for Wales recommends that provision should be made of at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population according to a system of tiers into which sites of different size fit.

1. No person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace
2. There should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
3. There should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km;
4. There should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km

Cemeteries and church yards, countryside in the urban fringe, civic spaces, water, green corridors and accessible natural greenspace can be combined into one heading "Open space". This should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport, recreation and tourism, and can also act as a visual amenity, and may have conservation importance.

In December 2008 an audit¹² was carried out of all the open spaces within identified settlements in Monmouthshire, over a minimum size of 0.3hectares. A total of 560 spaces were visited and individually assessed. For specific details please contact countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk and request a copy of the "open Space audit" report.

Since this audit has been carried out a Greenspace study¹³ has also taken place. The outcomes of this report were intended to help better understanding of the Council's Greenspace resource when making decisions to improve both health and well being and planning policy leading to specific development control issues. The report shows that there is generally good greenspace provision within the settlements of Monmouthshire. It suggests that improved management for increasing biodiversity and improving recreational access could focus on issues such as :

1. "Improving management of playing fields and parklands to increase biodiversity value, through additional tree planting, or the creation of less intensively managed natural areas. Although overall such areas are small compared to the main greenspaces, they are likely to be much closer to where people live and perhaps of more immediate benefit
2. Improving woodland management, and increasing numbers of broadleaves within the woodland canopy, at the same time opening dense conifer woodland up for easier access
3. Improving footpath management and accessibility. There are many footpaths that are currently blocked, where access is restricted. There could be a focus on addressing these blockages, especially close to settlements and on circular routes beginning and ending within settlements, in order to improve accessibility on those routes most likely to be used and of benefit to urban populations.

¹² Monmouthshire County Council Open Space Study Final Report December 2008 Ashley Godfrey Associates

¹³ Monmouthshire Greenspace Study produced by Environment Systems September 2010


4. Given the importance of the footpath network around small settlements, more effort could be made to identify circular routes for local recreational use and, if necessary, consider means (such as additional permissive access) to extend this network where circular routes are currently lacking."

The Green Infrastructure Team within Countryside have just drafted and are currently consulting on a "Green Infrastructure Strategy". It sets out the Councils strategic framework for provision of GI in Monmouthshire. It identifies key priorities and strategic opportunities where restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of green features and functions could deliver the most significant benefits on a county wide basis and for key settlements where growth is planned.

Volume 2 of this strategy provides the Councils delivery plan for Green Infrastructure in Monmouthshire. It will include prioritised action plans for delivery of GI projects over the next 5 years and beyond.

5.6 PARTICIPATION RATES

While some rights of access have increased over the last decade, the Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey (Natural Resources Wales) suggests that the proportion of Welsh residents undertaking outdoor recreation frequently has remained fairly flat, at around 27%.



Some 60% of people living in Wales state they would like to visit the outdoors more often, with one of the barriers reported being 'a lack of suitable places to go'. In addition, the ways in which people use the countryside are changing with patterns of recreational behaviour indicating that people are increasingly taking part in more than one activity. When this is combined with a preference for convenient 'bite-sized' doorstep opportunities, it suggests that we need better local opportunities which allow a diverse range of activities¹.

The outdoor recreation survey for Wales 2016-17 says that overall participation in outdoor recreation is very high, with 81% of adults living in Wales taking part in one or more activity at least once in the last 12 months. When asked about leisure and cultural activities, half of Welsh residents aged 65 and over had visited the countryside in the past for weeks, 45% had visited the seaside or coast and 30% had visited a park or country park. Unfortunately the data is not available on a local authority level. However there are overall trends which are important.

When asked about their most recent visit to the outdoors 47% of adults had travelled less than a mile from home, with 30% of visits being to a local park. This suggests that **access to "doorstep opportunities" is an important factor for engagement in outdoor recreation for many people. However, people enjoy visiting a diversity of places. The results show that Wales's beaches, coast and sea are the second most**

commonly visited destination (19%), whilst many people enjoyed a visit to woodlands and forests (14%).

There are distinct gender differences in the types of places that people visited, with women much more likely than men to visit their local park or beach/coast; whilst men more likely to visit woodlands and forests, along with hills, mountains and moors.

Similarly, there are differences in age, with younger people more likely to visit local parks and older people to head for the coast.

Proximity also has a significant impact on the place that people visit, with those living in urban areas being more likely to visit their local park, whilst people living in rural areas are more likely to go to woodlands, hills and mountains and farmland.

The results of the survey suggest that are gender differences in participation in outdoor recreation. On the whole, men reported significantly more visits to the outdoors than women. The difference was particularly apparent for people aged 65-74; men in this age group reported on average more visits compared to women of this age.

People living in rural areas made more visits than those in urban areas.

Walking was the main activity undertaken by 72% of all adults in Wales during the last 12 months of 2016-17. Social recreation activities were also popular with nearly a third of people enjoying a picnic (31%), taking children to playground (31%) or taking part in informal games such as playing Frisbee (20%). The popularity of these activities reflects the importance of “easy to do” pursuits that require little if any specialist equipment, skills or facilities.

More “active” outdoor pursuits are also popular, with running (17%), road cycling (13%) and mountain biking (9%) being the most commonly undertaken activities.

Wildlife watching was also a commonly undertaken activity (16%), especially with elderly people over 65.

People have also taken part in a diversity of water based activities, including outdoor swimming (13%); fishing (6%), and non-motorised water sports (5%).

Activity	Percentage of adults taking part in last year
Walking	71.40%
Picnicking	31.30%
Taking children to play area outdoors	31.10%
Informal games (e.g. Frisbee or golf)	19.80%
None of these	19.50%
Running	16.90%
Wildlife watching	16.20%
Road cycling	13.00%
Swimming outdoors	12.60%
Off-road cycling or mountain biking	9.10%
Fishing	6.50%
Other water sports	4.80%

Rock climbing or caving	3.60%
Field sports (shooting / hunting)	3.50%
Horse riding	3.00%
Off-road driving or motorcycling	2.90%
Other outdoor activities (camping, beach visits and paintballing)	2.90%
Motorised water sports	1.50%
Don't know	0.20%

There were significant gender differences in the types of activities that people took part in, with women more likely than men to say they had taken children to playgrounds, or been for a picnic. In contrast men were much more likely to have taken part in virtually all active outdoor pursuits, particularly road cycling, mountain biking and fishing.

Fresh air and health and exercise were the most common reasons given for respondent's last visit. The next common responses were

- "for pleasure/enjoyment",
- to relax and unwind,
- to enjoy scenery and wildlife,
- exercise dog,
- entertain children,
- to spend time with friends/family
- for peace and quiet.

People's motivations for visits to the countryside is affected with genre. Men are more likely to be motivated by taking part in a hobby whilst women were more likely to want to spend time with family, friends or entertain children.

5.6.1 Barriers

However there are some significant gender and age related differences. For those over 65 the main barriers were old age (41%) and physical disability (34%). For younger adults (16-44) the main barrier was lack of time (57%). Equally women were more likely to cite physical disability and old age as their barrier, whilst for men it was lack of time.

For those reporting no visits in the survey the single most common reason was a perceived lack of free time (28%), whilst 24% cited physical disability, 19% health reasons and 19% old age. In contrast 2% said there was nowhere suitable for them to go and 1.7% said they didn't know where to go.

Respondents who reported not having made a visit to the outdoors in last 4 weeks the most common reason was bad weather (46%).¹⁴

¹⁴ www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

6 OTHER ISSUES AFFECTING COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

Although not required by guidance it is important that the full extent of issues affecting access is considered in order that strategies can be put in place to overcome them as they can have a knock on effect to the delivery of countryside access.

6.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change could accelerate the introduction of invasive species, pests and diseases leading to adverse impacts on native biodiversity and the landscape. Climate change is also likely to increase the risk of winter flooding and summer drought.

The Met Office's 4th annual State of the Climate¹ report confirms 2017 was the 5th warmest year in records dating back to 1910. There were 7 named storms in 2017. The central England Temperature Series shows that the 21st Century has so far been warmer than the previous three centuries. Sea levels around the UK have risen at a rate of approximately 1.4mm per year since the start of the 20th Century, equivalent to a rise of about 16cm. Long term this will have an impact on the Wales Coast Path, Wye Valley Walk and other rights of way.

Widespread deep snow events have been relatively rare in recent decades but notably 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2018 were exceptions. The most recent decade (2008-2017) saw 8% more annual average UK rainfall than in 1961-90.

2012 was the wettest year in 100 years and had a significant impact on the amount of work that could be delivered on the ground and the usability of the network, particularly on stretches of the Wales Coast Path. Increasingly we are challenged to provide alternative "wet weather" routes or other solutions to muddy or slippery surfaces. An increase in storm events has resulted in greater tree fall and land slips. In 2017 we had to increase the amount of grass cuts on all routes as the warm wet weather promoted grass growth quicker than normal.

The change in weather has resulted in an increase in the introduction of new crops and increased viability for new crops i.e. vineyards, along with new animals like wild boar, ostrich and Llamas. Changes in patterns of visitor numbers with increased usage throughout the year and particularly during the colder seasons of spring and autumn have also occurred.

This has all brought about challenges for the Countryside Access Team both in terms of management and enforcement but also in increased costs. Potentially working practices, materials used and resources may have to change. It should be noted the Green Infrastructure plan aims at tackling climate change.

6.2 FLY-TIPPING

The annual change in the number of incidents at local authority varies but Monmouthshire has seen one of the highest percentage increases of 37%¹⁵. This may be down to improved recording of incidents and being more pro-active. The number of fly tipping on highways has increased with the majority of incidents recorded on this type of land. Littering and fly-tipping used to be uncommon on rights of way. The growth of such irresponsible behaviour shows perhaps disconnection with the land, its use and value to others.

It is important that responsible behaviour and countryside code are still promoted.

6.3 AGRICULTURE AND BREXIT

The Welsh Government is currently consulting on farming and Brexit (<https://beta.gov.wales/support-welsh-farming-after-brexit>)

It is unknown at the current time how BREXIT will help or increase the challenges that farming brings. Anything that changes the economics of farming may lead to land use change and such change can have significant environmental and social impacts. However the current consultation proposes a new land management programme which would include a Public Goods Scheme. This recognises the value of improving the nation's health by increasing access to green spaces and rights of way. Tourism, together with heritage construction or maintenance generates twice as much GVA as the agriculture sector in Wales. Walking and other physical activities generate employment and reduce long term health costs. There is opportunity therefore to work better with land managers in Monmouthshire to provide long-term benefits for all.

Any new land management grant programme will take time to implement and it is thought that Wales will take a transitional approach from 2020 to 2025 allowing time for land managers to adapt to any new system. There may well be pilot projects for the public goods scheme and Monmouthshire needs to ensure it is well placed to take advantage of this.

6.4 DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

There is demand for new housing and development, which if it increases without more resources for monitoring and taking immediate enforcement, the number of obstructions on the rights of way network will continue to expand.

6.5 QUALITY OF LIFE /CONNECTION TO LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY

There has been a loss of local services including the closure of several village pubs and shops throughout Monmouthshire in the last few years. Despite the increased interest in local food production evidenced by the attendance at events such as

¹⁵ <http://open.statswales.gov.wales/dataset/envi003>

the Abergavenny Food Festival, less and less people in the countryside have any connection to the growing or producing of local produce.

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and the development of the Living Levels Landscape Partnership scheme have both evidenced the loss of connection with the natural environment and there is much that can be done to reconnect people and nature and their landscape. Many businesses are either directly or indirectly dependant on the landscape and access to it. However people are uncertain how they can positively contribute towards the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty of the area and what the role of the Council is in this, or our partners, like the Wye Valley AONB Unit.

More effective information is therefore required to increase the overall appreciation of the landscape and the designations in it to encourage more people in understanding, contributing and benefiting from Monmouthshire's landscapes.

Many of the above pressures can be dealt with by a Green Infrastructure approach. This has been reinforced by the adoption of the GI SPG 2015 and the development of a draft GI strategy for the county setting out clear objectives and GI opportunities on a settlement basis, underpinned by the Ecological Connectivity Study Green space study, Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study 2009/2010 and Draft Landscape Character assessment provide clear information. Monmouthshire has developed and is delivering a clear mechanism that delivers ecosystem services in which landscapes, biodiversity, rights of way/accessibility and quality of life benefits are supported through sustainable communities.

7 THE CONDITION OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK AND ITS RECORD

7.1 RESOURCES

The total countryside access management revenue budget in 2018/19 is £399,997 (staff costs £356,489¹⁶). This is allocated between a team of 11 staff (9.7 FTE), only 6 of which are full time. The volunteer co-ordinator and three Field Wardens are part time and the 2 Field Officers job share one full time post. There has been a loss of 2 full time posts since 2007 and the 2 two hundred hour posts have now been assimilated into the existing Field Warden posts. The management of countryside sites has since late 2018 been a new function with one full time officer allocated.

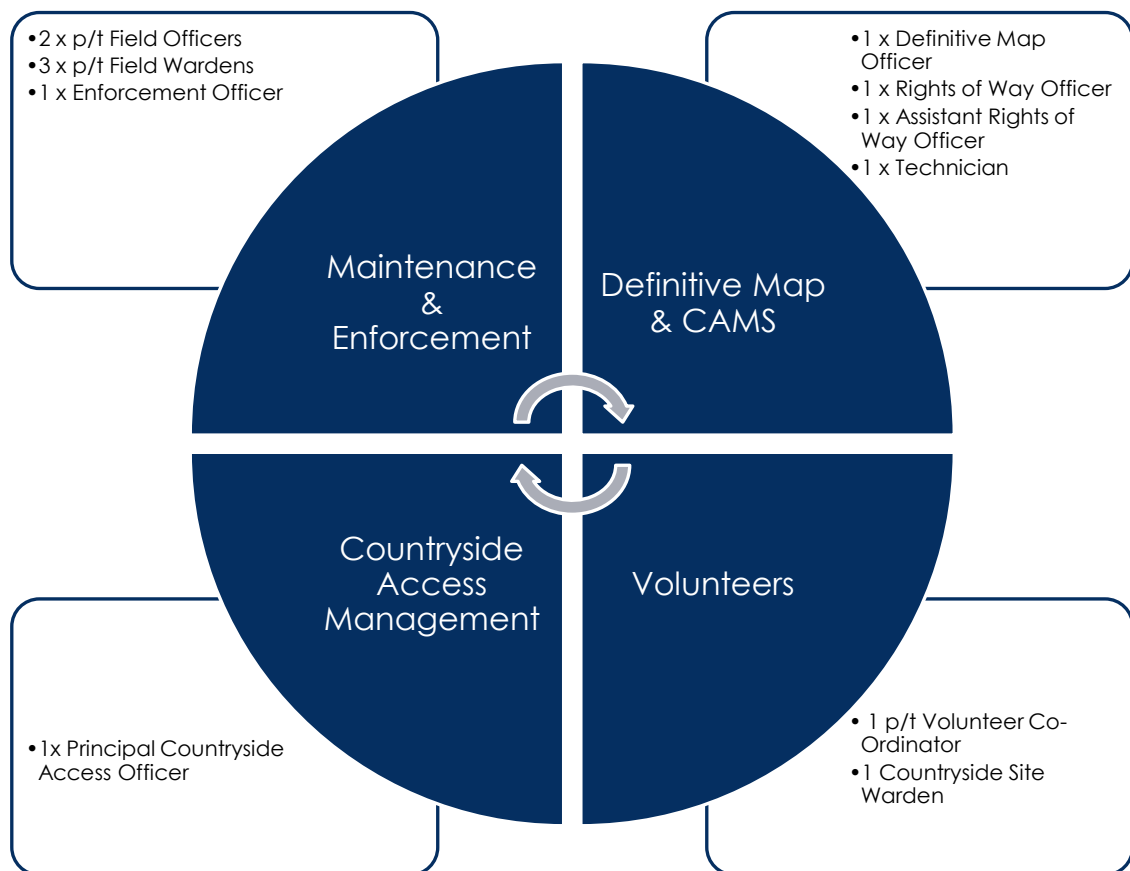


Figure 3 Countryside Access Structure

The Countryside Access Team is supported by one member of legal staff and staff from other teams as required.

The capital budget has gone up and down, but in 2018 it is £38,091. Revenue budgets can be spent on things like cutting contracts only, whereas capital budgets can be spent on things like surfacing and bridges. It is not known from year to year how much if any capital budget will be allocated to rights of way and this makes

¹⁶ Includes an allowance for management and administrative staff support

planning of surfacing and improvements and installation of bridges particularly difficult to manage. **There is no specific budget for Modification orders, enforcement, publicity, volunteers or legal orders.**

It is not possible to really separate budgets for maintenance of public rights of way. However the figures below include premises, transport, supplies and services, third party (contracts and a contribution to Brecon Beacon National Park under our delegation agreement and legal costs). All budget figures are for direct costs only and exclude all support services (admin and management costs).

Table 4 MCC Actual Maintenance budget

Year	Resource
2014/15	£42,924
2015/16	£42,201
2016/17	£53, 278
2017/18	£55,588
2018/19	£45,084

In addition the capital programme has enabled a total spend of £281,434 over the last 5 years (£462,106 since 2011).

Significant grant income has been generated from a variety of sources which have provided the main ways in which improvements to the network has been carried out and some paths like Offa's Dyke National Trail and the Wales Coast Path have been maintained. In the last 5 years, this has totalled £623,095 of grant from Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Heritage Lottery Fund and European Funding (£1,060,705 since 2011). Significant additional grant has also secured for landscape scale action and green infrastructure projects such as the past landscape partnership schemes in the Wye Valley and Blaenavon World Heritage Site and more recently for the Living Levels landscape partnership scheme across the south of the county, which has a total value of approaching £4M. These collaborative partnership schemes include major contributions to improved countryside access infrastructure and the visitor experience. £537,184.13 was obtained from Welsh Government under the Rights of Way Improvement Grant to directly deliver projects within the RoWIP.

However much of this grant has been underpinned by European and Lottery funding. With the uncertainties attached to Brexit and the overall reduction to funding available to the lottery distributors, future grant funding cannot be guaranteed and will be increasingly competitive.

Within current staffing levels and funding it is impossible to maintain all the network and make improvements. It will be important to review priorities and look at innovative ways of managing the network, including attracting larger funding and forming strategic partnerships to do so.

7.2 THE DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT

The current Definitive Map and Statement has a relevant date of 1st July 1952. It is hand drawn and produced on an imperial scale of six inches to one mile (1:10,560). Copies can be seen upon appointment at the Gwent Record Office and at County Hall.

7.2.1 Accessibility and Up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement

To improve its accessibility the records have been digitised and several years were spent quality assuring the records so that we were confident enough to publish a “working copy” on the internet (<http://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk>). Over 6000 links were checked along with 666 orders examined and 144 anomalies found. In addition 99.8% of Monmouthshire within Brecon Beacons National Park has been quality assured, leaving a handful of routes and side roads orders to check and 176 anomalies which will require further investigation to resolve.

Consideration of how these anomalies should be dealt with in conjunction with section 53 Modification Orders (claims) may be appropriate in any revised RoWIP or policy review.

The public now have the ability to view current Ordnance Survey Maps at various scales with the different classes of right of way shown on them at

<http://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>. They can also view furniture, input issues and print maps. This is a significant step forward in ensuring that staff and landowners working on the ground have more accurate plans to use, reducing the risk of errors and making the information much more readily available to the public.

It is no longer possible to obtain the base maps required for hand drafting the Definitive Map. Technology has moved along and Welsh Government are now consulting on making changes to legislation to allow a legal digitised version of the Definitive Map in the near future. We are therefore in a good place with regards to this. However until legislation changes we are still required to bring the Definitive Map and Statement up to date in paper format. To do this we are required to:

- Make Legal Event Modification Orders for all the 600+ orders that have been made since the publication of the Definitive Map in 1952.

Lost Ways is the name given to paths, or ways, on which there may be legitimate public rights of access but they are either unrecorded or incorrectly recorded on the Definitive Map or List of Streets. Unless they are legally registered, such rights may become subject to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and will be extinguished in 2026. This will make it impossible to change or upgrade a right using historical evidence.

There is an unquantified number of unrecorded and unregistered routes which the public might claim and no programme or resources to deal with this either for the List of Streets or Definitive Map. However it must also be noted that the Welsh Government has indicated that they intend to delete the 2026 deadline.

Currently the public are able to submit applications for evidential modification orders (often referred to as claims) to Monmouthshire County Council, if they have historical and/or user evidence to show a path is missing from the Definitive Map and Statement, that it is incorrectly recorded, or the status of a path on the Definitive Map and Statement is incorrect. This work is ongoing and currently we have 43 claims on our Register.

A programme of review for claims was agreed by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee and has been in force from the beginning of 2005. This policy has been reviewed again by the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum in 2017 and no changes were made.

There are 253 anomalies on the Definitive Map and there is much interaction with the maintenance and enforcement team as to the width of paths, location or investigation into historical furniture records.

Some Modification Orders go back to the 1990's, applicants are getting elderly and the Modification Order process is time consuming, complex and slow.

A challenge has been made that other issues should be taken into account such as the benefit of the claimed route to the public as a whole. It would seem that there is a case to consider the impacts of under resourcing this work and how the current prioritisation fits with the objectives of the RoWIP. However it will also be important to consider how any changes to policy will affect existing applicants.

The List of Streets maintained by the Highways team also has an effect on rights of way. **Legally all public rights of way are highways and should be on this list.** Staff in both Highways and Countryside teams need to know the background and correct terminology to be using otherwise incorrect information can be given out in land charges and searches resulting in the authority being liable for a claim against it for maladministration.

There is much cross-over where Modification Orders are concerned. The Natural Environment and Communities Act (NERC Act) has resulted in the loss of mechanically propelled vehicular rights where they were not shown on the list of streets or definitive map prior to the enactment of NERC. This more commonly now means highways that would have been shown just on the List of Streets will now need to be recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement. However **in those rare cases where NERC does not apply, there needs to be a method of formally putting those highways on the List of Streets.** Currently there is no legal method of doing so and the public have no method of challenging it without going to court.

The Principal Countryside Access Officer has been working on producing a protocol for adding or removing highways from the List of Streets in conjunction with Highways. This is now at a draft stage and should be consulted upon shortly.

s53 Wildlife and Countryside Act Register and s31 Statutory Declarations can be viewed on line [here](#).

7.2.2 Registers/Land Charges

Legislation requires that Highway Authorities produce and continually update a list of all recorded statutory declarations (s31HA) and section 53 modification orders (claims). These registers are available to view on appointment at county hall in paper formats. You can also now search for

individual definitive map modification orders, or statutory declarations, or view all of them on Monmouthshire's website. The Registers are regularly updated as the information is used when undertaking land charge searches and answering requests for information from the public and solicitors.

Legislation has also provided for a register of legal orders, but this part has not yet been enacted by Welsh Government. Nevertheless the Countryside Team see this as an important resource to users and applicants and therefore work is currently ongoing to develop a register on our website for all Legal Orders (diversions, extinguishments, creations etc).

There have been changes to legislation for land charge searches. Prior to July 2016 land charge searches for rights of way information was not mandatory and the Countryside Access Team directly dealt with approximately 350 cases. Since July 2016 there is a need to state what is publicly maintainable, whether any right of way abuts or crosses a property on the definitive map, if there are any pending applications to record a public right of way that abuts or crosses a property on the definitive map, whether there are any orders to stop up, divert, or alter, or create a prowl. This has, dramatically increased the workload to at least 7 cases a day requiring an answer. Each Land Charge case takes approximately 20 minutes to answer, but some cases are more complex and can take longer. This effectively is now a full time job for a member of the team and has **had a significant impact on the Countryside Access Teams ability to carry out other Definitive Map duties** such as preparing Legal Event Orders.

It should be noted that the agreement with Brecon Beacons National Park to undertake responsibility for the rights of way in Monmouthshire within the National Park has been reviewed. As Monmouthshire is the Highway Authority responsible for maintaining the Definitive Map records it was thought best if all Land charge searches within the National Park concerning rights of way were also undertaken by Monmouthshire.

7.2.3 Planning Applications

The Countryside Access Team currently deals with approximately 53 planning applications per year. Major applications are dealt with as part of a Green Infrastructure multi-disciplinary team approach, with the aim of achieving a wide range of benefits (addressing Landscape setting and quality of place, Habitat provision & connectivity, Green space provision connectivity and enjoyment, sustainable energy use local food production and Flood attenuation & water

resource management) and meeting the requirements of the Future Generations and Well-being goals the Councils Well-being Objectives and Biodiversity Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan.

The current average cost for a diversion is £2000. There were 100 building obstructions in 2007. Now there are 266 such obstructions **(£532,000+ to resolve by order)!**

It is known that there are more applications which we should be seeing. This will inevitably cost the authority in the long term

7.2.4 Legal Orders.

There are currently 80 outstanding requests for Legal Orders to be made amending the public right of way network by either diverting, closing or creating public rights of way. This has increased two fold since 2007. An information pack for applicants is available explaining legal processes involved, the individual legal tests that have to be made and costs involved. A list of diversions and the stages they have reached is kept at County Hall in Community folders.

Applications for legal orders are made for many reasons. Sometimes it is because of development, but often it is because of a landowners need to increase privacy and security. There is also a need to move paths because of obstructions and this remains one of the highest recorded issues for enforcement. Some diversion applications and proposals have been outstanding for many years. There is only one full time officer dealing with planning applications and legal orders and therefore to reduce the backlog there is a need to consider resourcing.

*There is a need for Legal Orders to be prioritised against an agreed set of criteria and in particular the benefit to the public as a whole.
There is also a need to seek more resources to tackle the backlog of legal orders.*

7.3 THE CONDITION OF THE NETWORK -MAINTENANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

The 2007 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) recognised that there was a need to prioritise maintenance and enforcement tasks. After extensive consultations a prioritisation system for maintenance and enforcement issues was approved by Cabinet in October 2012. A guide to the prioritisation system can be found in "Monmouthshire Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management 2019".

The prioritisation takes into account usage, route status, health and safety and effect, maintenance and enforcement type, barrier free routes and promotion. Those paths prioritised at 100+ are considered as high priority. Everything below that is a lower priority.

An analysis of the high and low issues that have been resolved since 2012 shows that only in the first year of 2012, were more high cases dealt with than low ones.

However there are generally less high prioritised cases than others. From 2013 to present day there are now slightly more cases that are prioritised as low being dealt with than ones that are considered high.

High priority cases are often complex and can take a considerable amount of time to resolve as compared to low risk cases.

Table 5 Resolved low and high priority cases

Year (Jan to Dec)	High 101+ Resolved	Low < 100 Resolved	High unresolved	Low unresolved
2012	385	174	67	357
2013	181	325	38	278
2014	144	214	51	177
2015	116	152	64	324
2016	113	135	74	212
2017	92	98	61	378

When the last RoWIP was published there was no integrated rights of way database. Access tables were used but had limited strategic planning capability. Recording of information by staff was also sporadic. The lack of appropriate record keeping and investment in good IT systems helped the service remain in a reactive rather than proactive manner. The 2007 Rights of Way Improvement Plan recognised this and a specialised Countryside Access Management System was brought, affectionately known by staff as CAMS. After extensive training this system is now used as the main means in which all staff record all issues. It has taken many years (see Definitive Map) for all the data there was to be inputted in to this system and for the mapping to be verified as correct. However all staff now have access to an up-to-date mapping system and database where ever they are. The database includes information on the location and status of rights of way within Brecon Beacons National Park but it does not contain all of their maintenance issues which they are unable to supply us with at the current time.

From March 2012 to March 2018 the Countryside Access Team have received 2800 enforcement and 9400 maintenance issues. Table 6 and 7 and the graph below show that we are resolving approximately 55% of enforcement issues and 66% of maintenance issues per year.

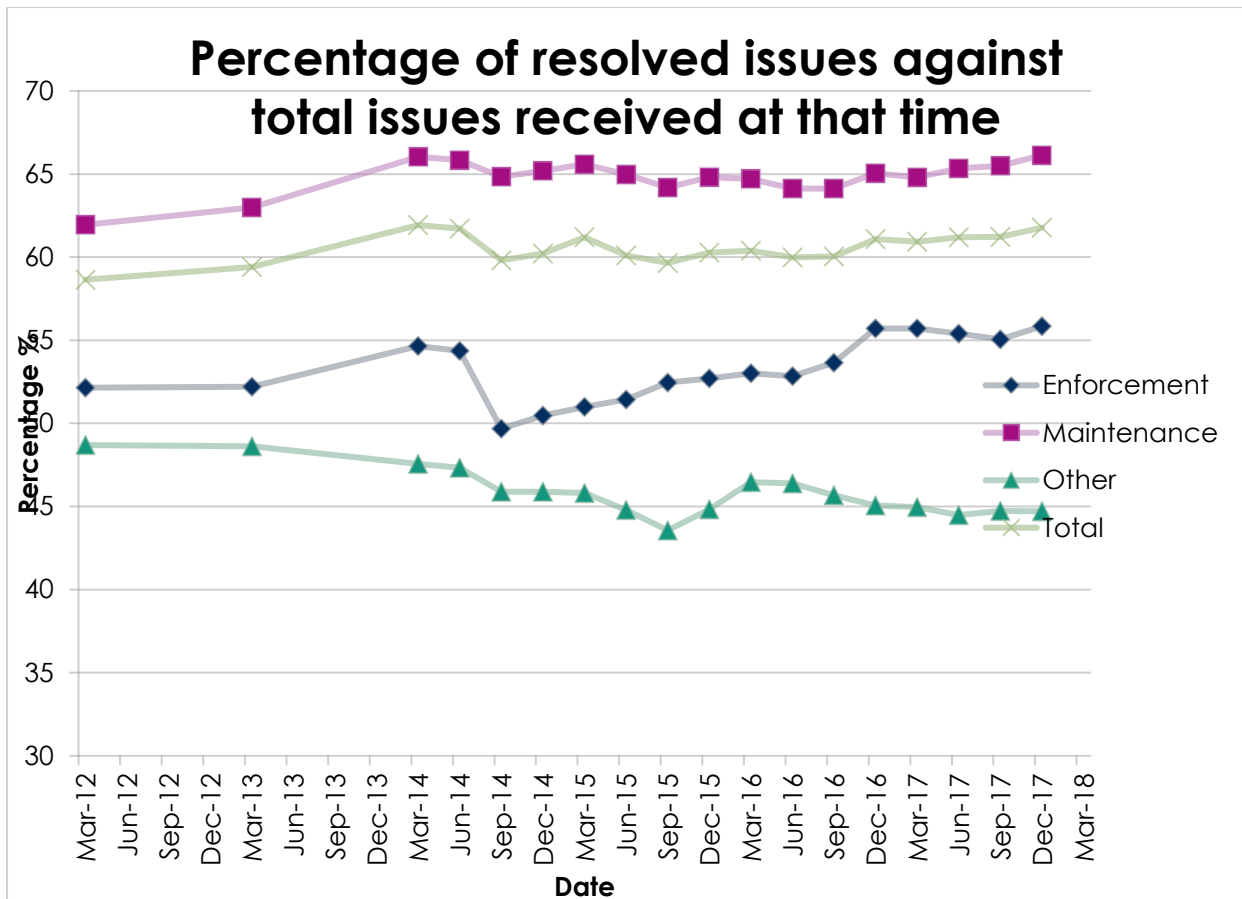


Table 6 Enforcement Issues Received, Resolved and unresolved

Time period up to	Total Enforcement resolved issues	Total Received Enforcement Issues	Total Unresolved Enforcement issues	Percentage resolved enforcement issues
Mar 2012	926	1776	850	52.14%
March 2013	1028	1969	941	52.21%
March 2014	1170	2141	971	54.65%
March 2015	1220	2393	1173	50.98 %
March 2016	1337	2522	1185	53.01 %
March 2017	1499	2691	1192	55.70 %
March 2018	1572	2837	1265	55.41 %
total	8752	16329	7577	

Table 7 Maintenance Issues received, resolved and unresolved

Time Period	Total maintenance resolved issues	Total maintenance received issues	Total unresolved maintenance issues	Percentage resolved
March 2012	3594	5802	2208	61.94%
March 2013	4060	6445	2385	62.99%
March 2014	4650	7043	2393	66.06%
March 2015	4967	7574	2607	65.58%
March 2016	5274	8152	2878	64.70%
March 2017	5689	8779	3090	64.80%
March 2018	6198	9400	3202	65.94%

Table 8 below shows that in regards to maintenance signage (waymarking and fingerposts), surface vegetation, stiles and bridges are the highest reported issues.

Table 8: Types of outstanding maintenance and enforcement issues			
Issue	Number outstanding	Issue	Number Outstanding
Fingerposts/signage	1160	improvement	70
obstacle	1005	slope	60
Surface vegetation	846	behaviour	35
Stiles	475	Order implementation	30
Waymarking	440	deposit	30
Bridge/culvert	273	Crops	28
Obstruction buildings	265	Drainage	27
Alignment	253	Notices/signs	24
other	190	animal	22
surface	161	information	21
Gate	159	Enforcement surface	15
Obstruction landscaping	98	Hazard abutting	12
Overhead/side vegetation	95	CROW section 130 Notice	5
Tree	79	Section 56 repair notice	3

7.3.1 Signage

There are 2524 signage items on the rights of way network. The Highway authority has a duty to provide signage where a public right of way leaves a metalled road. There are 1390 fingerposts consisting of 8 different types. The remaining signage is not where a metalled road leads onto a right of way but at other locations which provide assurance to the User as to where a path links to other routes, private roads etc. Some fingerposts are made for specific locations, such as on Offa's Dyke. The Three Castles Way and Wye Valley Walk have all been recently signposted. The Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path contain information down the post bilingually as well as on the finger. Specifically designed fingerposts can be more expensive to purchase than a simple wooden fingerpost.

With an average lifespan of 15 years, 168 Fingerposts per year need to be erected. Currently there are 1160 signage issues, so there is a considerable backlog to catch up on. A simple fingerpost complete with walking man and blade costs in the region of £65 to purchase and install. Therefore the authority is looking at an estimated cost of £75,400+ to resolve outstanding fingerpost issues, with a further annual cost of £10,920+ every year.

In addition to fingerposts there are also other items of signage on the rights of way network. The most commonly used is waymarkers to inform the public that they are following certain routes. But there are also other items like Information Boards. It is difficult to estimate the costs of these as they would be specific to the location or path. Generally grants are sought to cover such items.

Fingerposts are not easy to remedy as one would think as many of the footpaths where signage is needed also require enforcement, or major clearance. **There is**

opportunity to work with community groups and volunteers to better manage signage though. This could also include passing on the waymarking issues which many volunteers are trained to do. There is also opportunity to look at using different materials, as a change to metal posts, or plastic, may mean signage lasts longer and costs may be reduced.

7.3.2 Surface Vegetation

Surface vegetation is a growing problem, partly due to the weather in recent years which has meant more than the usual two cuts have been required.

A very small percentage of the network is currently cut. The National Trail, Wales Coast Path and Regional routes all receive two cuts per year by a contractor. These are given additional cuts if required, but are also maintained by Pathcare Volunteers. The Field Wardens also have a list of paths which they proactively cut every year. However other ways of keeping vegetation down must clearly be found. This however must be undertaken with the Rights of Way Biodiversity Action Plan in mind.

If further resources could be found to assist with maintenance a good use of officer time would be to look at setting up clearance schemes with community groups and landowners. Opportunity might also be found through small grants like that provided by Tesco's for Town and Community/volunteer groups to apply for funding for more cutting contracts. Magor and Undy Community Council have for many years with 50% funding from MCC had a local contractor cut all their rights of way twice a year resulting in few complaints about surface vegetation in this community.

7.3.3 Stiles and Gates

There are 3848 stiles and 4004 gates known to be on the rights of way network. There are many different types of stiles and gates and their cost therefore varies. From the figures we hold in cams it would appear that 89% of stiles and 96% of gates are in a good condition. However not all issues are reported so these figures might be misleading.

The Council operates a “Least Restrictive Access Policy” and also has produced a Countryside Access Design Guide. However this has not specifically been targeted to farmers and other landowners. This is an issue as there are many stiles which were put in 15 or so years ago and will soon need replacing.

On the basis that stiles and gates last about 15 years each, there is a need to replace 523 of them per year to keep the rights of way network in good condition

Stile replacement is not an easy issue as stiles represent barriers to many people and an assessment and request to the landowner to alter the structure has to be made every time a stile is replaced. The Countryside Access Field Officers have been successful in replacing stiles with gates, gaps or kissing gates on the whole of the Usk Valley Walk and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. Increasingly as the need for health walks is rising there is a need to identify and also change barriers like stiles on smaller local walks nearby villages/towns. **With over 3000 stiles on the network there is room to reduce a large number of these to more accessible pieces of furniture.**

7.3.4 Bridges

In 2013 a Welsh Government Rights of Way Improvement Grant paid for a "Countryside Access Bridge Report". The report identified 787 bridges made up of 16 different types, 41% of which were found under the general category and 18% are sleeper bridges. The report details the location and types of bridges in each community in Monmouthshire. It considered usage of which 35% is unknown, 19% is medium use and only 18% have a low use. This shows the importance of bridges in the rights of way network and the need to ensure they are safe to use and adequately maintained.

The majority of bridges are on footpaths with only 9 being found on a bridleway and 8 on restricted byways. 125 bridges, at least, were thought to be of a type and on a route which would make them barrier free and "Least restrictive access routes". Many more had the potential to become so.

In the 2013 report, 47% of bridges are noted as a "satisfactory" condition. 11% of paths "unsatisfactory" and 42% were "unknown". **In 2018 we now have a total of 1326 bridges recorded on the rights of way network of which 9% are now recorded as "unsatisfactory"**. These figures need to be used carefully as the "unknown" category represents where there is no information presently recorded on cams regarding condition. However many are well used and promoted paths with no recorded issues for either the route, or bridge, so it is likely that the percentage of paths which is satisfactory is much higher.

24 out of 33 communities and towns within Monmouthshire are affected by outstanding bridge issues with Mitchel Troy, Llangattock Vibon Avel, Devauden and Grosmont being the worst affected.

The current 273 bridge issues have been examined. In summary 85 need repair, 67 bridges need replacement and a further 81 are recorded as missing bridges. 88 bridges have "other" issues on them including 51 bridges which require full inspection to further ascertain what the bridge issue is. Of particular issue are the bridges which are 10m and over and require replacement or repair.

Handrails	34	Replace	67
Unknown	51 +	Inspect	37
decking	24	combination	23
abutments	9	Side posts	10
Missing	81	alignment	7
Bracing support	10	Footwalk/beam	21
Alternative crossing available	11	surface	9
Vegetation/trees	13	Bridge seat	12

There are known to be 81 bridges currently missing across the County. It is difficult to ascertain costs involved as it would depend on the type of bridge required and length. Assuming an average bridge cost of £1400 for a 6m bridge & contractor rates for installation (£850) this amounts to a total of £182,250 to install known missing bridges alone. However this sum is likely to be much higher, due to some bridges

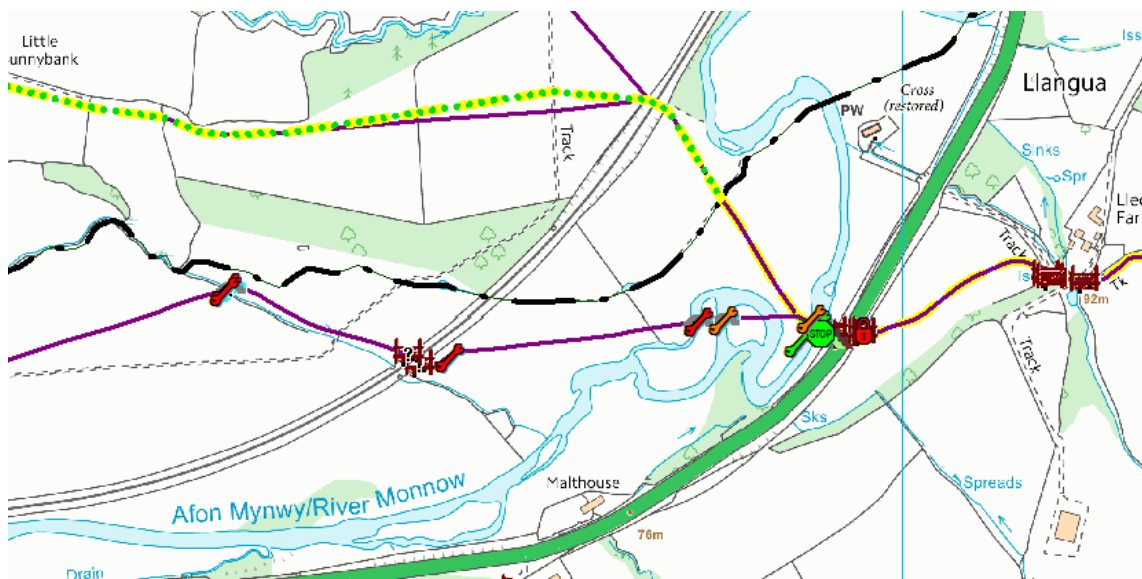
being over 6m in length and therefore requiring special bridge design etc. One example is Oldcastle Bridge that is 35m in length and cost over £75,000 to replace.

61 opportunities have been identified where volunteers could help repair or install small bridges. 10 Volunteers have also been trained to undertake basic bridge inspections. This is assisting the Council to save resources but due to the amount of specialist bridges in the County the use of volunteers to inspect bridges is limited.

It should also be noted there are 60 bridges on the rights of way network in Monmouthshire within the National Park. All of these are inspected each year by the Wardens. There are currently three bridges needing minor repairs. However inspection records are not kept in a manner where it is easy to see the type or length of the bridges in the National Park. This should be recorded for asset management purposes.

For safety & maintenance reasons 15 bridge inspections per week are required in Monmouthshire. This is not possible with current resources. It is also anticipated that bridges will last no more than 30 years and, therefore, a new bridge would need to be erected every 2-3 weeks to maintain the network.

All bridge work is currently prioritised according to the prioritisation used for all other maintenance and enforcement issues and includes risk and inconvenience and use. Recently Llangua Bridge in Grosmont (located at the word "stop" in plan below) was removed, as it was considered highly dangerous. The river is moving very rapidly here and a new site where the river is not ox bowing needs to be sought for replacement of the bridge. The new bridge would need to be at least 13m long, designed for the site, made to order and installed by contractors. It is estimated that the costs of this would be in the region of £27,000+.



This bridge and others like it will therefore only be replaced if additional funding is found. There is a question of policy here as the Council has a duty to maintain the network, but with current resources and the number of bridges that need replacing

benefits to the general public must be taken into account. The previous bridge was little used but since its removal a few local people have asked for a replacement sighting that it helped supply them with a local walk and was good for their well-being. However for the costs of replacing this bridge many other smaller bridges on well used paths could be replaced or fixed. **This resourcing dilemma is something which local people in Grosmont have specifically asked to be looked at.**

7.3.5 Enforcement

Section 130 of the Highways Act 1980 makes it the responsibility of this Authority 'to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of the highway' and numerous sections of the act have vested various powers and duties on Highway Authorities. The Public Rights of Way Team is responsible for serving notice, carrying out work and recharging or prosecuting individuals for offences.

There is a need to change enforcement policy for some types of action for enforcement to be more effective and timely.

There are currently 1585 enforcement issues of which 1081 are “unresolved”, 372 are “unknown”, 4 require “officer attention” and 128 are “part resolved”. With only one enforcement officer it is difficult to see how the backlog of enforcement issues can be reduced.

Obstacles are the highest enforcement issue. These usually consist of some type of gate or fence obstruction, but can also be things like a builders skip. The current enforcement policy of the Council is a very soft consolatory approach. This does not help to solve these issues which are often time sensitive. In order to resolve more issues, such as padlocked gates, a more reactive but sensitive enforcement is required. For example the ability to serve letters which can act as Notices immediately. This will therefore have to be a matter to consider in a policy review in more detail.

As per 6.2.4 there needs to be more assistance with legal orders and planning to ensure there are no further building obstructions and to move footpaths around permanent building obstructions.

7.3.6 Volunteering

The citizens of Monmouthshire are active volunteers and there is an expressed desire amongst walking groups/organisations and individual volunteers to help deliver maintenance and promotion of the rights of way network.

The U3A Groups in Monmouthshire have said *“We support the roles that volunteers can play in helping to maintain and enhance the network and to encourage use by local communities, visitors and tourism businesses. However volunteer input is only viable with the support of the dedicated Monmouthshire CC team with their integrated technical, legal and data handling resources. The availability of a dedicated volunteer co-ordinator is critical in encouraging and enabling volunteers to work effectively, to share best practice and in developing innovative approaches to obtaining best value from volunteer effort.”*

Monmouthshire County Council commissioned Resources for Change and Asken Ltd to help it develop a Community Engagement Strategy which would allow it to make better use of the willingness of people to volunteer to do work on public rights of way and countryside sites. Some of the actions are now beginning to be implemented such as training Group Leaders to carry out maintenance tasks. But much remains to be done to adequately, inform, train, arrange activities and manage volunteers.

Monmouthshire Countryside Service recognises the value of volunteers and the benefits to local communities and Monmouthshire as a destination for visitors. A Statement of Action for the revised RoWIP should therefore be *“to seek to engage with partners and communities and obtain further resourcing which will enable volunteer groups to be actively engaged with promotion and maintenance of rights of way and countryside sites throughout the County.*

PROMOTION AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

7.4 PROMOTION

Monmouthshire was one of the first tourist destinations and the extensive network of rights of way and varied landscape provides great potential to market the County to a wide audience.

To improve marketing Monmouthshire County Council has developed a Monmouthshire Walking Product Development Strategy. The aim of the Walking Product Strategy is to take a more proactive approach to stimulate demand for and use of the network to achieve maximum public benefits from it.

The Walking Product Development Strategy has a range of objectives and a delivery programme which suggests that in future there should be more made of existing routes, new products need to be developed to appeal to target markets, there needs to be coordination of marketing and management of maintenance. It also suggested that Volunteer Groups should be empowered to maintain, develop and promote walking routes and activities in their locality.

Importantly it recognises that any new products need to be developed around a range of identified themes.

There is a good supply of literature (produced by the public and private sectors) on walking in Monmouthshire and this is readily available in bookshops and tourist information centres in the County. There is a wide range of leaflets on short walks, but they are of variable quality and distribution is patchy. The Wye Valley Walk guidebook is now produced by a commercial publisher under licence from the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

The County straddles 5 different 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey maps – OL13, OL14, 152, 154 and 189.

Information on walking and other types of routes is readily available through the following:

- Official long distance route websites for Offa's Dyke Trail and Wye Valley Walk
- www.visitmonmouthshire.com has 30 Pathcare walks across Monmouthshire managed by volunteers. It has links/information on all of the County's Long Distance Trails and 23 short easy health walks which can be downloaded. Monmouthshire being the Food capital of Wales also recommends places to eat and drink when the walk is done. This website also has a cycling trails and other recreational activities and events can be found on this website. The Tread and Trot Trails and Tewdrigs Trail can also be found here.
- Websites of other organisations have downloadable routes, for example WyeValley AONB, National Trust, BBNP and Bleanavon WHS.
- National websites on which subscribers post walking routes, for example www.walk4life.com, www.go4awalk.com, www.walkingworkd.com, www.my.viewranger.com, etc.

Further research is being carried out into what the requirements of the public are in regard to promotion. Improvements in technology mean there is a wide choice in how information can be supplied.

79% of households in Monmouthshire have internet access¹⁷. The ONS 2016 report into internet access tells us there has been an increase in daily internet access and that use of smart phones to access the internet has nearly doubled since 2011. The growth of smart phones is important to bear in mind when planning digital services. However the Older People's Commissioner notes that 35% of people aged 50+ in Wales are digitally excluded so for the time being it is important to look at a wide range of publicity material not just digital technology.

Occasional private individuals or organisations wish Monmouthshire County Council to help design or promote a walk or ride of their own. In this situation, a policy similar to that recommended in the Walking Strategy is required.

¹⁷ National Survey for Wales

8 OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO PLANS SUCH AS ACTIVE TRAVEL PLAN AND WELL BEING PLAN

In preparing the revised RoWIP the Authority is required to have regard to a range of new legislation, policies and plans. Particular attention is to be taken regarding the Active Travel Plan, Well Being Plan and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

8.1 THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT 2015

This Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales which can be seen in the diagram.

The Act also sets out how public services in Wales need to think long term, work better with people and communities and each other and look to prevent problems with a more joined up approach. Public Bodies are bound by the Act to set their own well-being objectives by 31 March each year.

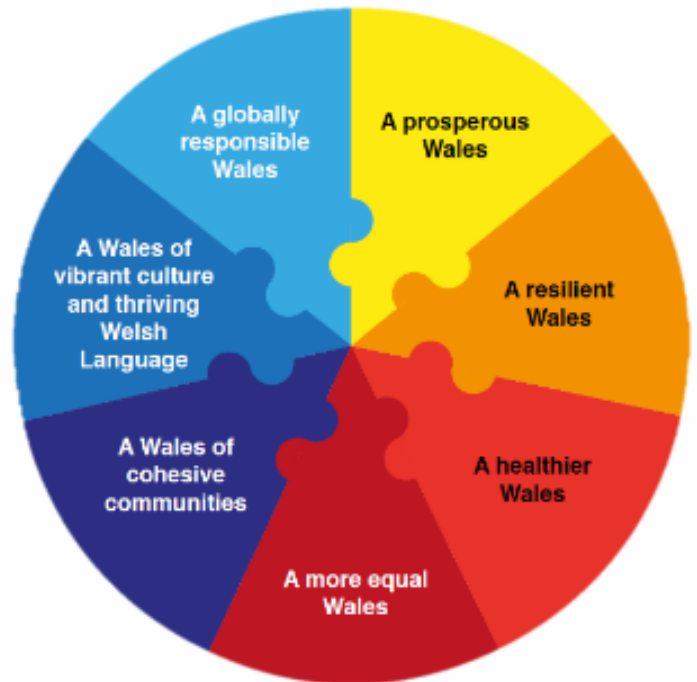
Monmouthshire has a Public Service Board made up of public bodies such as Gwent Police, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and others like Monmouthshire County Council. A Well-Being Plan for Monmouthshire was agreed by this group in April 2018.

[The Well-Being Plan](#) sets out what public services will work together on to address the things that matter to local communities. This plan is reviewed every five years. From this plan a set of Actions has been produced. The aims of the Well-Being Plan cover areas which the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is also involved with, such as health, climate change, protecting landscapes & biodiversity, reducing levels of inactivity, working with communities etc. There is therefore lots of opportunities for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan to contribute to the Well-Being Act.

An example is health. Physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of ill health in the UK and spending on the NHS is recorded at £1,000 per second on dealing with preventable ill health. However walking is recognised as a way of getting inactive people active again. A campaign to promote 10 minutes brisk walking could have significant beneficial results as outlined by the Chief Medical Officer for the UK.

Monmouthshire's Public Service Board Well Being Plan has the aspiration of "realising the benefits that the natural environment has to offer"

It has the following objectives towards this:-



Purpose		Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities	
Our aspiration is to:		Reduce inequalities between communities and within communities Support and protect vulnerable people Realise the benefits that the natural environment has to offer	
Our Well-being Objectives are:	<i>People / Citizens</i>	<i>Place / Communities</i>	
Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change		
Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change	Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.		

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has identified the following objectives under four key work areas which link to the seven Well-being goals:

1. Heritage – The National Park’s historic, environmental and cultural heritage will be conserved, enhanced and promoted
2. Landscape and Biodiversity – The Authority will lead on the maintenance and
3. enhancement of landscapes and biodiversity through practical programmes and partnership work
4. Resilient Communities – the Authority will lead on creating strong communities within the National Park, providing accessible physical activity for communities outside of the National Park
5. Sustainable Economic Development – The Authority will lead on encouraging the development of new and existing businesses and increasing the number of jobs while promoting sustainable use of natural resources.

8.2 ACTIVE TRAVEL (WALES) ACT

On 4 November 2013 Wales enacted the [Active Travel \(Wales\) Act](#). It aims to make active travel the most attractive option for shorter journeys (journeys to work, school, to access the shops etc. i.e. it is not recreational). The Act required local authorities in Wales to produce active travel maps for certain named settlements (Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow, Gilwern, Magor, Monmouth and Usk) and deliver year on year improvements in active travel routes and facilities. It requires highway authorities in Wales to make enhancements to routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in all new road schemes and to have regard to the needs of walkers and cyclists in a range of other highway functions.

Monmouthshire has developed a set of Integrated Network Maps which set out the Council's plans for improving active travel routes in and around key settlements over the next 15 years. Some of the routes are already up to standard but many fall short of design standards. The maps can be found [here](#).

As the Active Travel Act is aimed at improving access for walkers and cyclists there is therefore great opportunity to link paths to the wider network and to get improvements to the network which otherwise might not have happened. Some of the routes that have been identified in the "Integrated Network Maps" are already public rights of way and form part of promoted routes such as the Wales Coast Path, Usk and Wye Valley Walks. The Active Travel Act will allow big and beneficial projects, such as a bridge for cyclists and walkers across the Wye in Monmouth, to be achieved.

The Active Travel Act however can be restrictive in that it limits provision to "active routes", not just recreational routes and to areas of large populations. However this does not prevent the Council and our Partners from working together to create other routes that connect these to other places. There is opportunity also to connect other projects like creating a cycleway in Usk along the old railway line and linking bridleway networks with active travel routes.

8.3 ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY FOR WALES

The Environment Strategy for Wales (2006) is the Welsh Government's long term strategy for the environment of Wales, setting strategic direction to 2026. The vision is to see the distinctive Welsh environment thriving and contributing to the economic and social well-being and health of people in Wales. To achieve this, the Strategy states that the pressures we place on our environment need to be managed more effectively. It has 5 main environmental themes:

- addressing climate change
- sustainable resource use
- distinctive biodiversity, landscapes and seascapes
- our local environment
- environmental hazards

Monmouthshire's RoWIP can contribute towards this vision in many ways. For example

- By ensuring its policies that sustainable sources of materials are used when undertaking works on routes.
- That works on countryside sites and access routes take into account biodiversity and landscape sensitivities.

8.4 THE ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2016

This Act received Royal Assent on 21 March 2016. It is complimentary to the Well Being Act and also the Future Generations Act. It puts in place the legislation to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined up way. The objective of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) set out in the Act is to maintain and enhance the resilience of our

ecosystems and the benefits they provide to deliver lasting, sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. The Act also sets the legal framework for decarbonisation and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The overall aim is to build greater resilience into our ecosystems, our businesses and society.

SMNR is delivered by a number of statutory products set out in Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act, including the Natural Resources Policy (NRP) which sets out the national priorities for management Wales' natural resources sustainably. These priorities address the major pressing environmental trends of our time, such as climate change and biodiversity decline. The scale and pace at which the national priorities are delivered is key, and an ambitious approach to the proactive provision of public goods is vital to their delivery.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act also puts in place a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty for public authorities (including the Welsh Ministers) who must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as is consistent with the exercise of their functions in Wales. This recognises the underpinning importance of biodiversity in its widest sense to healthy, functioning ecosystems, and therefore the multiple benefits that we derive from them.

Opportunities exist to deliver the aims of the Environment Act through protecting Biodiversity and Landscape whilst undertaking rights of way improvement projects and through working closely with the Green Infrastructure Team particularly where there are large developments proposed.

Of most relevance to the development of the new ROWIP will be the Area Statements being developed by Natural Resources Wales. The Act contains no statutory timeline for the production of these statements, but Natural Resources Wales has indicated that full coverage of Wales will be achieved by the end of 2019.

The latest update produced by Natural Resources Wales in September 2017 indicates they will be taking a placed based approach to the development of the Area Statements for Wales and have identified seven geographic areas for planning and engagement purposes. These are:

- North West Wales
- North East Wales
- Mid Wales
- South West Wales
- South East Wales
- South Central Wales
- Marine Area

Monmouthshire would fall within South East Wales, but the Brecon Beacons National Park would mainly be in South Central Wales. This may or may not cause problems with partnership working if Natural Resources are not flexible with the National Park.

Whilst Area Statements for Monmouthshire and Brecon Beacons area are not yet available there are ways that in developing the new ROWIP regard can be made to some of the principles set out in the Natural Resources Policy Statement.

Table 10 Principle	Brecon Beacons and Monmouthshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan Review
Building Resilience	In developing the new RoWIP regard can be had to the pressures and demands upon sites, landscapes and paths and how these can be managed to ensure long term enjoyment of them.
Managing for multiple benefits	Ensuring that all aspects of least restrictive access, biodiversity and landscapes are taken into consideration when developing policies and priorities.
Long term	As with the five ways of working within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the long term to be considered, the RoWIP will be taking a 10 year view and consider the implications and impacts of this.
Collaboration and Co-operation	The RoWIP review shows that future collaboration and partnership working is essential to deliver countryside access improvements and other public benefits.

Monmouthshire County Council and Brecon Beacons National Park¹⁸ will work with Natural Resources Wales to develop work programmes and projects that will contribute towards the sustainable management of natural resources.

8.5 EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together the various aspects of discrimination legislation. It absorbs the Disability Discrimination Act and goes further in requiring public bodies to be proactive in eliminating discrimination, in advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relationships between people with a disability and others. Mobility difficulty, poor sight, learning difficulties, manual dexterity and certain long term illnesses all come within the Act. Monmouthshire has a lease restrictive access policy to ensure that any works carried out take into account the Equality Act and have published a Countryside Access Design Guide to assist with this.

¹⁸ BBNP Pre Consultation Draft ROWIP

8.6 CLIMBING HIGHER” (2005) AND “CLIMBING HIGHER NEXT STEPS” (2006) – WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Copies of the documents are available here:

<https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/150311-climbing-higher-en.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/100201-next-steps-en.pdf>

The Climbing Higher Strategy is the Welsh Assembly Government's twenty-year vision for sport and physical activity. It sets out objectives and targets dealing with health, economy, culture, society and the environment. Its vision is as follows:-

“An active, healthy and inclusive Wales where sport, physical activity and active recreation provide a common platform for participation, fun and achievement, which binds communities and the nation and where the environment of Wales is used sustainably to enhance confidence in ourselves.”

Particular objectives and targets that are relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are:

- The percentage of people in Wales using the natural Welsh environment for outdoor activities will increase from 36% to 60%
- 95% of people will have a footpath or cycleway within a 10 minute walk
- No one should live more than a 6 minute walk from their nearest green space.
- Encourage the integration of walking and cycling into everyday life and as a means of transport and recreation
- Minimise the gaps related to gender, age, disability, ethnicity and deprivation.
- By increasing participation in sustainable ways that ensure the quality of the natural environment is maintained and enhanced.

8.7 “CREATING AN ACTIVE WALES” (2009) – WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Creating an Active Wales is central to the One Wales ambition for a healthier nation for all. It recognises that physical activity and sport are beneficial to health and that a partnership across the Welsh Assembly Government, local Authorities, the NHS, the Third Sector and communities, is essential if benefits are to be gained from an active and healthy Wales.

The actions in this document seek to further support people who are already active and provide encouragement for those who are not. The strategic aims are to

- Develop and maintain a physical environment that makes it easier and safer for people to choose to be more physically active.
- To support children and young people to live active lives and become active adults
- To encourage more adults to be more active, more often, throughout life.
- To increase participation in sport, by all sectors of the population.

Priorities to achieve that aim are:-

- Developing an infrastructure to support travel by healthier and more sustainable modes, such as cycling, walking and public transport.

- Ensuring that the natural and built environment encourages people to be more active, designed to make physical activity an attractive option
- Increasing availability, access and high quality green space, waterways and countryside

Monmouthshire will support this policy and the aims within this document via our Leisure Service Department and with actions such as continuing to support the Walking Exercise Referral Scheme. Creating and maintaining partnerships is also crucial.

8.8 PLANNING POLICY WALES (PPW)

(PPW) sets out land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice notes (TAN). PPW, the TAN and circulars together comprise national planning policies which are taken into account in Monmouthshire's Unitary Development and Local Development Plans. PPW requires that local authorities should provide the framework for well-located sport, recreation and leisure facilities and that these should be: "sensitive to the needs of all users, attractive, well designed, well maintained, safe and accessible to all."

PPW also refers to the need for the planning system to ensure that adequate land and water resources are allocated for informal and informal sport and recreation.

8.9 OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ACCESS ENABLING PLAN 2015-2020 NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

This plan presents Natural Resources Wales objectives for outdoor recreation and access. The plan supports the goals in the Well-Being and Future Generations Act, Climbing Higher, Vibrant and Viable Places, Active Travel etc.

The document provides information on how outdoor recreation provides benefits to the economy etc. It states three overarching principles which are:-

1. All outdoor recreation provision delivered, facilitated or funded by NRW will adhere to the principles of least restrictive access and be developed and delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
2. We will align our work to deliver the benefits of recreation and access through spatial targeting, focussing first on those areas that deliver the greatest public benefit for people and communities.
3. We will be an enabling organisation, working with partners and others to facilitate outdoor recreation and access activity both on and off our own land.

The overarching aim is that "**Wales has more people participating in and benefitting from outdoor recreation more often.**"

This aim is to be achieved by ensuring that

1. Access opportunities are provided and improved that best meet people's needs for recreational enjoyment of the outdoors

2. Promotional information and engagement about recreational access opportunities are widely available in appropriate formats
3. Recreational users have an increased understanding of how to act responsibly in the natural environment
4. Effective planning for the sustainable recreational use and management of natural resources is embedded in our work
5. Effective mechanisms for the delivery of the benefits of outdoor recreational activity are developed and embedded in our work

Natural Resources Wales is a major forestry landowner and has dedicated most of its woodlands "open access". NRW is also a Quango with other functions to manage. The U3A Walking Groups and the Local Access Forum have expressed concern that access has been impeded through NRW woodlands in Monmouthshire, either through problems regarding long access diversions or closures to fell woods, or for other reasons such as sitting on the fence with modification orders and requiring paperwork and a fee for using the woods for walks.

Meetings have been held between Monmouthshire Countryside Access and NRW staff. As a result NRW is considering if it can introduce access plans into its management of woodlands which would considerably help with managing the woodlands for both production of wood and recreational purposes. It is recognised that there is great scope for extending access within the NRW woodland for cyclists and horse riders and opportunities to improve and provide walks for those with disabilities. Monmouthshire will continue to work in partnership with NRW to ensure that access can be improved for all within Monmouthshire.

8.10 MONMOUTHSHIRE'S CORPORATE PLAN 2017 -2020

The Monmouthshire County Council Corporate Plan "A Monmouthshire that works for everyone" sets the direction for the council. It states the Council's purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities and sets out the direction the Council will take to deliver services in Monmouthshire.

It sets out five priority goals and a number of work programmes. The five goals are:

- Best possible start in life
- Thriving and connected communities
- Natural and built environment
- Lifelong-well being
- Future focused council

Countryside sets out its work programmes each year to support these goals and also the Well-Being goals which are similar. The RoWIP is future focused as it looks to provide services not only now but for the next ten years. Thriving and connected communities is reflected in our aims for volunteers and community group work and the current and future RoWIP considers well-being and health projects.

8.11 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (GI)

Monmouthshire is currently developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS) which will be in place later in 2018. The purpose of the GIS is to provide a framework for

delivery of a range of national and local policy goals (including Welsh Government's Well Being Goals, the Council's Wellbeing objective and Monmouthshire's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan).

Green Infrastructure can be defined as "*the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places.*" Access is therefore an important part of Green Infrastructure.

When completed the plan will provide a strategic framework identifying key priorities, opportunities and management strategies for improvements around settlements in Monmouthshire. Green Infrastructure pulls many different disciplines together to ensure cohesive actions.

Consultations are currently taking place to identify projects which will include many access improvements. Monmouthshire has already adopted a Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance and Gwent Levels Green Infrastructure Strategy to inform the implementation of Local Development Plan policies.

8.12 SEVERN ESTUARY STRATEGY 2016 -2026

The Severn Estuary Partnership incorporates a wide range of interests including national agencies, voluntary bodies and 13 local authorities and covers a broad area spanning the boundary between Wales and the South West England.

The 2001 Severn Estuary Strategy aims to develop a strategic management framework to guide/support sustainable development and wise use of the Estuary. The RoWIP has a direct impact on the Severn Estuary. Locals and visitors can access the coast through the Wales Coast Path. There are also a wide range of other activities that occur on the Severn Estuary including boating, walking, cycling, angling and other land and beach based activities. It is recognised that participation in recreational and sporting activities often serves to foster attitudes of environmental awareness and well-being. This can lead to increased support for conservation and the sustainable use of the area.

8.13 WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015 -2020

This management plan provides guidance and strategic objectives to support and steer positive landscape change to the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory committee, wider AONB partnership, local visitors, residents, landowners and communities in the area.

The lower Wye Valley remains a nationally renowned as a destination for tourism and recreation with 2.3 million tourist days per annum. The Management Plan has a vision for the Wye Valley AOB. Of particular relevance are the following:

- *Where the natural and heritage assets are in good order, well understood and accessible where appropriate, in fully compatible uses and adapted and changed in ways which respect and enhance their significance.*

- *Where both visitors and residents are able to enjoy the area, particularly for sustainable tourism, recreation and informed appreciation of the historic and natural environment, with minimal conflict or disturbance from other users.*
- *Supported by the goodwill pride and endeavour of local people, visitors, and the public, private and voluntary sectors.*

The Management plan also has extensive Recreation and Access strategic objectives and targets to encourage and promote recreational pursuits and responsible access, resolving conflicts, supporting sustainable management of access and identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, to support and promote access enhancements and improved access for all.

These targets are ones which appear in the current Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

8.14 BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

The corporate plan for the National Park can be found here:-

<http://modgov.breconbeacons.org/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13131>

A copy of the current National Park Management Plan is available here:

<http://modgov.breconbeacons.org/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13311>

The National Park Management Plan is the Authority's leading document setting out its vision and strategic objectives. The current plan covers 2015 -2020 and is currently being reviewed. It has 6 themes.

1. Managing park landscapes to maximise conservation and public benefits
2. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity
3. Providing opportunities for outdoor access and recreation
4. Raising awareness and understanding of the Park
5. Building and maintaining sustainable communities, towns and villages (duty)
6. Sustainable economic development (duty)

The rights of way improvement plan for Brecon Beacons National Park and Monmouthshire's rights of way improvement plan encompasses many of these themes already.

9 GLOSSARY

BBNP	Brecon Beacons National Park
GI	Green Infrastructure
MCC	Monmouthshire County Council
NERC Act	Natural Environment Rural Communities Act
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
RoWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
SAC	Special Area Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Special Site of Scientific Interest
SMNR	Sustainable Management Natural Resources
TAN	Technical Advice Notes
WVAONB	Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Welsh Government Climbing Higher <https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/150311-climbing-higher-en.pdf>

Natural Resources Wales (2017) Area Statements



RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
CONSULTATION RESPONSES 2017&2018

RUTH ROURKE

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTRYSIDE@MONMOUTHSHIRE.GOV.UK

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSES 2017&2018

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Project communication

3.0 Responses to initial consultation 15th November to January 2017

4.0 Results to Questionnaires

4.1 Public Questionnaire

4.2 Organisation questionnaire

4.3 Land Management questionnaire

5.0 Workshop Responses

5.1 The extent to which countryside access meets the present & future needs of the public

5.2 Enforcement & Maintenance policy

5.3 Bridges

5.4 Diversion, Creation & Extinguishment Orders

5.5 Publicity & Promotion

5.6 Priorities

6.0 Other issues raised during the event

7.0 Conclusions

ROWIP REVIEW CONSULTATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Legislation requires that a review of the 2007 Monmouthshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) takes place. The first stage of this process to undertake a consultation to advise of process, timescale and content was undertaken in Winter 2016/17. In 2018 the assessment reports were also published along with questionnaires to landowners, the public and organisations. This report summarises how these consultations took place and the responses that were received back.

2.0 PROJECT COMMUNICATION

A formal timetable outlining how we were going to undertake carrying out a review in accordance with Welsh Government guidance was produced at the beginning of September 2016. This was circulated to internal management and the Cabinet Member responsible for Countryside, before formally consulting (on 27th September 2016) the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum and then the Brecon Beacons Local Access Forum (15 November 2016).

It was the intention from the beginning that the LAF's should be involved with the process and production of a revised ROWIP.

On 8 December 2016 a paper was put before Monmouthshire County Councils Strong Communities Select Committee to seek the Committee's views on the scope of and progress on the review of the ROWIP. The review requirements and proposed timetable were discussed and the recommendations endorsed.

Formal scrutiny and approval were built into the timetable and although the timeframe has changed the level of scrutiny is not diminished and it is expected that further scrutiny will take place at the following stages:

- Reporting on the outcome of consultations on an amended/new ROWIP prior to a decision to approve/ publish a final plan
- After the approval of the new ROWIP the opportunity to consider the annual reports which are a new requirement over the period of the plan.

A website for the ROWIP review was set up in English and Welsh and all relevant documents are available here (<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/?p=39506>). Over 500+ emails (in Welsh and English) were sent out to the consultees in Appendix 1. Please note the consultee list only has titles of the organisation/group, but emails were sent both to local representatives and to National Organisations Headquarters. Individuals who have also expressed an interest have also been consulted but due to privacy may not be shown on the attached list. The consultation ran from 15th November 2016 to 29th January 2017. All replies were acknowledged.

Advertisements of the 1st Consultation also appeared in local press and on social media.

<https://twitter.com/MonmouthshireCC/status/801079341362937858>

<https://www.facebook.com/MonmouthshireCC/>

<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2016/11/22/councils-rights-way-improvement-plan-review>

A copy of the Argos article is below.

Residents are asked to comment on paths plan

MONMOUTHSHIRE County Council is inviting residents, businesses and organisations to comment on the review of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). The outline plan has been published on the council's website, with the existing

RoWIP published in October 2007 following extensive consultation. Its contents have enabled the authority to bid for and win grants to benefit the county's rights of way network, and also formed the basis for the council's rights of

way business plan. The review of the existing plan is required by the Welsh Government and will take into account new legislation like the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Monmouthshire's principal countryside access officer,

Ruth Rourke, said: "We invite as many groups, individuals and organisations as possible to contribute to the review of our Rights of Way Improvement Plan. "We welcome your views and any information you may have to provide a new RoWIP

document that will serve the county's communities into the future." Comments may be sent to countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk at any time until Sunday January 29. The plan can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/j2ovzf>

The Brecon Beacons and Monmouthshire Local Access Forum both were able to comment on the outline proposals or any other matter that they thought the ROWIP should take account of and received a specific report on this. They then received a report on the responses to this initial consultation in May 2017.

To supplement the responses received, on 3rd September 2018 further press was undertaken to advertise the publication of three questionnaires for landowners, the public and for organisations. On 8 November these were circulated by email to the consultee list in Appendix 1 along with a copy of the Outdoor Disability and Health Assessment Report and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Condition of the network and opportunities Assessment Report 2017/18.

In addition a public workshop was held on Wednesday 21st November 2018 at Shire Hall Monmouth. This ran from 10 to 4pm and included for the first hour a Monmouthshire LAF meeting. This workshop looked specifically at priorities and issues raised in the assessments.

3.0 RESPONSES TO INITIAL CONSULTATION 15TH NOVEMBER 2016 TO JANUARY 2017

The majority of consultees to the first consultation acknowledged receipt of the consultation but provided no comments. It is expected that most consultees will respond more fully via questionnaires or to the draft ROWIP consultation in 2019.

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
Monmouth U3A	1/11/2016	Looking forward to being involved
British Horse Society	24/11/2016	Acknowledge receipt waiting draft.
Reg Darge – Usk U3A	2/11/2016	I am chairman of Usk U3A and we do have a walking group that would be relevant. There are a number of walking groups in Usk and I have forwarded your inquiry to some 3rd parties in case they've been missed.
Myra France (Usk U3A)	2/11/2016	I am the coordinator of the Gentle Walking group who meet fortnightly on a Monday. If I can be of any help, please let me know
Eria Steggles	9/1/2017 & 11/1/2017	Harry and I Pathcare the healthy walking routes in Monmouth and have long tried/hoped for wheel chair access on Wye Valley Walk from Wye bridge to Dixon church. Happy to see upgrade in your plan. With reference to our local Healthy Walking routes;

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
		<p>1. Between Drybridge Nature Reserve and Anchor hill</p> <p>The wide metal bridge over the stream near the entry to Vauxhall Fields retains water up to about 2 inches deep on occasions; it is difficult to negotiate - especially if frozen! A hand rail is required for safety. A slight raising of the bridge at one end would allow the water to flow away. Why not ask the local army unit of engineers to do the job?</p> <p>Depressions at the three gateways and the first stile after Cowlings Lane, need to be filled in. Putting in gates instead of the three stiles would be very helpful.</p> <p>2. Between Rockfield road and the ODP an extra waymark post in the middle of the large field would be beneficial; there is some confusion because some walkers [usually with dogs] have established their own path which goes through a hedge and into a field which has no PRow.</p> <p>3. Salt's Lodge Lane - Intruding vegetation needs a drastic pruning to enable two walkers to proceed side by side, which might be a requirement for some disabled people.</p> <p>We have included major improvements as well as the general upgrading which you might like to consider</p> <p>New housing estate, Wonastow, Monmouth - There will be an increase in the need for suitable walking routes from this estate, Why not upgrade with gates where there are stiles and open up all the paths in the area? Put up signs around the edges of the estate to show where the public rights of way are, Perhaps Monmouth Walkers are Welcome and Monmouth Ramblers could be approached to be of assistance?</p>
<p>Pamela Mansfield The North Village Hall committee.</p> <p>Very similar comments were made by Chepstow U3A, Monmouth U3A and Trellech Community Council</p>	<p>12/1/2017</p>	<p>Our initial comments on the proposals set out in your document are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for the review of ROWIP being undertaken – the previous version is now 10 years old and needs to be updated to reflect the high priority being placed on countryside access by the Welsh Government. 2. Support for the principle of making a series of

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
		<p>assessments to establish a baseline for the new ROWIP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Concern about the scale of the process to be undertaken – it will be important to make the necessary resources available if the ambition set out in the proposal is to be realised. 4. Support for looking at the wider issues that clarify the purpose and value of the PROW network and the contribution that it can make to people’s lives and wellbeing and to the economy. 5. However, a PROW network that is fit for purpose – i.e. unobstructed, appropriately signed, with a usable surface and with furniture well-maintained and in good order - lies at the heart of the countryside access policy. It is only this that will enable the delivery of the wider benefits. 6. Support for the work of the Monmouthshire CC Countryside Management Service. A dedicated and properly resourced in-house team with a strong public service ethic and commitment to the network and its use by residents and visitors is essential. This must lie at the heart of the ROWIP. 7. Support for the roles that volunteers can play in helping to maintain and enhance the network and to encourage use by local communities, visitors and tourism businesses. However, volunteer input is <u>only</u> viable with the support of the dedicated Monmouthshire CC team with their integrated technical, legal and data handling resources. The availability of a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator is <u>critical</u> in encouraging and enabling volunteers to work effectively, to share best practice and in developing innovative approaches to obtaining best value from volunteer effort. The North and District Footpath Project would <u>not</u> have happened without this support. 8. Support for the inclusion of access land in the ROWIP. In our area, much of the land is in the ownership of Natural Resources Wales and is available for public access as a result of its dedication as Access Land under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. The Plan should include a clear statement from NRW of how it will ensure that public access provision is maintained to high standard for a variety of users

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
		<p>and abilities and how it will work to ensure delivery of the wider benefits of public access from its land.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Support for joining up the management and responsibility for Unclassified County Roads (currently with MCC Highways) with the remainder of the PROW network with all becoming the responsibility of MCC Countryside Management. The distinction between these two categories of route is often indistinguishable on the ground and it is illogical for them to be in separate management, especially as they will always have a low priority for Highways. 10. Support for a clear strategy to deal with problems of misuse that are both damaging to the surface and usability of PROW and other routes on Access Land, as well as presenting a danger to legitimate users. The main category of misuse is by motorcycles and quads. 11. Concern that inclusion in the ROWIP of the PROW within Monmouthshire that lie within the Brecon Beacons National Park will lead to a further diminution and dilution of available resources across the remainder of Monmouthshire. A transfer of resources that enables a proper level of maintenance and management of the routes must accompany any transfer of responsibility. 12. Support for the production of annual Delivery Statements to enable transparent monitoring of progress.
BHS Mark Weston	24/11/2016	Received with thanks
Chepstow U3A Walking Groups	19/01/2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As per The Narth Village Hall Committee comments above.
Joan Sheldon	24/1/2017	<p>CUR 51/Public FP 21 – Fingerpost by bus top at Wye Valley Hotel needs adjusting. Add destination and distance. Condition of fp21 not suitable for blind or partially sighted persons or those with mobility issues. Monmouthshire Tourism Economy – this path needs improving as it is the only access to widely advertised Pava Farm and vineyard shop: this attracts many visitors, many from overseas. FP381/50 – Fingerposts should be improved by more information re destination and distance.</p>
Caldicot U3A	29/01/2017	At a meeting of our walking group committee there was general agreement that the ROWIP has delivered to a

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
		<p>significant degree. In the early years much work was carried out by the countryside service, backed by volunteers, to identify problem areas, and generally improve the network and make it more accessible to the public and less abled. Replacing stiles with gates is a case in point.</p> <p>At present the condition of the network is considered reasonable but concern was expressed about the future. There are signs of deterioration. Reports and complaints are not getting any response and there is a tendency not to bother to report. We bemoaned the passing of the Report It form which was easy to complete.</p> <p>The opportunities for open air recreation and enjoyment in the Caldicot area are considered reasonable with easy access to the Castle and the surrounding countryside. However this does not necessarily apply to disabled users. Paths in the Park are often in a poor state with muddy areas and large pools of water. You do not have to be “less abled” to be wary of embarking on a walk.</p> <p>Another concern is Undy. Our walkers reported paths in poor condition with sparse signage. In recent years the countryside service has declared a policy of improving and maintaining paths near the urban areas. Alongside Govt policy of getting more people walking, paths were improved and leaflets produced to encourage people to walk near their homes. Unless these paths are regularly checked and maintained the general public will deter from using them.</p> <p>Opportunities exist to open up areas to wheelchair users. For example, Dewstow Golf Club and the fields belonging to the Heavens family. There is already a linkage from the park to these areas. We suggest a survey be carried out with a view to establishing where paths can be opened up and improved for access by “less abled” and young families with prams/pushchairs.</p> <p>As far as publicity is concerned, of course there is always room for improvement. Producing leaflets is an expensive and time consuming business, but couldn’t more use be made of local publications?</p>
<p>Trellech Community Council</p>	<p>20/01/2017</p>	<p>Comments were made which were similar to those of The Narth Village Hall Committee & Chepstow U3A above. They also said: - Trellech United Community Council has a keen interest in countryside access in and around Penalt, The Narth, Trellech, Llanishen, Catbrook, Whitebrook and</p>

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
		<p>Llandogo. Residents and visitors make considerable use of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Network and enjoy the use of Access Land in the ownership of Natural Resources Wales. Visitors and walkers make a significant contribution to the incomes of many local businesses, especially local shops, pubs and B&Bs. As with many other areas of Monmouthshire, well-maintained public rights of way are important for tourism.</p> <p>Several Community Plans, including The Narth and District Community Led Plan 2015 identified public footpaths and rights of way as being important to residents. In the Narth, this led to the establishment of a volunteer-based Narth and District Footpath Project. A comprehensive survey of public rights of way around The Narth has been undertaken and a programme of work is being implemented to improve signposting, clear some obstructed paths and otherwise improve access. In tandem with the practical work is a further initiative to encourage use of the network for healthy outdoor exercise and enjoyment.</p> <p>MCC Countryside Management has been very helpful in providing encouragement, training, support, people, materials and tools to facilitate the work of our local volunteers. Their input has been critical and we have an <u>overriding concern</u> that this review will be used to cut funding to Countryside Management and the activities and services that support countryside access.</p> <p>We look forward to the opportunity to participate in the review of the ROWIP and note that it is currently only in the early planning stage. We would like to be added to the list of consultees and will be happy to contribute in any way we can that would be of help to you.</p>
Monmouth U3A	03/02/2017	<p>Comments made as per The Narth Village Hall Committee. Also:-</p> <p>Our members make regular and extensive use of Monmouthshire's public rights of way network, and we have seen a marked deterioration of its condition over recent years and a lack of direction to work with the U3As and Ramblers to ensure obstructions to Public Footpaths are removed and essential stiles and bridges repaired.</p>

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
		<p>We hope our response to the Review will be taken into consideration and please let us know if we can be of further assistance. We would like to be included in any future consultations and to be kept up to date as the work progresses.</p>
Canals and Rivers Trust	27/01/2017	<p>Thank you for advising the Canal & River Trust (the Trust) that the council is undertaking a review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Trust own and maintain sections of the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal and we promote the canal towpath as part of the Natural Health Service, as an outdoor gym, a perfect place for free, open air exercise, recreation and enjoyment. We are The towpath also has a part to play in the Active Travel network and forms part of NCN 49. The Usk Valley Walk includes a stretch of towpath and several walks include the canal are promoted within the World Heritage site and it is hoped that Goytre Wharf can be promoted as hub destination for walking in the future.</p> <p>The Canal & River Trust would welcome the opportunity to meet with you during the preparation of the review draft, in order to provide additional information where possible, and to explore and consider locations for possible partnership working in the future.</p>
Natural Resources Wales	26/01/17	<p>Many thanks for sending us your outline plan and timetable for the Review of Monmouthshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). We note the timeframes included in it.</p> <p>As this is the first Outline and Timetable we have received for the Review of ROWIPs, if it would be helpful to you, we would like to work with you to help explore how NRW could best help support the Review of ROWIPs.</p> <p>Our intention is to try and inform the assessment stage of the process and signpost you to information which NRW may hold and/or facilitate discussions in relation to NRW work.</p> <p>To this end Carys Drew, our Recreation and Access Advisor will contact you shortly to discuss.</p> <p>The only minor comment on the consultation is in reference to section 4. Where it states that 'NRW require information on records of limitation and the</p>

Consultee	Date Received	Comments
		processes in place for authorising this'. Although this point was originally made as part of our advice to Welsh Government in developing the draft ROWIP guidance, as it was adopted by Welsh Government it should be referred to as a requirement of WG Statutory Guidance [not NRW].

In addition to the above responses there was also a request received on 4 October 2016, from Matthew Hamar UTAG Chair, outside of the formal consultation for the inclusion of a ramp from Usk Island up onto the railway. This it is stated would provide significant barrier free circular route around Usk. It is also requested that the railway track from Usk to Lt Mill be developed as a cycle track. On 24th April 2018 Usk Trail Access Group also said they wanted the following routes created:-

1. Creation of cycletrack / footpath from Little Mill to Usk Primary School along old railway line (along length subject to current planning applications and along railway line adjacent to BAE and over river bridge, through tunnel to the old Monmouth Road where it would need to link to the highway.
2. Creation of surfaced footpath along the riverbank path running South from the road bridge (A472) to the cricket ground on the East side of the River Usk. This is currently a muddy path that is not accessible to people using wheelchairs or prams and often becomes boggy during the winter months. Whilst we understand that it is not recorded on the Definitive Map of public rights of way, it has been in use for many decades without obstruction or hindrance and so can be assumed to be a public right of way.
3. Upgrading of the public footpath to a cycletrack (or bridleway) running from the south side of the A472 (opposite the Halfway Inn) to the railway line (GR 324029). This is needed to connect the proposed cycletrack back to the main road.

In response to an invitation to the workshop and site of the assessment reports the following was received:-

The Wye Valley Ramblers said: *"I have looked up our response to you from the last ROWIP and I think our response this time would be very much the same except that we would ask for a more active effort from CAS regarding landowner obstructions to the ROW. Most of the long standing unresolved issues that I have pressed CAS to deal with are landowner obstructions and there has been a lamentable success rate with some issues now more than 10 years old."*

Monmouthshire's Enforcement Officer said *"I have scan-read the maintenance and enforcement bit and thought what was there is fair. Yes a new more prompt method required for enforcement is required – the new yellow notices have been quite effective. Also lots of Definitive Map issues come up and looking at 67 year old definitive map does not help."*

Mr Cadman *"I would be grateful if you could support the inclusion of Llanvair Kilgeddin to Nantyderry routes in the priority plan. From the surveys over the past three years there is a clear understanding of what needs to be done and support from the landowners. In addition to the benefits of local residents, there are an increasing number of accommodation options for visitors in the area that would benefit from improving the access to the countryside in our part of the Usk Valley; the Pont Kemys caravan park,*

Swanmeadow cottages, Glanusk farm bed & breakfast, the new Glamping Site and most recently the application to convert the former school in Llanvair Kilgeddin to bed and breakfast accommodation.”

4.0 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

There were three questionnaires, one for the public, one for organisations and one for land managers. They were made available via email and were on Monmouthshire’s website. They were advertised in the press also. Not everyone responded to every question.

4.1 PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE:

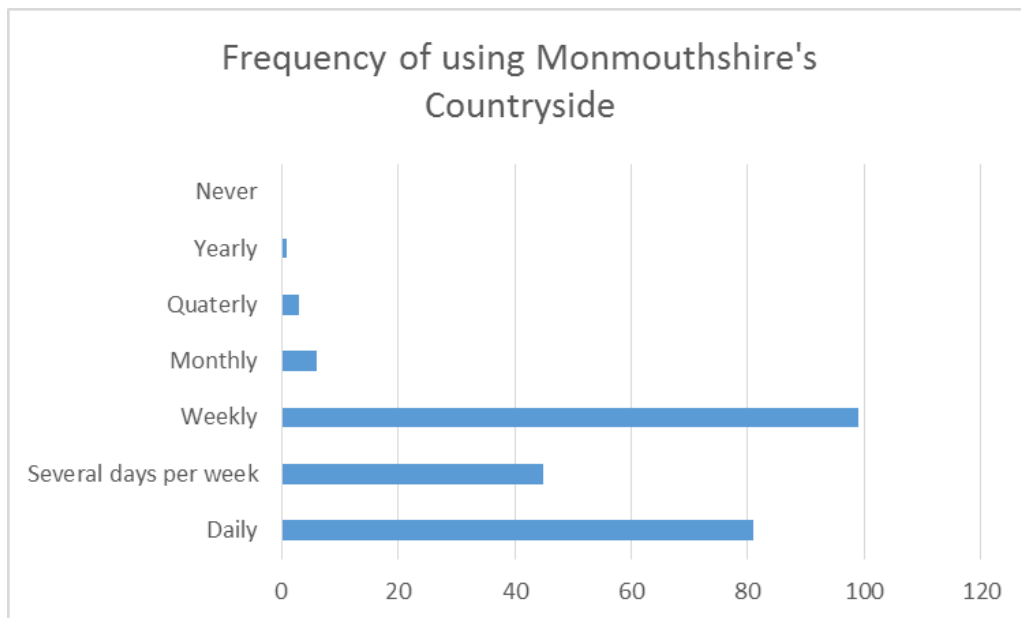
There were 235 respondents of which 52% were male, 47% were female and 1% were unknown. There was only 1 respondent of the age group 19-24 and none younger. 8% respondents were in the age group of 25-44, 8% were aged 75+, 16% were 45-59 and 68% were aged 60-74.

1. Are you a member of any of the following organisations, clubs or groups (tick all that apply)?

The results of this question showed that 98% of respondents had membership and therefore it would be worth countryside services working in partnership with these groups.

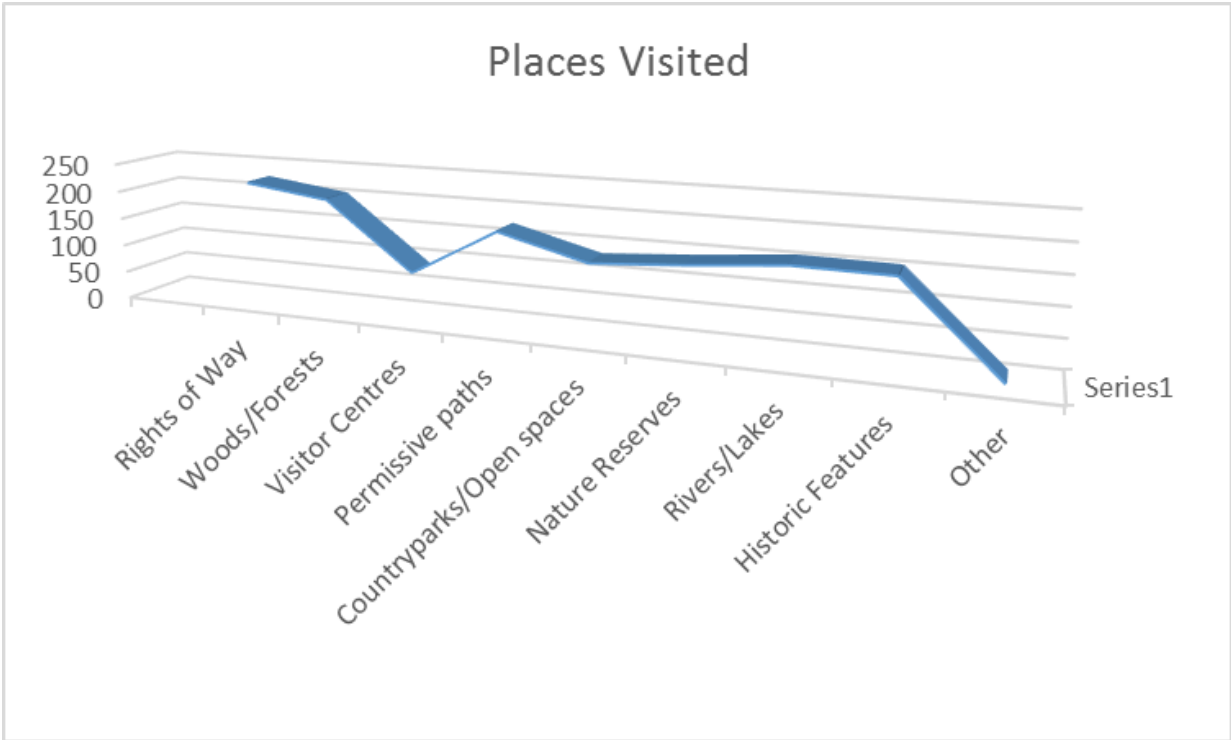
National Trust 85	Wildlife Trust 41	RSPB 34
Walking Club or association 129	BHS, Riding group, pony club or society 26	Cycling club or association 12
Woodland Trust 18	Running Club 9	Off Road Club 2
		None 5

How frequently do you visit the Monmouthshire countryside (tick one)?

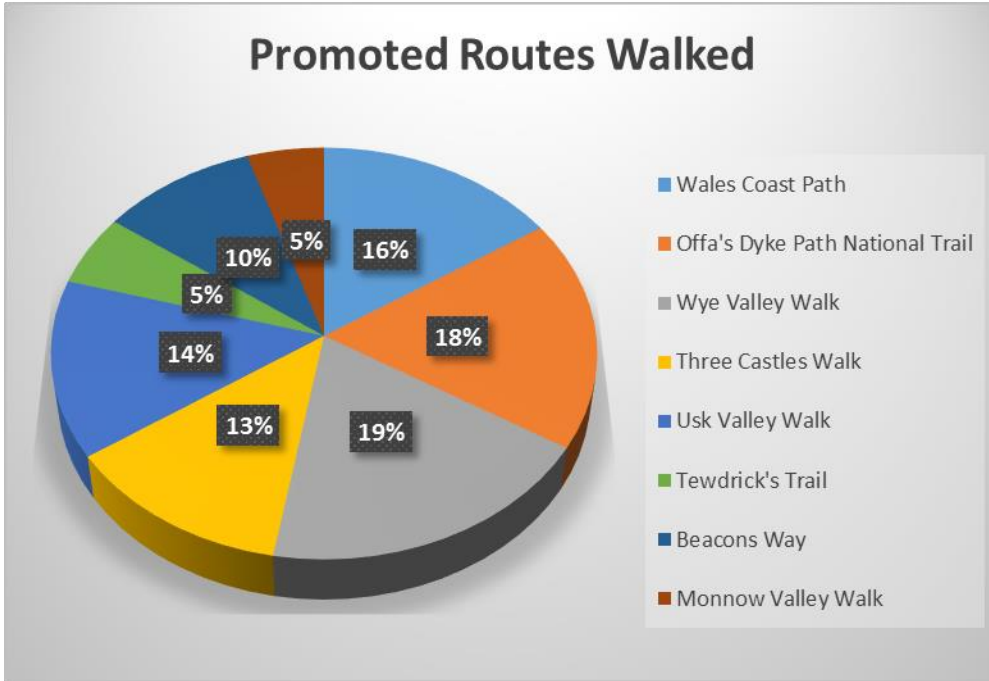


Which of the following prevent you using the countryside in Monmouthshire or affect how you use it?		
Don't like walking/cycling etc. 0	Health restrictions 11	Livestock/animals 59
Inability to read a map 0	Lack of information 12	Conflicts with landowners 68
Difficulty getting to countryside 0	Lack of secure parking 13	Unclear routes 91
Previous bad experience 1	Lack of river crossing 13	Routes overgrown with grass 110
Type of landscape 2	Lack of time 31	Routes blocked with crops/ploughing 115
Personal safety concerns 7	Problems using roads/verges to link paths 41	Other 22
Dog fouling excessive 9	Difficulty with access 48	

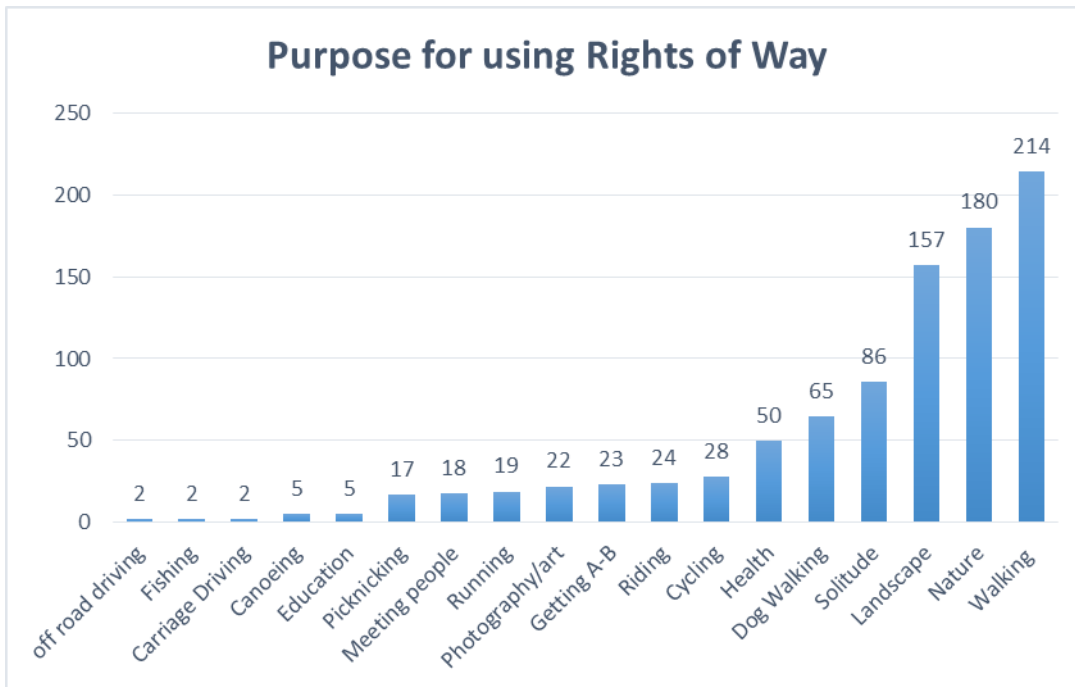
What types of places do you typically visit in Monmouthshire's countryside? (tick all that apply)



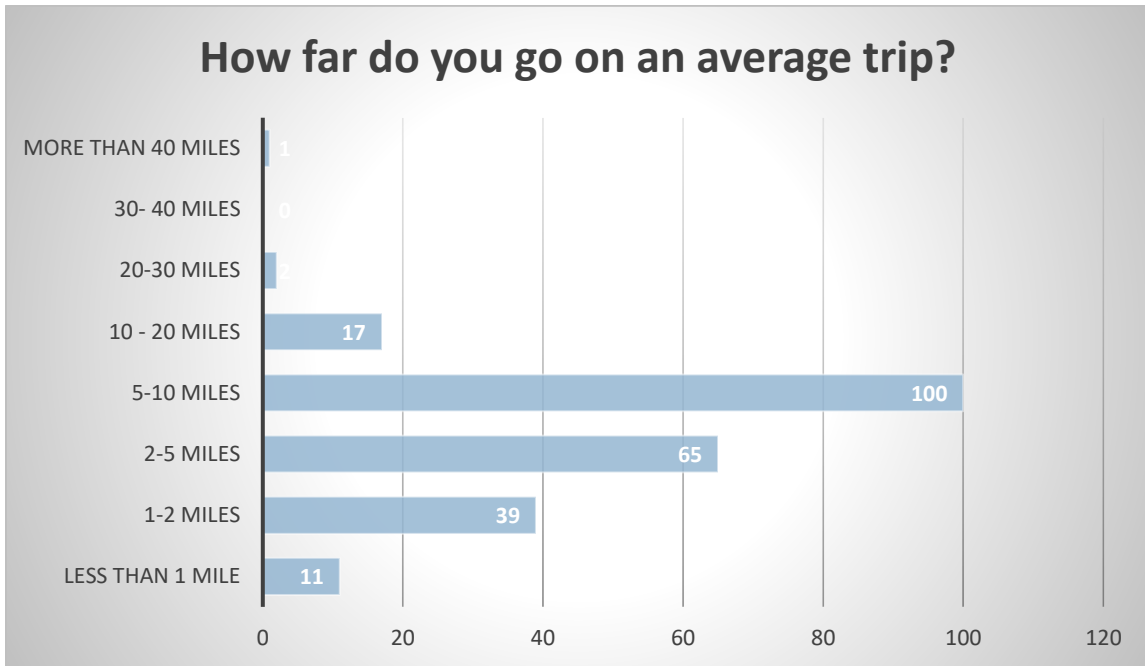
Have you ever used any of the following long distance promoted routes in Monmouthshire? Tick all that apply



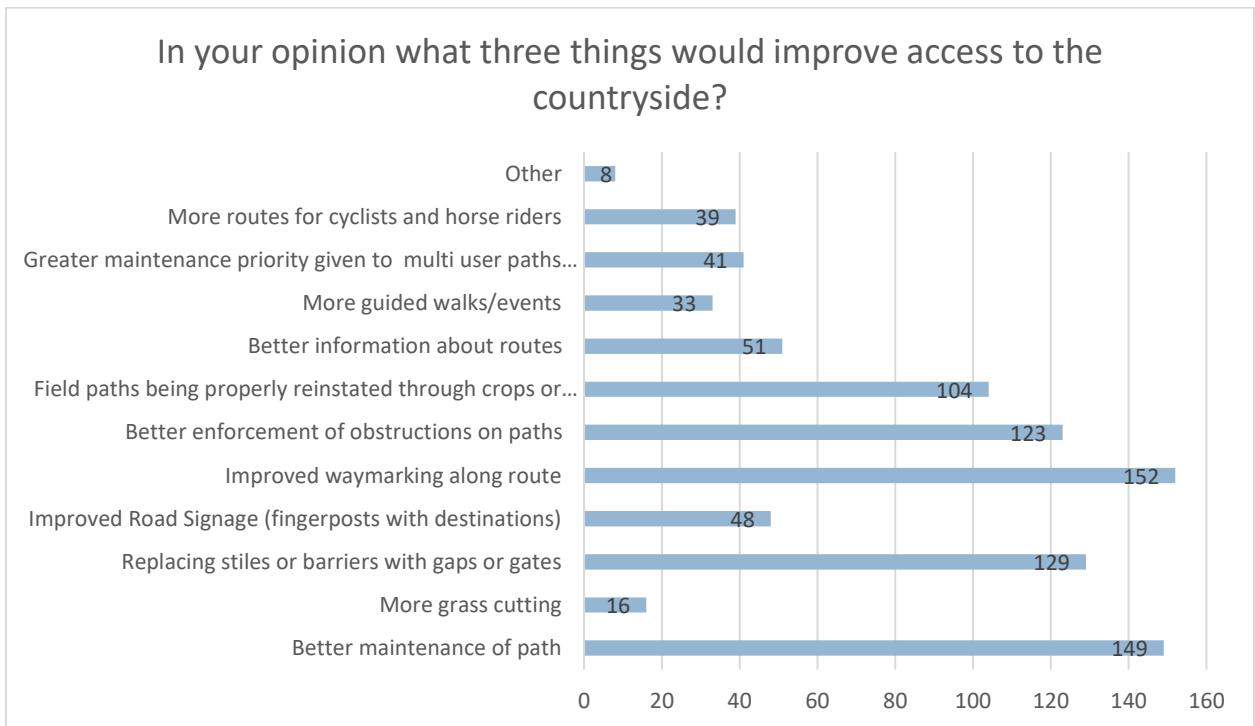
What are your reasons for using Rights of way (tick all that apply)?

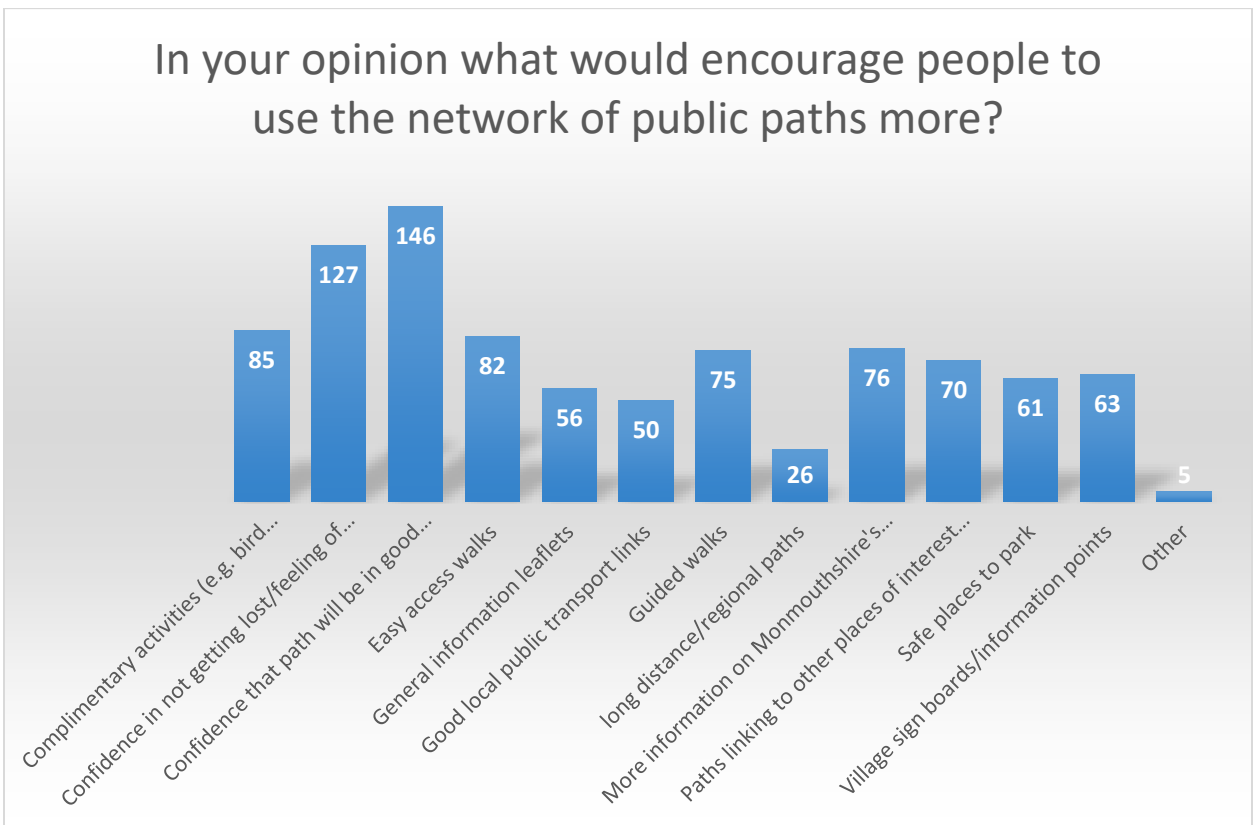
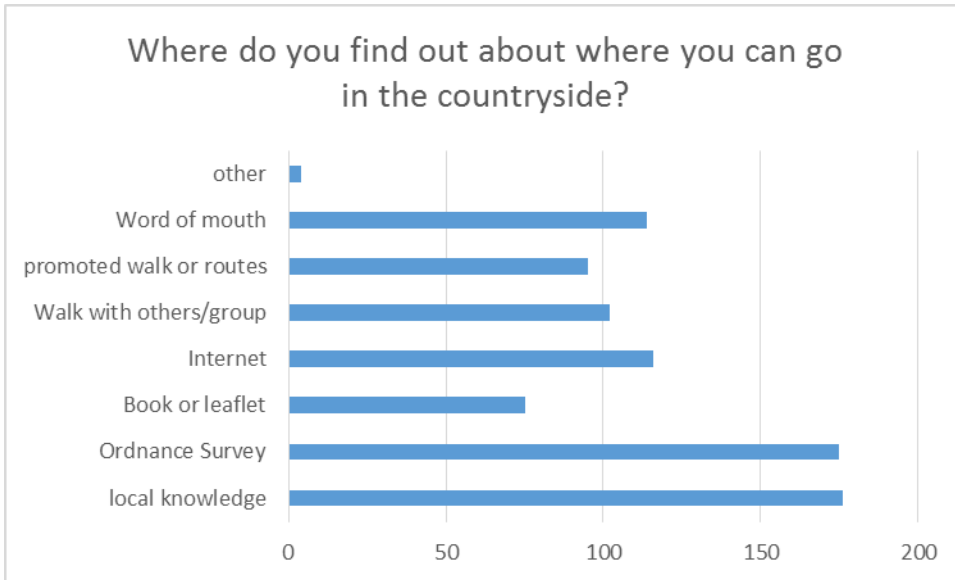


On a typical visit how far do you travel on rights of way in the countryside?



In your opinion what three things would improve access to the countryside?





When using rights of way in Monmouthshire how satisfied are you with the following provisions (one tick per question)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion
Existing rights of way network	14	169	38	14
General maintenance of routes (surfaces etc.)	3	150	72	10
Accessibility for disabled people	0	51	65	119
Condition of stile and gates etc.	3	155	73	4
Signs at route/ road ends	6	137	79	13
Waymarking on routes	4	91	124	16
No of routes close to home	55	114	30	36
Information provided by MCC and partners about rights of way	4	142	50	39
General enforcement of routes (obstructions etc.)	3	86	123	23
Recording of paths and interactive electronic map provided by Countryside	6	79	54	96

When considering access to Monmouthshire’s Countryside and its rights of way are there any particular things you do not like or would like to see being done differently?

There were quite a few respondents who thought improved signage was important. There were also a few about improving structures for those less able and for dogs. Quite a few thought enforcement should increase and there were a few comments about enforcement against illegal off-roading. Several would like to see improved communication and quite a few would like to see more use of volunteers and community councils to maintain and fund improvements. There were also comments made about the lack of bridleways and maintained verges and county unclassified roads connecting them.

Here is a selection of the comments made:-

- *Fewer stiles, replaced with access for large dog!*
- *Greater enforcement re: illegal off road motorcycles. Do not over sanitise paths*
- *NRW being too precious on what is theirs.*

- *More communication on the condition of the paths and rights of way.*
- *We need effective and safe cycle routes particularly around Usk. Footpaths need better maintenance.*
- *Signage more clear...we have got lost several times when we have lost a trail.*
- *Clear marking at the entry and exit of rights of way. Suggested walks and routes with wildlife info on website.*
- *Clearer marking at times and obstructions removed. Better enforcement in respect of some landowners or tenants.*
- *We are very lucky where I live (The Narth) because local volunteers work hard to keep the footpaths in good order*
- *Tree fall is frequently an issue in and around the Wye Valley walks.*
- *Motorbikes are an absolute menace. Groups churn up the paths to slippery deep mud and the noise spoils our peaceful Sundays at home.*
- *More signage and more visitor friendly. Map boards, benches picnic areas to make you feel more welcome and encourage you to stamp and spend time. Sometimes it feels like march from a to b.*
- *I would like more leaflets with routes placed in easily accessible shops and library near me. There are too many rights of way that have effectively disappeared due to a lack of respect by landowners. This is mainly applicable in the centre of the county and has put me off planning walks in certain areas as I know I will encounter issues. Maintenance of the right of way network would encourage me to visit these under maintained areas.*
- *Replace stiles by accessible gates. Also improve areas around entrances to paths which often get slippery and muddy.*
- *Needs more investment in ROW maintenance but appreciate budget constraints. Perhaps prioritise strategic routes that link key attractions and points of access e.g. bus routes, car parks etc. Also provision of safe off road cycle routes would be a priority for me.*
- *Stiles frequently have no provision for dogs which is unsatisfactory - having to lift them over stiles is not easy (and can lead to injury).*
- *I have answered several of the above as "satisfied" as the majority of times they are, but for some I am "dissatisfied" sometimes. Paths sometimes blocked, sometimes deliberately by landowners. I do not feel Monmouthshire enforce blockages strongly enough. Also gates on ROW being locked by landowner.*
- *I appreciate there must be stockproof fencing, but dog flaps next to Stiles would make it easier.*

- *More resources given to the footpaths team, i.e. some nails and spades*
- *Off-road motorcycles are a major problem in the lower Wye Valley area.*

This is in large part a problem because many tracks are nominally highways open to all vehicles. The designation of these needs changing to footpath or bridleway and responsibility transferring from Highways, who do precisely nothing to maintain these tracks to Countryside Management who, at least around The Narth, are quite active.

- *A point of contact to report blocked paths, it's difficult to access the right person. Involve walking and other interested groups routes to maintain and report on.*
- *Educating landowners about their responsibility to maintain availability of access e.g. installing safe break points in electric fence; not using barbed wire at stile access*
- *Better signs especially around farm buildings and on farm land. Landowners should be made aware of the rights of way that cross their land and that is illegal to obstruct the rights of way or prevent access to the rights of way.*
- *Updated information of condition of paths to be accessed electronically would be useful.*
- *The most important thing is for the full network to be well signed, way marked and maintained with good quality safe and usable stiles, gates, bridges, etc. So, bringing this up top scratch would be the top priority. I accept that this would require the participation of users and communities, so both the existing MCC countryside rights of way team (field wardens) and the volunteer coordinator are essential.*
- *In the south of Monmouthshire there is a distinct lack of bridleways and restricted by ways for horse riders and carriage drivers. Some restricted byways are closed, some are not marked as such. Gates are locked preventing horse riders and carriage drivers from accessing restricted byways across fields. If you can't use them, then we could potentially lose them!*
- *Verges between paths and roads are very often overgrown and often never maintained at all, it would make a big difference if the council cut all the path over the verge when cutting the grass beside the road.*
- *R65. The right of way network could be improved if landowners were encouraged to do more to maintain paths over their land by ensuring paths are kept clear, stiles etc. are kept in good condition and their hedges are not causing obstructions or a nuisance. Perhaps it would be in everyone's interest if they were encouraged to waymark paths over their land.*
- *Temporary public right of way closures can be a serious problem, it seems sometimes they are allowed without really being justified, without providing an alternative route when sometimes an alternative route could be provided and seemingly without too much consideration given to those who use the path. It seems usually temporary closure orders are granted for 6 months*

even when it is not necessary for the path to be closed for that amount of or all of that time, resulting in path users unnecessarily being prevented from using the path. Often a notice saying the path is temporarily closed is displayed out of sight of the actual closure warning people it is an offence to contravene the order, despite the fact the path is not physically closed, is actually currently open or has not yet been closed. Temporarily closing paths may sometimes be necessary but I think more should be done to prevent people from unnecessarily being stopped from using paths and where possible diversions should be provided.

- *R65. . Stiles overgrown especially at roadside where grass verges may be cut but access to stiles ignored. Same with signage either broken off by hedge trimmer or overgrown with ivy. I have photographic evidence of the very poor maintenance of footpaths in my locality, many are fast disappearing. Financial resource required to address these issues and some common sense use of available manpower/machinery.*
- *R70. More rights of way should become multi user rights if way for walkers and cyclists. The growth of mountain-biking is putting more pressure on a limited number of bridleways and byways.*
- *R77 Make access at gates wheelchair friendly and ease of use. Though I do understand about controlling livestock in fields. Tarmacking in and around gate areas so less muddy puddles and fear of getting stuck in wheelchair!*
- *R79 Would like more effective regulation of illegal off road motorised bikes and vehicles, and of illegal use of the Wye Bridge pavements by cyclists who do not dismount, because I have almost been hit several times, even in the Black Mountains.*
- *R81. I would like to see bridleways cleared twice a year - some of the hedges are so overgrown it is impossible to walk down them in foot, let alone with a horse. We have very limited bridle paths in Monmouthshire, linked by crossing fast roads but most of these paths are so overgrown or eroded they are unusable. I have been satisfied with the footpaths when I have been hiking.*
- *R82. Linking of bridleways to avoid dangerous roads (Tre-Herbert Road Llandegveth being a typical example) or safe places to park where horses could be unloaded to use the bridleways.*
- *Partner with community councils, charities and the public to replace stiles with kissing gates where possible or at least add access for dogs, many stiles elsewhere have had this for years. The public would contribute to a dedicated well-publicised fundraising campaign to increase access. This could be done on a community council and county basis. Every community council has much funding available to serve its community. What better use could there be than to support access and healthy lifestyles? Many of our villages have no facilities and no/few buses, leaving older residents feeling trapped. In our beautiful, safe and welcoming county, footpaths must be cherished.*

Discourage fencing in fields without livestock to encourage existing and create new wildlife corridors.

Creating permissive footpaths have very successfully been used elsewhere to create short and

long circular walks. I unsuccessfully proposed this to Llanover community council, regarding my own village of Llanfair Kilgeddin. The hope is to create safe off-road access for us to join the Usk Valley Walk and the nearest pub. We have no facilities, many residents are very elderly and there are several tourism businesses in the area, including my own.

Monmouthshire could partner with neighbouring councils on buying furniture like kissing gates in bulk, reducing costs and cohesion on regional and national routes.

We urgently need more cycling paths both for tourists and connecting villages and towns. We are very proud of the Velothon and we have many cyclists all-year round, but as a local resident I don't cycle here because I don't feel it's safe. Many of our roads are narrow, many drivers speed and become irritated. Also, many cyclists ride a few abreast and are otherwise inconsiderate.

- *Inadequate funding of footpath and furniture maintenance. Greater devolvement of work to volunteers, widening scope of their input.*
- *More access for horse riders. The county's roads are getting so busy they are dangerous. Many bridleways are cul-de-sacs or have a status change so you can't continue on them. Riders very often feel like second class citizens*
- *There needs to be more off road paths for cyclists and horse riders to get them off the roads which are dangerous. However the paths created/alterd also need to ensure that they are not magnets for off road motorbikers coming over from Bristol/Birmingham by using the barriers suggested by the BHS.*
- *Farm animals particularly cattle on footpaths. People I know will avoid fields with cattle in. Some signage about the cattle and how to react with them would help or possibly farm visits with a farmer to give advice. Should one walk around a herd or keep to the footpath. I avoided one field with cattle in because of the density of stocking. I have also been mock-charged by young bullocks.*
- *More field officers to support volunteers carrying out path maintenance.*
- *more local signage/small information route boards as to where paths go*
- *Attention to stiles and more gates to allow older people access. Many hip/knee problems and find wobbly stiles impossible. Prow are important for health & mobility of an increasing elderly population*
- *More joined up action - we have some great new bridges in Llanvapley area which are an expensive resource but many of them do not lead to maintained paths & so are of limited use.*

Is there anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit or improve people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Monmouthshire?

Responses are below. Note some were repetitive and therefore not all are included where this is the case. There were also some responses similar to the previous question relating to the need for improved signage and maintenance which are also not noted due to the repetitious nature of them elsewhere in the report. Any personal details or offensive comments are not shown.

- *I would like to see a stronger commitment from Natural Resources Wales to the maintenance and provision of waymarked walks and general access routes on NRW land.*
- *Maybe more picnic sites*
- *It would be very helpful to dog owners and to encourage Monmouthshire's reputation as a dog-friendly county if any publications about footpaths etc. could comment on the suitability or otherwise for dogs of the routes described.*
- *We have to play to Monmouthshire's strengths by making it save and easy to cycle and walk. Usk, and other towns are dying when they could be centers of beauty and activity. Public rights of way should be working hand in hand with tourism and local business to make our county an even better place to visit.*
- Local bus routes are in jeopardy. It would be difficult for some groups of people such as young people to access the countryside
- Mutual respect by walkers and landholders of their respective rights. I have no doubt that there are faults on both sides but enforcement by the Council seems weak. Anti-social behaviour by some walkers who drop litter etc. could perhaps also be tackled.
- More and better guided walks.
- Off road motorcycles a problem. Perhaps give areas for them to use? And promote through associations/signage.
- Some areas are not within range of mobile phone access. Many of our walkers have some sort of disability and it would be helpful if we could contact emergence services should there be a problem.
- I do not feel Monmouthshire give enough priority and money to ROW. It is important for people's health (saving money for NHS) and also for tourism.
- Info on walks linked to bus routes to make linear walks easier.
- Management is obviously essential in places, but please keep the nature of the countryside as well. Maintaining the feeling of wildness, encouraging flora and fauna by protecting habitats. Don't lose what makes it so special.
- More tourism related publicity - promotion of Monmouthshire as a walking destination would be beneficial all round.
the occasional seat or bench
- Walking festivals for local areas within Monmouthshire.
- Better signage and more online information on walks that are easy to follow
- More easy access routes would make it easier for disabled people
- Promote that the country side is an asset that is shared by a range of individuals and groups in partnership with the land owners.
- ROW network is maintained to a higher standard than in all the neighbouring counties. It just needs to be used and schools need to teach basic map reading skills: I have seen how many walkers disregard a waymarked route through fields owned by friends.
- Useful to have a basic A to B map at the start of a public rights of way (that cover large open areas of farmland) so the user is confident they are not straying off the designated path.

- Cooperate with landowners, charities, NRW, DEFRA, neighbouring and regional councils to eradicate invasive species together consistently over several years. Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and others are out of control. No single council can eradicate it alone. The Monnow River Association have proven that it works if done over a whole geographic area consistently over a few years.
- Reopen Victorian water fountains for drinking. We are fortunate to still have a few around in some state. Let's make them usable again.
- Development of family picnic/play areas similar to those found in Forest of Dean.
- Better paths mean more use and better health benefits. Better paths mean more tourists. We need to keep them open
- Set up team of volunteers to assist in the maintenance of way marking like they do in France. Could also extend to collecting litter and assisting with track maintenance
- OS maps being keep up to date with path diversions, changes to field boundaries, etc.
- Publish a set of sustainable 4x4 promoted routes.
- increased publicity to schools
- Better promotion of health walks - advertising literature/leaflets together with distribution into surgeries, chemists etc. Improved care of health routes e.g. ensuring all of the route is accessible. For wheelchair routes - information boards or written description of what to look for.
- Send leaflets to all registered walking groups in Monmouthshire. If funding available hold a walkers conference(get a sponsor)

4.2 ORGANISATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE.

The following Organisation's representing a mix of User Groups, Government Bodies, Charities and others responded:-

1. Caldicot U3A Walking Group
2. Chepstow Walkers are Welcome
3. Monmouthshire Local Access Forum Member
4. Monmouth Rambling and Hill Walking Club
5. Usk Trail Access Group
6. Canal & Rivers Trust
7. CLA Cymru
8. Sustrans
9. St Arvans Community Council
10. Caldicot U3A Group
11. Llanbadoc Community Council
12. Llangwm Community Council
13. Pontypool & District Group of Ramblers Association Greater Gwent Area
14. Llangybi Fawr Community Council
15. Trellech United Community Council
16. The Narth and District Footpath Group
17. Water of Wales

The majority of Organisations said they were interested in Monmouthshire as a whole, but four have more regional/national interests and two said they have very local interests.

How would you rate the Monmouthshire Rights of way network for different users?

	Very good	Good	Badly	Very Badly	Don't Know	n/a or blank
For Walkers	2	12	1	1	1	0
For Riders	0	6	1	1	6	2
For Cyclists	0	5	4	1	6	0
For those with disabilities	0	1	3	6	5	1
For vehicles	0	1	0	1	12	2

Q5. How aware do you feel local people and visitors are of the rights of way in Monmouth shire?

69% of organisations ticked “aware”. 31% of organisations ticked “Not Aware”.

Q6. Is your organization aware of the Definitive Map? Yes or No. Q6b) If you are aware of the Definitive Map have you used it?

94% of organisations are aware of the Definitive Map and 81% of them have used it.

Q7. Has your organization any evidence which might be useful to the rights of way improvement plan that people require either more or different access to the countryside and where this is required?

- Chepstow Walkers Welcome: *“We think it is important to extend the RoW network to make it accessible to a wider range of users. In particular, those with limited mobility or health issues. The replacement of stiles with kissing gates has proved successful in St Arvans and could be extended to areas such as Mathern and Mounton.”*
- Monmouthshire Local Access Forum Member: *“Must consult with disabled users. Must only use data that is valid to assess requirements not useless surveys. ROWIP should not be a wish list. Should be attainable. Prioritise those parts of previous ROWIP that were not achieved. All DMMO and diversion applications must have all information clearly available on line to all.”*
- Usk Trails & Access *“Yes, we often observe wheelchair users and pushchair users unable to access paths in urban areas because they are not barrier free.”*
- Canals & Rivers Trust *“We have towpath counters which record use. None of these are in Monmouthshire. It may be possible to install more or move existing if this would be of interest.”*
- Sustrans said *“Yes The missing link in Clydach Gorge on National Cycle Route 46, Usk to Pontypool Cycle Route and Caldicot Greenway (path along disused railway)”*
- St Arvans Community Council *“Minuted correspondence usually from resident commentary about difficulty accessing pathways”*

- Caldicot U3A *“More access required. More parking facilities.”*
- The Narth & District Footpath Group: *“People tell us that they value having some routes where they can be sure of following them without fear of getting lost, especially in woodland setting. The colour-coded wm routes on the NRW woodland estate fulfil this role very well. However, we are concerned about the commitment of NRW to maintaining these routes in appropriate condition - good signing, information and surface condition. These colour coded wm routes are an essential part of the mix. In our area we are very fortunate in having large areas of (mainly NRW) Access Land in addition to the ROW network and this provides a wide range of opportunities. We support the MCC policy of Least Restrictive Access for PROW furniture”.*

Q8. There is a cross over between the ROWIP and other plans and priorities and potential partnerships that may arise from them to deliver maximum benefits to the public. What such policies and strategies do you have which we could take account of.

- *The Canal & Rivers Trust have a waterways and well-being outcomes report which will be updated regularly. [Http\[s://canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/thumbnail/33802-canal-and-river-trust-outcomes-report-waterways-and-wellbeing-ful-report.pdf\]](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/thumbnail/33802-canal-and-river-trust-outcomes-report-waterways-and-wellbeing-ful-report.pdf) We may start on further localised waterway plans in due course. The Council will be advised of this as if/we progress.*
- *Take account of the Active Travel act and MCC's integrated network map*
- *Ensuring that residents have unhampered reasonable access to countryside and its many benefits, taking into account the need for land, resource and habitat management*
- *Maintenance carried out on row*
- *Collaboration between walkers, cyclists and probably horse riders towards keeping paths clear and ensure they are as free as possible of vehicular traffic including motorcycles*
- *see our standing orders: <http://www.trellechunited.org.uk/Trellech-United-CC/UserFiles/Files/Documents/Standing%20Orders%202016.pdf>*
- *The overall objective of the Narth and District Footpath group is “to ensure that the public rights of way network and other selected routes in and around the villages (the Narth, Whitebrook, Pen y Fan and Maryland) are properly signed and in a condition that enables residents and visitors to enjoy using them”. We believe this ties in very well with the ROWIP and we depend on the ROWIP having at its centre a strong commitment to improving Rights of Way across Monmouthshire. We have largely completed phase 1 of our project which included:*
 - *an initial stocktake of the path network*
 - *identifying the works required to bring them up to an acceptable standard*
 - *putting in place the arrangements to enable the works to proceed**We are now engaged on phase 2 which includes:*
 - *implementing a prioritised programme of work to ensure that the network is maintained in a good condition*
 - *encouraging the community to engage with its network of footpaths and bridleways through village walks, volunteering and making us of it as part of everyday life.*

We have worked closely with MCC throughout the Project and we need the ROWIP to provide the framework and initiative for this collaboration to continue.

- *Establish clarity over use of RoW to access water.*

Q9. Given that resources are limited, what three improvements do you think would make using/visiting the Monmouthshire countryside easiest and most enjoyable (rank 1-3, 1 being most important?)

1. Better maintenance of paths
2. Better enforcement of obstructions on paths
3. Field paths being properly reinstated through crops

Q10. Is there any specific improvement that would encourage currently inactive people to use row in your locality?

- *With BBNPA we are working on a Step-by-Step project which is social prescribing Doctors recommend walking towpath as part of active lifestyle/well being*
- *Guided walks*
- *Safe access to a good range of circular walks with information to give guidance e.g. looking at historical artefacts, particular habitats etc. You get an increase of walkers for example when bluebells are out ... why not link some ancient trees/look at industrial residue/ get a great view...*
- *Obstructions to row removed; stiles made safe.*
- *Increased advertising to encourage membership of local walking groups (especially the Ramblers) pointing out the considerable benefits which can be gained both physically and mentally*
- *increase barrier free access*
- *Replacing stiles and barriers with accessible gates or gaps*
- *Much of this is about people feeling confident that that PRow are in good condition (surfaces, way marking, fingerposted from public highways (with destinations), easy to follow and with good furniture and minimal obstructions) and that they will not get lost. Waymarked or recommended routes can help give this confidence, as can grading of routes (easy, difficult etc.) and the opportunity for led walks or being part of a walking group of some kind. Resting places are also of great benefit to people who find walking a little difficult. It is a matter of concern that NRW has a tendency to remove seats and benches on its land and not replace them. Communities could perhaps help with some of these issues.*

Q11. What is the level of your organisation involvement in local paths?

Water of Wales, Sustrans, The Canal & Rivers Trust, Llanbadoc Community Council and The Narth have an active working group/ working party on rights of way.

Pontypool & District Ramblers Association Greater Gwent Area, Sustrans, The Canals and Rivers Trust, Caldicot U3A all have a nominated councillor/representative who monitors rights of way

Q12. What is the level of interest of your organization in being more actively involved in maintaining promoting or improving the network of paths in your local area?

	Very interested	Moderately interested	Not interested
Maintenance	Sustrans, Canals & Rivers Trust, Llanbadoc CC, Pontypool & District RA, Trellech United CC, The Narth & District Footpath Group	St Arvans CC, Llangwm CC	Caldicot U3A
Promotion	Sustrans, St Arvans CC, Llanbadoc CC, Pontypool & District RA, The Narth & District Footpath Group	Caldicot U3A, Llangwm CC, Trellech United CC	
Improvements	Sustrans, Llanbadoc CC, Trellech United CC, The Narth & District Footpath Group	St Arvans, Caldicot U3A, Llangwm CC, Pontypool & District RA	
Other (specify)	<p>Sustrans: Construction promotion and maintenance of national cycle network</p> <p>CLA Cymru: representing landowners</p> <p>The Narth: Survey and monitoring. Events village walks etc.</p> <p>Waters of Wales: We are particularly interested in RoW leading to/alongside water.</p>		

Q13. What would encourage greater participation from your organization in maintaining, improving and promoting paths?

Access to Grants or other funding	Canals & Rivers Trust, Sustrans, St Avans, Llanbadoc CC, Llangwm CC, Pontypool & District, Trellech CC
Availability of workforce or volunteer group	Canals & Rivers Trust, Sustrans, St Arvans, Caldicot U3A, Pontypool & District, Llangybi CC, Trellech CC
Nothing would	none
Other	The Narth & District Footpath Group: <i>The ability to work with NRW Estate on non-row routes on their land. It is disappointing and frustrating that NRW does not have the policies or capacity to work with volunteers. For PROW we have reached a level of activity that we are content to maintain for our area. The main issue for us in</i>

	<p><i>doing this is being able to rely on continuing support from MCC Countryside Warden Team and Volunteer Co-Ordinator</i></p> <p><i>Pontypool & District: - some "teach - ins" by cc countryside access on organisation and involvement of path volunteers could be very helpful.</i></p> <p><i>CLA Cymru : Members being represented on LAF.</i></p> <p><i>Waters of Wales: Recognition of the need to access water in order to enjoy the statutory prn on all flowing water for which there is a considerable body of evidence.</i></p>
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Q14 Overall how would you like to see the rights of way in Monmouthshire improved in the next ten years and what would be your highest priority?

- *Improve and Promote projects such as "discovery trail"*
- *Better waymarking and maintenance*
- *Have a priority list and concentrate on paths that are most likely to be used and enjoyed. Complete the missing link in Clydach Gorge, complete the Usk to Pontypool walking and cycling route, complete all the short term and medium term routes set out in MCC's INM*
- *Joined together planning through Highways and ROW and community Groups*
- *Provision of safe row without obstructions/safe stiles/gates and bridges. Good waymarking crop enforcement*
- *publicity/promotion*
- *reviewing stiles and fingerposts*
- *improved maintenance of stiles & wm*
- *Removal of obstructions (priority) and disabled access improvements*
- *Our absolute top priority is a PRoW network that is fit for purpose – i.e. unobstructed, appropriately signed, with a usable surface and with furniture well-maintained and in good order. This high quality PRoW network that MCC, communities, landowners and individual users can collectively be proud of, lies at the heart of countryside access policy and it is only this that will enable the delivery of the wider benefits that the ROWIP seeks.*
- *The highest priority has to be the identification and recording of RoW that are unrecorded or under-recorded on the definitive map. Following from that, ALL RoW need to be properly signposted so that people are aware of their existence, and are thus in a position to report obstructed and overgrown paths.*

Q15 when considering the Monmouthshire countryside and its rights of way are there any particular things you do not like or would like to be done differently?

- *We have a serious concern about Unclassified County Roads. We have quite a number of these in or area. They are heavily used by motor cycles and because many of them are on slopes they are now so badly eroded that they are dangerous for walkers, horse riders or cyclists to us. To the*

individual user, these routes are just part of the PRoW network and they are the part that we receive most complaints about. We understand that responsibility for these routes in MCC lies with Highways for whom they are low priority and we cannot see any joining up of effort with the Countryside Team to bring them back to an acceptable standard. We believe strongly that responsibility for these routes should pass from Highways to the Countryside Team with an appropriate budget, so that they can be properly integrated in to the Countryside Access Network which is a much more appropriate place for them than in the Highway Network where they currently sit in a position of sad neglect.

- *It is disappointing to see the roadside finger posts with destination place names being replaced with new ones that just have a symbol. This loses the sense of the PRoW network connecting places together, which is something that we believe is important to see promoted rather than lost. It makes the network both more accessible and inviting, and gives it a greater sense of purpose.*
- *The ROWIP should contain a clear strategy for landowners and public bodies to work together to tackle illegal use – principally by motor cycles and quads – which is damaging the network and causing users to feel unsafe. The Plan should include a clear statement from NRW as the principal owner and manager of “Access Land” to provide clarity as to how it will ensure that public access provision is maintained to high standard for a variety of users and abilities and how it will work to ensure delivery of the wider benefits of public access from its land.*
- *Rationalisation of the network - getting rid of routes which do not have any practical usage and concentrating resources on well used routes*
- *Very good team working with very limited resources. Keep up the good work.*
- *Micromanagement is not necessary - and there is always a lot of fun in wayfinding but there needs to be a balance between keeping walkers on a narrow, defined path thus ensuring safety, security and safeguarding environment and the encouragement of exploration. I wouldn't like to see too many clearly demarked pathways.*
- *Provision of funds to enable row to be maintained.*
- *Keen to strictly exclude motorcycles and other off road vehicles from all walking trails*
- *All RoW must be protected, not just the key ones. If a RoW has low usage, this could be because people are unaware of it, or feel unable to use it.*

Q16 is there anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit or improve people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Monmouthshire?

- *Access to drinking water - human and doggies. Signage including "What to see" and how far, how long - these are great.*
- *Control of dangerous farm animals where footpaths traverse farm yards or fields. A blitz on fly-tipping in the countryside*
- *Liaising with NRW's forest-paths people re way marking paths through woodland. (New grey posts for way marking were erected in local woodlands many months ago by NRW but they have not yet affixed any way marker discs to them, despite my reminding them)*
- *We would like to see a central theme of the ROWIP being the achievement of a high quality PRoW network that MCC, communities, landowners and individual users can collectively be proud of. It is vital that support for the work of the Monmouthshire CC Countryside Management Service is maintained. A dedicated and properly resourced in-house team with a strong public service ethic and commitment to the network and its use by residents and visitors is essential. This must lie at the heart of the ROWIP if it is to be successful.*

- *There needs to be space for creative thinking and approaches to the challenge of improving the condition of Monmouthshire’s PRoW network and its Access Land and encouraging more people to use it for the many benefits that it provides.
Given the likelihood of continuing restrictions on MCC’s budget, there could be an opportunity for communities and users of the network to be prepared to play a bigger role in supporting MCC in carrying out its responsibilities in order to make its resources go further. We have been able to demonstrate that volunteers can play a big part in helping to maintain and enhance the network and to encourage use by local communities, visitors and tourism businesses. However, such volunteer and community input is only viable with the support of the dedicated Monmouthshire CC team with their integrated technical, legal and data handling resources. The availability of a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator is critical in encouraging and enabling volunteers to work effectively, to share best practice and in developing innovative approaches to obtaining best value from volunteer effort. The Narth and District Footpath Project would not have happened without this support.
We would be very happy to work with MCC to share our experience with other groups or communities who are considering taking action to improve their local PRoW networks.*
- *People are excluded from water and waterside. Strategy is all too often predicated on one opinion of the legal situation without giving due regard to other opinions. The importance of recreation in, on or beside water should be recognised, and every effort made to facilitate. Public access to open spaces (land and water) needs to be taken into consideration in all planning and development decision-making, to ensure that rights, proven or otherwise, are protected.*

4.3 LAND MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

There were 17 responses to this questionnaire. 14 stated they were landowners working the land, 1 is a public organization and 1 is an Estate.

1. What area of Land do you manage?

Under 5Ha 4 5-50HA 7 50-200Ha 4 200-500Ha 4 Over 500Ha

2. How do you principally manage your land?

Arable Livestock 4 Both 4 Other 8 (Woodlands/domestic wildflower meadow)

3. Do you have any of the following on your land?

Rights of Way 13 Permissive paths 4 Open Access 1 Glastir or other grant access 2

4. In the last week/month, have you experienced any of the following?

Please tick as many as apply	Week	Month	Never
Walkers on rights of way on your land	11	4	
Riders on rights of way on your land	5	11	
Cyclists on rights of way on your land	4		9

Motorised users on rights of way on your land		1	15
Walkers/riders/cyclists/motorised users illegally on your land	5	3	8
Dogs out of control on your land	3	3	9
Fly tipping on your land			13 3 no comment
Vandalism to crops/stock		1	12 3 no comments
Vandalism to property/machinery		2	11 3 no comment

5. In terms of rights of way law and best practice, which of the following would you like more advice on?

Ploughing and cropping 0 Signage 7 Barriers/stiles/gates 6
Changes to the network 1 Other 3

6. How well do you feel that the Rights of Way on your land meets the needs of current users?

Well 12 Badly 4 Don't know 0 Not Interested 0

7. Given that current resources are limited what THREE improvements do you think would make using/visiting the Monmouthshire countryside easiest and most enjoyable (rank 1 to 3, 1 being the most important)

1. Improved way marking along routes
2. Better maintenance of paths
3. More routes for horses and cyclists
4. Replacing stiles or barriers with gates or gaps (Increased barrier free access)

8. How aware do you feel local people and visitors are of the rights of way in Monmouthshire?

Very aware 3 Aware 8 Not aware 5

9. Are you aware of the Definitive Map?

Not aware 3 Aware 13

11b if you are aware of the Definitive Map, have you used it?

Yes 10 No 6

10. How well do you think that local plans & partnerships address countryside issues?

Very well 0 Well 7 Badly 4 Very Badly 2 Don't know 3

11. When considering the Monmouthshire countryside and its rights of way, are there any particular things you do not like or would like to see being done differently?

- *I do not like deliberate obstructions or paths where the landowners have deliberately obfuscated the path by removing signs and waymarkers. As landowners we should make sure the paths are clear and clearly marked.*
- *More localised walk leaflets - other than those centred around the 'tourist areas' and large towns. Lots of good walks around the villages of Monmouthshire - including the south of the county.*
- *The landowner is not always in the wrong. Important to foster good working relationships with landowners. Consult landowners on the problems they face with users of rights of way. Have option on MCC website for landowners to report problems. Consider help to divert paths out of farmyards to improve safety and wellbeing of users and landowners. On line access to DMMO's and diversions and closures must be accurate and up to date. System should be like planning applications with full transparency and all documents available.*
- *As a landowner I understand the fears others have about rights of way, but I think many of these fears are often exaggerated. My nearest village is isolated and has no services, the nearest bus stop is a long walk and many of my neighbours are elderly. Some have dogs. They walk their dogs on my land and meet me and others to chat. For some it's one of the few places to go. What harm would they do? What would they do if I tried to make access difficult as many others do? As it is they can't walk further because the stile is too high. A criminal is not going to be stopped by the lack of a footpath.
Many of our footpaths are very ancient, used by our families to walk to church, to work, to school, to friends for centuries. Britain is the only country in the world I know of that grant us such privileges. We should cherish and protect that.*
- *Enforcement of dogs on leads*
- *The council does nothing for footpaths*
- *Better signage for understanding who can use which paths*
- *maintenance of gates so as they are not likely to be left open*
- *If a right of way or permissive path has not been used for a lengthy period of time by any member of the public then it should be easier for the landowner to request that the path be decommissioned.*
- *I think there should greater emphasis placed upon a 'code of conduct' for walkers i.e keeping to the path; having a map and sticking to it; keeping dogs on a lead and fouling taken away!;; being respectful to the landowner i.e treating fields in the same way they would like their gardens(if they have??) treated.*
- *It all comes down to funding so that the row can be properly & safely maintained*
- *Improved enforcement for blocked and damaged routes*

12. Is there anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit or improve people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Monmouthshire?

- *More tourism related information*

- Improved fingerpost markers along the routes, and more localised walk leaflets or display boards available from points within villages
- Better access for people with less mobility. We have an ageing population, we all have grandparents. How can they climb over stiles?
- Maybe the council could actually do something. The footpath management is a joke
- Improve maintenance of paths
- dogs on leads through livestock
- More bridle paths
- It is a partnership which requires respect and tolerance from all parties. 99% of the walkers I have using the paths on my property are very nice people and it is a pleasure to meet them and make their experience of the countryside enjoyable. Unfortunately, it is always the minority who spoil things for everyone
- Clear, safe, unobstructed path
- MCC should CPO the land to complete the Clydach Gorge cycle route

5.0 WORKSHOP

The public workshop was attended by 27 people. Several were MCC staff but also present were private individuals, countryside volunteers and representatives of the following organisations:

- Monmouth Rambling and Hill Walking Club
- Usk U3A
- Caldicot U3A
- Lower Wye RA
- Chepstow Walkers
- Monmouthshire LAF Members

The meeting started with a presentation on the processes involved and what assessments the authority was having to make. Welsh Government Guidance for producing a new ROWIP can be found here: - <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160711rights-of-way-improvement-plans-en.pdf>

Matthew Lewis, Green Infrastructure and Countryside Manager then put this in context and talked about the Well-Being Act, Service delivery demands and resources.

5.1 THE EXTENT TO WHICH LOCAL RIGHTS OF WAY MEET THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC

Ruth Rourke gave a presentation on the public rights of way and other types of countryside access available. There are 2,164.83km of path 505.78 km of which are in the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Footpath 89%, 1927.306 km

Bridleway 5%, 109.31km

Restricted byway 6%, 126.8km

Byway 1.52km

Other highways a, b, c roads 1609.6km

There is still a lack of off road routes for horse riders, cyclists and motor vehicles. There is also a lack of suitable routes for those with mobility and other health issues. The first ROWIP prioritised creating and maintaining bridleways over other routes. It was generally believed that this should still continue.

Other identified issues were:

- Connecting people with wildlife and landscapes
- Access to woods – uncertain what is allowed. Better promotion of what is available in each woodland is required. There is a desire to make more use of woodland tracks. Maintenance in woodlands can be a problem especially for those with physical and mental health problems.
- Limited access for those with mobility issues – Stiles still remain a problem. The Health Walk sector needs to be pushed and taken more seriously.
- Development of bite sized doorstep opportunities – more circular walks
- Links to green spaces/quality access
- Farm animals were deterrent to users
- Cropping a problem
- Lack of Car parks/toilets
- **What do children require?** – Education of countryside code important. Wild Tots Group in The Narth is a good example of getting children outside. NRW doesn't make it easy though. Organised walks should be targeted to children/families/schools.
- Crossing points on main roads – several main roads do not have suitable crossing points dividing communities and the network
- **What would make people go out?** – Better promotion to targeted audiences. Information and confidence. Ambassadors are underutilised they should be the "Go to People". Chepstow Walkers Welcome provide information. There are over 2000+ visitors to their website.

5.2 ENFORCEMENT/MAINTENANCE & POLICY

From March 2012 to March 2018 the Countryside Access Service received 2800 enforcement and 9400 maintenance issues, resolving approximately 55% of enforcement cases and 66% maintenance issues per year. Resourcing was considered a major issue.

It was felt that the general policy (*"The Service must prioritise where it focuses resources and standards to accurately reflect areas of most demand. It must also be able to be adaptable to cover such things as bad weather events"*) was acceptable.

Ian Blomeley the PRow Enforcement Officer gave a presentation on Enforcement with particular regards to the approach to cropping.

Do you agree policies should enable rather constrict timely action? Generally this was agreed.

How do you want enforcement prioritised? No real consensus, but some issues require a more timely approach if possible – such as cropping. It was noticed that some new crops were a problem and some things like long grass (which are a crop to farmers) are not covered by legislation so no enforcement or maintenance can be undertaken.

5.3 BRIDGES

There was a presentation regarding the maintenance of the 1326 bridges on the rights of way network in Monmouthshire. 9%+ of these bridges need repair or replacement.

All bridge work is currently prioritised according to the prioritisation used for all other maintenance and enforcement issues and includes risk and inconvenience and use. Recently Llangua Bridge in

Grosmont was removed, as it was considered highly dangerous. The river is moving very rapidly here and a new site where the river is not ox bowing needs to be sought for replacement of the bridge. The new bridge would need to be at least 13m long, designed for the site, made to order and installed by contractors. It is estimated that the costs of this would be in the region of £27,000

This bridge and others like it will therefore will only be replaced if additional funding is found. There is a question of policy here as the Council has a duty to maintain the network, but with current resources and the number of bridges that need replacing benefits to the general public must be taken into account. The previous bridge was little used but since its removal a few local people have asked for a replacement sighting that it helped supply them with a local walk and was good for their well-being. However for the costs of replacing this bridge, many other smaller bridges on well used paths, could be replaced or fixed. This resourcing dilemma is something that local people in Grosmont have specifically asked to be looked at.

What are your views? Is the prioritisation still agreeable?

There was general consensus that the prioritisation for bridges was correct and a fair approach.

5.4 DIVERSIONS/CREATIONS AND EXTINGUISMENT ORDERS

There are approximately 60 legal orders outstanding. **Should these also be prioritised according to “public benefit”? What would this be?**

Issues to consider:

- Routes where landowner has paid full costs
- Type of order – town and country planning act might be required for development
- Some diversions are required to resolve obstructions/enforcement

To be consistent with ROWIP and maintenance prioritisation public benefits could consist of

- Routes that allow more types of user – consistent with aims of ROWIP of increasing access to those with disabilities/health issues and who have little off road access
- Routes with positive health and safety benefits – such as providing safe off road routes as alternative to busy roads
- Links to amenities/tourism attractions

This proposed prioritisation of legal orders was generally agreed.

5.5 PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

The following comments were made regarding promotion and publicity:

- There is capacity to Link to visit Monmouthshire all types of walks
- Information Boards are required like in Talgarth
- The Tread & Trot route website is missing – this & other routes are being moved and put in one place under visitmonmouthshire.com
- There is a problem with many errors on the Ordnance Survey Maps and the length of time taken to reproduce them.
- There should be a Walking Festival for Monmouthshire?
- CAMS - The User Face is difficult and needs to be improved
- Volunteers can help with publicity and promotion. Efficient use of volunteers to Pathcare promoted routes
- Long distance cycle track/bridleway required

5.6 PRIORITIES

There is a high desire and need to continue providing schemes of improvement where it is of most benefit to the public. Underlying this there is a recognised need to improve the health of the population and provide for their physical and mental well-being. The last ROWIP had the following three priorities

1. To achieve an up-to-date and accessible Definitive Map and Statement (Chapter 6 in the ROWIP)
2. To target improvements on rights of way so greatest public benefit is obtained (Chapter 7 Maintenance and Enforcement)
3. To improve the accessibility of the rights of way network (Chapter 8)

These objectives are all still relevant, but in light of other policy and legislative changes it would be good to review these and the other priorities in the ROWIP to ensure they are still fit for purpose now and for the next ten years. Attendees thought these were still the three most important priorities.

How would you like to see countryside access in Monmouthshire improved in the next 10 years and what would be the highest priority?

Attendees said with regards to priorities there should be:

- Improved strategy for health walking
- Community links
- Connectivity
- Maintenance was considered highest priority and looking for more resources.

5.7 OTHER ISSUES RAISED DURING THE EVENT.

- Volunteers – This came up in many discussions and it was clear that volunteering and enabling volunteer groups to take part in maintenance and promotion could be expanded if simple processes, tools and staffing resources were available.
- Library of resources would be useful.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS TO ALL CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The comments made so far support the need for the ROWIP to be revised and raise a number of new issues that will need addressing by Monmouthshire County Council and also by Partners.

A range of partners have been identified which if further resources are found could assist particularly with marketing, information and promotion.

There is a strong emphasis on maintaining and improving the way in which we work with local volunteer groups particularly walking groups and with landowners.

Respondents gave a clear message that enforcement of obstructions on routes and enforcement of reinstating paths after ploughing or cropping needs to improve. Signage and waymarking is also an issue for both landowners and the public. Interestingly there is a strong desire for more signage/information boards around villages. There is also strong support for making routes easier to use and for more routes to be made available to cyclists and horse riders and a range of path improvements have been suggested.

Respondents struggled to prioritise works required, but enforcement and maintenance came over clearly as a first priority. Overall the information from this consultation showed that locals regularly

use rights of way and wish to do so more. They value the benefits that walking and riding can bring support an approach based on the Well-Being and Active Travel Plan. Views from these consultations will now be used to prepare a draft ROWIP.

This report will now be translated and made available on our website.

The Countryside Access Team would like to thank all those who have been involved with the review to date and also to those who have expressed an interest in assisting with the rest of the process.

APPENDIX ONE

CONSULTATION LIST

In many cases, both national and regional/local offices, and representatives of groups have been consulted.

Several groups consulted have also sent documents to individual members

1. Brecon Beacons National Park
2. Gloucestershire County Council
3. Herefordshire County Council
4. Balfour Beatty
5. Newport County Council
6. Powys County Council
7. Carmarthenshire County Council
8. Bleanau Gwent
9. Torfaen County Borough Council
10. Forest of Dean District Council
11. Wye Valley AONB
12. Natural Resources Wales
13. CADW
14. Environment Minister Lesley Griffiths AM
15. Members of Parliament and Welsh Government representing areas within the Brecon Beacons National Park and Monmouthshire
16. Secretary and Members of Monmouthshire Local Access Forum
17. Secretary and Members of Brecon Beacons National Park Local Access Forum
18. All members of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
19. All members of Powys, Torfaen, Newport and Monmouthshire Local Access Forums
20. All Community Councils in Monmouthshire
21. U3A Groups – Crickhowell, Ross on Wye and District, Newport, Caldicot, Monmouth, Usk, Tredegar, Abergavenny and Chepstow
22. Ramblers Cymru
23. Ramblers Association
24. Lower Wye Valley Ramblers
25. North Gwent Ramblers
26. NW Monmouthshire Ramblers
27. Pontypool Ramblers
28. Newport Walking Club
29. The Narth and District Footpath Group
30. Monmouth Rambling and Hill Walking Club
31. Usk Trail Access Group
32. Pontypool & District Group of Ramblers Association Greater Gwent Area
33. Raglan Local Ways
34. Llanbadoc and other community Volunteer Group Leaders
35. All Walkers Welcome Groups
36. South wales group long distance walkers

37. British Driving Society (Wales)
38. Byways and Bridleways Trust
39. British Horse Society
40. Monmouthshire Pony Club
41. Llanagybi Pony Club
42. Vale of Usk Riding Club
43. Wye Valley Riding Club
44. Monmouthshire Hunt
45. Trellech Riding for the Disabled
46. Riding for the Disabled
47. Health and Social Care Co-ordinator
48. Aneurin Bevan Health Trust
49. Action for the Blind
50. Gwent Age Concern
51. Abergavenny Walking for Health
52. Chepstow Walking for Health
53. CAIR The Monmouthshire Disablement Association
54. Disability Sports Wales Officer
55. Gwent Association for the Blind/ gelligaer group
56. Gwent Outdoor Centre – Gilwern
57. LSB (Local Service Board) Development Manager
58. Melin
59. MHA
60. Monmouthshire Exercise Referral Co-ordinator & FIT4life walking group leads (all four towns)
61. Monmouthshire Voices
62. National Exercise Referral Scheme
63. North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity, Abergavenny
64. Salvation Army Abergavenny
65. Age Concern
66. Alcoholics Anonymous UK
67. Alzheimer's Society
68. Autism Cymru
69. British Heart Foundation
70. Depression Alliance Cymru
71. Mind - Cymru
72. Wales Centre for Health
73. Wales Council for the Blind
74. Wales Council for the Deaf
75. Disability Wales
76. Disabled Ramblers
77. Fieldfare Trust
78. Gavo
79. Wales Council for Voluntary Action
80. Groundwork Wales
81. All Monmouthshire Volunteers

82. British Mountaineering Society
83. Cambrian Caving Council
84. CTC Cyclist Touring Club
85. Sustrans
86. Welsh Trail Riders Association
87. GLASS
88. Auto cycle Union
89. Treadlightly
90. All Wheel Drive Club
91. Wye and Welsh Landover Group
92. LARA
93. Green Lane Association
94. Gwent Federation of Women's Institute
95. Duke of Edingboroughs Award
96. Monmouthshire District Scout Council
97. Girl Guiding Gwent Commissioner
98. Coleg Gwent
99. Welsh Orienteering Association
100. Abergavenny and District Civic Society
101. National Farmers Union
102. CLA Cymru
103. National Trust
104. Woodland Trust Wales
105. Forest Enterprise
106. Agents for estates - Duke of Beaufort, Glanusk , Llanarth
107. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (Cymru)
108. British Trust for Ornithology
109. RSPB Wales
110. British Upland Footpath Trust
111. Canals and Rivers Trust
112. Canoe Wales
113. Gwent Wildlife Trust
114. Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust Wales)
115. Mountain Forestry
116. Clwyd & Powys Archaeological Trust
117. Open Spaces Society
118. Keep Wales Tidy
119. Chepstow Racecourse
120. Camping and caravanning club
121. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
122. National Grid
123. Railtrack plc
124. Western Power Distribution
125. British Telecom
126. SEWTRA

127. CPRW
128. Youth Hostel Association
129. Lower Wye Valley Society
130. Celtric Trails
131. Severn Estuary Partnership
132. Gwent Police
133. Offa's Dyke National Trail Officer
134. Wales Coast Path South Regional Officer
135. Monmouthshire County Council Equalities Officer, Sports and Well Being Project, Youth and Community Manager, All Monmouthshire County Council Green Infrastructure and Countryside Team Officers, Sustainability officer, Highways Manager, Legal Services and all Management including Chief Executive, Head of outdoor centers, Head of Community Led Delivery, Rural Programme Manager, Youth Service Manager, Equalities Manager
136. All Monmouthshire County Council Members

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Future Generations Evaluation

(includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Ruth Rourke Countryside Access Manager</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644860 E-mail: ruthrourke@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2019 – 2029)</p>
<p>Name of Service</p> <p>Tourism, Leisure, Culture & Youth</p>	<p>Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed</p> <p>25 March 2019</p>

Page 177

Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal.

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>The assessments show that rights of way contribute towards jobs and the economy. They also show that there is opportunity for working with others, sustainable transport benefits by improving walking and cycling opportunities, social and health benefits by working more proactively with communities and volunteers. Improvement works on paths can be prioritised to improve tourism and benefits to local businesses.</p>	<p>- Maximise positive opportunities by continuing to work with partners as well as other key organisations including the local community, volunteer groups and local businesses.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and</p>	<p>Appendix 3 shows that a new ROWIP will promote and support the sustainable management of the rich and varied cultural landscape of</p>	


Appendix 5

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Monmouthshire. Policies and actions will enhance and maintain biodiversity locally and help contribute to a resilient Wales.	
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p> <p>Page 178</p>	<p>Appendix 2 shows what is required to get inactive people outdoors and to improve the health of residents and those with disabilities. A new ROWIP will set out policies and actions for the management of rights of way and countryside sites to reduce barriers to residents using the outdoors and to achieve a network of well promoted, useable paths, to help residents improve their health and well-being.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities will also be further encouraged especially working with community and other volunteer groups who can play an important part in identifying improvements, leading health walks, helping with maintenance and promotion of the network.</p>	
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Assessments show that a new ROWIP will holistically address the present and future needs of the communities within Monmouthshire by setting out clear policies and actions that address the economic, social and environmental issues facing the area.</p>	<p>- Maximise opportunities for engagement with a range of key stakeholders.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language</p>	<p>Assessments show that rights of way play an important role in heritage and culture for local communities and tourists. A new plan if made can</p>	<p>Promote countryside access to others so that they can maximise opportunities to for volunteering and</p>





Appendix 5

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	reflect this and will importantly provide the means for which access to the countryside for various recreational activities can be undertaken..	participation a wide range of outdoor activities.
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	Preparation and development of assessments in order to draft a new ROWIP has included full up front community, partner and stakeholder engagement. If it is agreed a draft rowip can be prepared than another 3 month consultation will follow.	

How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	Assessments for a revised plan establish the need for long-term planning and management arrangements to ensure that outcomes in the plan if made are sustainable in the future.	The assessments present actions to protect, maintain and improve access to the countryside both now and for future generations. The assessments recognise the long-term challenges of social, economic and environmental regeneration within Monmouthshire.

Appendix 5

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The assessments and consultations identified that it is important to work in partnership with others both locally on a community basis and with volunteers, but also regionally and nationally with organisations such as Natural Resources Wales and neighbouring authorities. Several new partners were identified.</p>	<p>The assessments have been widely promoted in social media and the press. There has been three consultations, one workshop and a set of questionnaires. The assessments have been prepared in collaboration with partner organisations, the local community and other key stakeholders including the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum. Any resulting ROWIP will include the results of the public consultation. Furthermore, if a plan is produced it will be subject to a further 3-month public consultation before being finalised.</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The extensive consultations undertaken before and during the writing of the assessments has ensured that the local community and wider partners have been fully involved in the delivery of the assessment reports. The ROWIP review process requires that a further 3 month consultation is undertaken when the draft rowip is prepared.</p>	
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Assessment three identifies resources, issues and looks at opportunities to maintain and improve countryside access. Appendix 1 & 3 show how the last ROWIP has been instrumental in accessing substantial grant funding and improving the management of rights of way. Rights of way are severely under resourced, but a new ROWIP would give opportunities to work with others and look at ways of addressing resource issues.</p>	
 <p>Positively impacting on people, economy and environment and trying to benefit all three</p>	<p>The primary focus of the assessments is identifying the needs of the people now and in the future, using rights of way to benefit the economy, the environment and to provide the means for which the public can access our rich cultural heritage.</p>	<p>Any new ROWIP prepared would ensure contribution to all 7 of the national well-being goals.</p>

Appendix 5

3. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Positive through improved physical and intellectual access, volunteering and activity	None	
Disability	Positive through improved physical and intellectual access	None	
Gender reassignment	None	None	
Marriage or civil partnership	None	None	
Race	None	None	
Religion or Belief	None	None	
Sex	None	None	
Sexual Orientation	None	None	
Welsh Language	Positive through supporting further interpretation and information provision	None	

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Social Justice	Positive through improved physical and intellectual access, volunteering and activity for all	None	

Appendix 5

Safeguarding	None	None	
Corporate Parenting	None	None	

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

Numerous documents and plans such as Monmouthshire's Well Being Assessment and Wye Valley AONB Plan, BBNP assessment and draft ROWIP, consultations with Monmouthshire Local Access Forum and others. The appendices 2 & 3 contain details of documents/links to data used in the assessments.

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The Assessments show the need to maintain long-term planning and management arrangements, it considers the benefits of supporting a tourism product, and providing economic, social and environmental improvements to provide improved physical and intellectual access, volunteering opportunities and activity. This supports the need for a revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Monmouthshire.

7. Actions. As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
Draft ROWIP and carry out 3 month consultation	April - September	Countryside Access Manager	

8. Monitoring: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	Impacts will be re-evaluated when the ROWIP has been drafted and the results of the next consultation are known. September/October 2019
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