

Outline Business Case – Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion

Contents

1. Executive Summary	2
2. Introduction	2
3. Strategy.....	4
4. Financial Implications	6
4.1 Demographics	7
4.2 Latent Demand	8
4.3 Competitor Review	9
4.4 Current Budgets.....	11
4.4 Assessment of Current Performance.....	11
4.5 General Business Case Assumptions.....	12
4.7 Income and Expenditure Projections.....	13
4.8 Project Capital Costs	14
4.9 Community Benefits	15
4.10 Tourism Benefits	17
4.11 Capital Funding	17
4.12 Other Benefits	17
5. Health and Safety	19
5.1 Risks	20
6. Conclusion	23
7. Recommendations.....	23

1. Executive Summary

This Business Case seeks support for the building of an outdoor covered events structure ('Events Pavilion') within the grounds at Abergavenny Castle & Museum. (Please note this Business Case forms part of a range of activities detailed within the five year plan which was approved by cabinet in December 2016)

This structure will allow us to develop a programme of events and activities which will both generate income and be of value to the local community.

Events and related activities are well recognised as being central to the delivery of the Museums Service. Events provide an excellent vehicle for active engagement of both existing and new target audiences and are a more proactive way to be 'inspiring' and to 'bring alive' museums, heritage, arts and culture – central tenets of the vision and mission of the Monmouthshire Museums Service.

A feasibility study has already been commissioned and completed which informs the design, layout and location of the covered structure and suggests a programme of events and activities.

The total cost of the project is £257K. £137K of external funding has been secured. We are currently putting together a second stage funding bid for the remaining £120K having been successful in our initial first round application.

In addition to the above we have secured an additional £30K that can be put towards building costs or towards initial revenue costs as we deem appropriate.

2. Introduction

Abergavenny Museum and Castle has a great opportunity and a strong platform on which to build. The opportunity is afforded by strong tourism growth which Monmouthshire is currently enjoying. This growth is fuelling an increase in visitor numbers and consequently a bigger target market. The most recent tourism statistics indicate that the majority of visitors are domestic, and that couples and families with young children form the biggest share of that market. Further, it is clear that visiting castles and museums is the first and third most popular thing to do in Monmouthshire. At the other end of the spectrum the least represented audiences are those in the 16-30 and 70+ age brackets. It is the express intention of the Events Project to both build on existing interests and to address perceived gaps in the market, helping to attract new and under-represented audiences to enjoy what the Museum and Castle has to offer through a carefully designed and targeted Events Programme.

The platform is the Castle grounds themselves, which have a very special set of qualities – the setting and views out, the variety of spaces, the inclusion of the museum, the proximity of a large car park and the location so near to the bustling market town that is Abergavenny, with its own vibrant event scene and its annual Food Festival – one of the premier event in Wales. The Castle Grounds have become a well-recognised venue for outdoor theatre drawing in people from across South Wales as well as visitors staying in the area.

More than this though is the strong sense that the Castle and its grounds 'belong to' and are 'appreciated by' local people.

Events at the Museum and Castle are hardly a new initiative. The Castle grounds have been used for public entertainments since the 1880s. The Castle Grounds have also been one of the three key venues for the Food Festival since its inception nearly twenty years ago, and in the last few years the Castle has been the setting for a packed programme of weekend-long food related events and activities, drawing in up to 2000 people at any one time.

The grounds currently host:

- **Heritage re-enactments**
 - o The Courtney Household ran public and school focussed re-enactment sessions between 2004 – 2009
 - o In 2015, 2016 and 2018, The Freeman of Gwent ran public re-enactment sessions and a Medieval Wedding
- **School visits**
 - o In 2016/17 - 257 school children visited us to participate in sessions on World War II, Toys and Markets.
- **Outdoor theatre productions**
 - o Most years we host an annual theatre performance by a National Company. Since 2015 they have been very popular and well attended adaptations of David Walliams novels. In 2018 we added two other performances to our portfolio.
 - o We also have a longstanding relationship with the Borough Theatre to host 3-4 performances by touring companies each summer.
- **Concerts**
 - o In 2016 the National Eisteddfod fundraising committee used the grounds to host a concert by 'Abergavenny's Elvis'.
 - o In 2016, 2017 and 2018 we were the venue for the AM Festival, a family friendly day with a series of performances by local bands. This was hosted by the Round Table and raised money for local causes.
 - o In 2018 we hosted a Silent Disco.
- **Wedding parties and drinks receptions**
 - o A small number of successful wedding breakfast parties and evenings receptions have been held within the Castle grounds.
 - o The grounds are also used by the nearby Angel Hotel for drinks receptions and wedding photographs
- **Community group activities**
 - o The Museums Service maintains excellent links with local community organisations and has facilitated the use of the grounds by groups including Abergavenny Transition Town and the Friends of Abergavenny Orchard.
- **Organised youth activities**
 - o During Summer 2017 Monmouthshire Youth Service used the Castle grounds for a series of youth activity workshops over 3 days attracting 80-120 young people per day
- **Informal recreation**
 - o For example picnics in the Castle grounds

However, the fact that these events have taken place should not serve to hide the difficulties faced by Community groups and Museums Services staff and volunteers in staging them. Inclement weather combined with a relatively exposed location and lack of outside shelter has limited the scope and nature of the events that can be staged, and the relative costs of hiring a marquee together with their visual impact has led the Museums Manager to consider alternatives.

A traditional oak framed structure with slate roof and open sides that can be enclosed in poor weather conditions is the proposed solution. It would be able to accommodate around 120 formally seated. The new Events Pavilion, rather like a large bandstand, will provide a permanent shelter within the grounds and a new facility that can be used for a wide range of events and related activities. Critically, providing a high quality events space that can be 'dressed' to suit the occasion.

The proposed structure will be 18m in length and 9m wide. This will be appropriate for small-scale music, theatre and events and small -medium sized wedding parties.

Please see Appendix A for draft designs and Appendix B for photorealistic images.

Its proposed location is the green area to the left of the entrance gate. However Planning Permission is required before this can be confirmed.

The Nevill Estate Company Limited who own the site are in support of the project

Consultancy firm Gareth Kiddie Associates were commissioned by the Museums Service in March 2017 to undertake a 6-month feasibility study to gain a fuller understanding of the potential for events in both the castle grounds and within the museum building. The study included extensive community and local business consultation, to ensure that events being proposed complement rather than compete with the existing local offer and have a sustainable legacy. The work included: testing the public, private and corporate appetite for events at Abergavenny Castle; a review of existing local events; a review of the existing community use of the site. It has produced a potential events programme, recommended private hire arrangements and pricing structure, an appropriate marketing strategy and an outline Business Plan on which much of this Business Case documents is based. (The Final Report accompanies this Business Case).

This study was paid for thanks to a grant from the RDP LEADER Fund, Abergavenny Town Council and the Nevill Estate.

The Museums Service is guided by its current 'Forward Plan 2017-22' which has two clear strategic aims:

- 1) To create a cross-county museum offer to encourage a sense of pride and community identity whilst identifying opportunities for arts and culture development.
- 2) To ensure we have a resilient and sustainable service. This will be achieved by improving and extending our income streams; increasing and widening our user base and raising awareness of the Museums offer, whilst contributing to a vibrant community by adapting and working in new and innovative ways.

A full copy of the Forward Plan can be found on The Hub.

3. Strategy

The Well-Being of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is a key piece of legislation for Wales, which seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

This project has sustainable development at its heart and aims to improve the local economy through tourism. It is considerate of our environmental and cultural well-being and will contribute to the following Well-Being Goals:

- A Prosperous Wales – developing economic opportunities for ourselves and our users
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities – our feasibility study worked with our local communities to devise an events programme that is beneficial to all
- A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language – the proposed events programme will be wide ranging in its scope. The Museums Service has experience in working bilingually through its exhibitions and has hosted events through the Welsh language. We will continue with this bilingual approach in our programming.

This work will contribute to the Monmouthshire Corporate Plan, meeting several of the 22 goals. Most obviously *The Council enhances local heritage through community ownership and development of arts and cultural services* but also, the council:

- develops and delivers a sustainable plan for enhance the local enhancing the local environment
- provides more opportunities for local living, working & leisure.
- The council delivers on social justice, better prosperity and reducing inequality
- enables better local services through supporting volunteers and social action
- boosts leisure, recreation and wellbeing
- enables and provides good sustainable local services whilst delivering an excellent customer experience across all channels
- delivers a sustainable and resilient organisation and relevant, viable and valued public services.

It also meets several of the priorities that the Administration set out in its Political Manifesto prior to the election in May 2017, particularly *Locally Accessible Services – maintaining a local service offer and enhancing our leisure and recreation provision* but also:

- Social Justice - a fair and equal society, respecting and upholding diversity within our communities, addressing child poverty and worklessness
- Rural Community - combating rural deprivation and access to services

An increased opportunity for events and venue hire at Abergavenny Castle will also contribute to the following Welsh Government strategies for our sector:

- *Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020*
The project will include the creation and maintenance of employment within the tourism sector. This would include short term employment opportunities per event but could also potentially open up opportunities for longer term employment in the form of an ‘Events Co-ordinator’ or similar if demand warranted it.
- *Partnership for Growth – The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020*
Through this project we will share year round attractions, activities and cultural experiences of a medieval castle, thereby supporting Wales’ tourism industry. An events programme within the grounds widens the potential audience to beyond those whose primary interest is in the medieval castle.
- *One Wales, One Planet*
Our events programme and private hire venue will promote the importance of sustainable tourism in ways which enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limit. By

providing an events venue in a rural town we are reducing the need for people to travel as far for entertainment reducing environmental impact.

- *Vibrant and Viable Places*

This Welsh Government strategy states that organisations in cultural fields and the assets they own or manage can have powerful regeneration impacts at community level. There is clear evidence that participation in cultural activities can make a significant contribution to the acquisition of the transferable skills required by employers. A covered structure will significantly increase our opportunity to host and facilitate events. This in turn will lead to an increased opportunity to participate in cultural activities at a local level thus contributing to these wider skills.

- *Food and Drink Action Plan*

A key part of our events programme will be establishing the food and drink offer which runs alongside. Our priority will be supporting local suppliers and producers. We have a close relationship with Abergavenny Food Festival and they will be a key partner in our work developing an events programme.

- *'Light Springs through the Dark – A Vision for Culture in Wales*

This recently published Welsh Government education paper acknowledged how important culture is in empowering individuals, helping them to develop confidence, skills and employability. It also notes the increasingly important role that culture makes to our economy, and the significant social impact that can be made by events and festivals by connecting people and communities from all backgrounds and promoting participation. Heritage sites and historic places play an important part in supporting regeneration. *'They are at the heart of identity and distinctiveness, and can make a decisive contribution to quality of place'*. The provision of a structure to increase the sustainability of the site would contribute to the protection of Abergavenny Castle, an important heritage asset, therefore enabling us to play our part in empowering our users through culture.

More directly, within the Forward Plan for Monmouthshire Museums, Strategic Aim 2 is *'To ensure we have a resilient and sustainable service'*.

We plan to do this by:

- Improving and extending our income streams
- Increasing and widening our user base and raising awareness of our service
- Contributing to a vibrant community by adapting to work in new and innovative ways

An Events Pavilion will increase the number of opportunities we have to run events, as we will not be hampered by weather conditions. However, a structure also provides a physical focus which increased awareness of it and in turn, the public's awareness of the Museum and Castle. We will ensure this focus does not have a detrimental effect on the neighbours on the site by putting a mitigating strategies in place.

Within the North Monmouthshire 5 Year Plan it says *'Development of the outdoor space at Abergavenny Castle in conjunction with the Museum in order to bring arts, heritage and culture together in a sustainable way'*. This demonstrates political support at local level for the project.

This project will also contribute to the following programmes within the Monmouthshire Destination Development Plan:

2 - Town & Village Visitor Experience Development Programme

4 – Food Tourism Development and Programme

5 – Festivals development, using events to boost off peak demand and capitalising on the opportunities to host high profile events at key heritage sites.

The role of Monmouthshire Museums includes improving the experience of the town for visitors by helping to interpret its stories and with a wider arts remit staging and promoting events.

4. Financial Implications

Monmouthshire Museums recognise that Abergavenny Castle Grounds provides one of the best opportunities for income generation within the service. Our experience of running events up to now at the site has given us confidence that much more can be achieved if we can provide protection from the weather – an element that has disrupted the success of events in the past.

The income generated from these events could play an important financial role in supporting further development of the service, as well as contributing to the growth and expansion of our user base.

The feasibility report undertaken by Gareth Kiddie Associates has provided us with an ambitious but realistic recommended events programme based on evidence gathered during their consultation stage. If this forecast can be achieved and demand for our events offer is proven to be high, then we could consider further growth in the future.

The following information is based on the information provided in this feasibility report.

4.1 Demographics

To understand the potential usage of the proposed Events Pavilion Gareth Kiddie Associates undertook an assessment of Monmouthshire's current resident and visitor profile.

Residents of Monmouthshire

- The 45-59 age range is the most prevalent age group in the county with 22.4% of the population belonging to this category
- The over 85 age group is expected to increase by 153% by 2033
- In June 2012, 79% of the population were economically active (the highest level in Wales) of which 74% were in employment
- It is estimated that just under 3 million people are within a 1 hour drive of Abergavenny from both Monmouthshire and its surrounding counties

This tells us that we have a good potential audience but we must ensure the events programme we provide can be easily accessed by residents of all ages and incomes. Consideration will therefore be given to the type of events and activities offered, the times that they are offered and charges that are made.

Visitors to Monmouthshire

- In 2015 Monmouthshire welcomed 2.19m visitors, a 4.4% increase on the previous year.¹
- Day visitor days increased to 1.7m, the highest since STEAM began monitoring tourism in the county seventeen years ago.
- To summarise the Wales Visitor Survey 2016 as it relates to the County ²
 - Most visitors are domestic (UK/Ireland, and only 7% of visitors to Monmouthshire come from overseas)
 - Couple and families with young children are the most common types of visitor to the area
 - Over a third of staying visitors were either first time visitors to Wales or new to this part of Wales
 - 60% of visitors to Monmouthshire were most likely to have come to the area to visit places, historical/religious sites and attractions.
- The most popular activities undertaken by visitors to Monmouthshire were:
 - Visiting a castle or historic attraction (44%)
 - General sightseeing (30%)
 - Visiting a museum or heritage centre and visiting a religious site (20% for each)
 - Arts and cultural festivals, and more specifically the Eisteddfod (survey coincided with the national Eisteddfod being hosted in Abergavenny), were also popular, with roughly one in eight Monmouthshire visitors attending (12%)
- Satisfaction levels were high with 80% giving it a score of over 9/10
- Most visitors travel using a car

This suggests that there is a large and growing market for historic sites such as Abergavenny Castle, and that good quality events can be a significant factor in attracting visitors. If even a small additional proportion of the 2.19 million visitors to the County can be persuaded to make Abergavenny Castle a 'must see' site, then that could help make it more sustainable in to the future. We must also be aware that the majority of our holiday visitors are likely to be of a younger age than our residents – something which we will ensure the programme reflects.

Visitors to Abergavenny Museum & Castle:

- Abergavenny Castle receives around 26,000 visitors per annum
- Of these, 66% come from outside of the area, 11% are local residents, 20% are children and 3% come to attend specific museum events
- The age groups 16-30 and 80+ are under-represented, whilst some sites also lack visits by pre-school children
- The visitor profile is more middle aged and younger older people and family groups

Although we acknowledge that we have suffered from a lack of visitor analysis data in the past, in particular what impact we have on our visitors, this has started to be addressed. A Monmouthshire wide survey carried out across Tourism, Leisure and Culture Services which took place in August 2016 revealed the following comments about what was important:

- 33% said 'Museums need to be interesting and educate people'

¹ <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2016/05/20/2015>

² Wales Visitor Survey 2016: Monmouthshire County Council – Research Report

- 23% said 'Information is available and relevant'
- 21% said 'History should be preserved and share with everyone'
- 14% said it was 'Important that museums stay free'
- 14% said 'Being able to learn about local history locally'

This information provides us with a steer in terms of the needs of existing users, and who we should be targeting in terms of potential new markets, in particular, local people, families with pre-school children and the 16-30 age groups would appear to have growth potential. We can also see that opportunities for learning and showing relevance to the historic site need to be included in the events programme.

4.2 Latent Demand

Castles in general are great places to stage events. As 'romantic ruins' they appeal to a wide range of people and by their very nature they offer the perfect backdrop for events. Abergavenny Castle is no exception and has some particularly unique qualities which make it particularly attractive as a place to stage events:

- The setting and views out over Abergavenny, Castle Meadows and to the surrounding hills and mountains dominated by the Blorenge.
- The variety of different spaces within the castle grounds, providing different backdrops and a range of different ambiances and atmospheres.
- The fact that Abergavenny Museum is located in a former hunting lodge in the middle of the grounds and atop the Norman Keep.
- The location in the heart of the vibrant and picturesque market town of Abergavenny, well blessed with a good range of restaurants, bars and places to stay.
- The proximity of a large local authority owned car park adjacent to the front entrance gate with easy (level) access into the grounds.
- The fact is it seen as a safe enclosed space for families, especially those with young children³

A study by William Tregaskes, Cardiff University Graduate, commissioned by the Museum Manager in spring 2017 supported these assumptions:

- In answer to the question '*Why do we value Abergavenny Castle and grounds?*' and using a pre-set list of attributes, the conclusions were as follows:
 - The Castle's 'historic value' was most generally appreciated with 89% of participants selecting at least one historical attribute
 - The 'views' out from the Castle were selected by 59% of participants, confirming that the 'views' are important to visitors and a reason for coming to the Castle.
 - The 'natural value' of the sites was appreciated by 47% of participants and this was said to be reflective of the importance placed on the Castle grounds as an accessible green space near to the town centre.
 - The 'social value' of the site was appreciated by 45% of participants, said to be reflective of the Castle as a community asset – a focal point where people from Abergavenny can meet, socialise, take children to play and take part in local events.

³ Consultation workshop – 14 July 2017

These responses tell us that the sites is valued by visitors as being much more than just an empty romantic ruin – people also value the Castle as a greenspace, a natural habitat, a community asset and a place to hold local events. We will also be mindful of protecting the views when locating the structure.

Our current number of attendees for our events are as follows:

- Outdoor Theatre productions are usually attended by around 150-200 people (184 in 2017). The ones based on David Walliams novels have been particularly popular with a high proportion of advance sales. In 2018, 324 people attended the Midnight Gang.
- The AM Festival was attended by 650 people in 2017 (An increase from 500 in 2016). In 2018 2000 people attended.
- Our public re-enactment events attract around 350 people per day.
- The Food Festival at the Castle is attended by around 2000 people each day (Saturday and Sunday). In 2017, 890 of those came into the Museum itself.
- Stargazing evenings have consistently sold out with 50 places on offer, however we are currently limited by the space we have inside in case of wet weather.
- Art History and Astronomy courses around 20 people attend 10 week courses. As above we are limited by the space we have inside the museum.

4.3 Competitor Review

There are 15 other history and heritage attractions within a 15 mile radius and 10 attractions within a mile of the town of Abergavenny. Our region is also active with events (70 events in September in the Wye Valley and Monmouthshire alone⁴) and South Wales boasts 323 wedding venues, 5 of which are in ‘castles.’⁵

As part of the consultation process, Gareth Kiddie Associates undertook an online survey of other local event organisations. Of the 29 who completed the online survey, 12 took part in more detailed follow up telephone and Face-2-Face conversations. The 12 included: - Abergavenny Food Festival, The Angel Hotel, The Borough Theatre, Friends of Castle Meadows, County Marquees Ltd, Abergavenny Town Council, Abergavenny Town Team, The Three Peaks Challenge, Black Mountain Jazz, Abergavenny Transition Town, Abergavenny Local History Society, Abergavenny Civic Society.

Their opinions were sought on 2 key areas:

- 1) *Abergavenny Castle and Museum as an historic and recreational public asset*
 - 93% use the grounds/museum either ‘frequently’ or ‘infrequently’
 - 100% felt access for quiet recreation is ‘reasonably’ to ‘very important’
 - 73% ‘agree strongly’ that private events are acceptable and 23% ‘don’t mind’ the grounds being used for this purpose
 - 82% think it’s ‘perfectly acceptable’ to hold events in the grounds whilst allowing public access to all other areas (However, a significant 9% felt it was ‘not acceptable’)
- 2) *How Abergavenny Castle and Museum can link with and further develop Abergavenny’s annual events programme*

⁴ Visit Monmouthshire

⁵ Visit Wales

- 86% of respondents made suggestions as to new possible events including a Crafts & Gifts Fayre (Market Traders), High Quality Street Food Offer (Angel Hotel) and the establishment of an Arts Town (Abergavenny Town Team)
- 71% felt that common ground existed between what they offer and what the Castle & Museum could do to improve Abergavenny's events offer
- 91% saw opportunities for joint working and resource sharing
- 90% saw opportunities to collaborate on marketing and promotion of events at the Castle & Museum
- 65% would consider the Castle & Museum for events if and when capacity was unavailable elsewhere
- 86% had no concerns about the Castle grounds being utilised more frequently for fee paying and/or community events

The Museums Service has developed a close working relationship with Abergavenny's Borough Theatre use already use the Castle grounds to stage a range of professional and amateur productions. Regional and national touring theatre companies are also attracted to stage productions within the Castle grounds.

In conclusion we can see that the majority of other events providers wish to see the Castle & Museum become a recognised events venue and are interested in both using and collaborating with our site (e.g. joint programming, joint marketing). However, it was highlighted that the right balance needs to be created between public access and private use and any changes effectively communicated to the community. This will be addressed in our events programme and marketing strategy.

Close working relationships will also be developed with Monmouthshire County Council's own Events Team and the other Museum and Attraction sites (e.g. Shire Hall, Tintern Old Station) to ensure that we are not creating competition and making the best use of resources and expertise. For example, Abergavenny Castle grounds could be promoted alongside other MCC sites for weddings as part of a county-wide portfolio.

Taking the wider market competition into account the key to success will be creating a unique offer at the Castle. Nowhere else appears to be offering quite the same thing as is envisaged for the Castle grounds.

4.4 Current Budgets

The total income and expenditure for the Monmouthshire Museums Service 2017/18 and the budget for 2018/19 is shown in Table 1.

Income	Actual 17/18	Budget 18/19
Events	-26,952.32	-23,493.00
Shop Sales	-23,865.64	-25,000.38
Refreshments	-1,902.14	-1,537.50
Hire of Facilities	-836.73	-1,025.00
Admin	-169.45	0.00
Non WG External Grants	-15,440.91	-3,316.00
Fundraising	-2,928.13	0.00
Exhibitions Commission	-241.67	-1,845.00

Reproduction Fee	-590.00	0.00
Reimbursements	-685.30	0.00
Recharges External Bodies	-900.00	0.00
Total	-74,512.29	-56,216.88

Expenditure	Actual 17/18	Budget 18/19
Employees	287,454.07	250,173.56
Premises	75,966.65	79,790.00
Supplies & Services	57,601.12	37,289.00
Third Party	1,302.80	0.00
Total	422,324.64	367,252.56

4.4 Assessment of Current Performance

Across all of the Monmouthshire Museum sites income from general shop sales has reduced over the last 3 years, whilst visitor figures have remained fairly stable. The site at Abergavenny has consistently attracted the most visitors comparing favourably with similar sized museums across Wales. However spend per head in our shops is at its lowest at this site. This may be due to a less affluent audience. Attendance at events as remained stable or increased. User levels appear to be greater in the castle grounds although we do not keep records so are unable to evidence this. There does however appear to be a positive interest in the castle grounds that are an opportunity to maximise.

Since Monmouthshire County Council took on the lease for managing the Castle and its grounds the Museums Service has sought to develop a wide range of events appealing to an equally wide range of audiences.

Generating a surplus from events staged at the Castle has not been a requirement or necessarily a priority until now. Previously, when public expenditure enabled more investment in heritage related activities 'events' were seen as more of a platform for attracting the engaging with existing and new audiences, rather than as a way of making a profit. However, we recognise that it is entirely possible for our events to do both. The current programme of events creates income which makes a positive contribution towards the costs of the running the Service.

It is fair to say that there has not been a strategic approach to income generation to date.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle grounds are an excellent venue • Good demand from external event organisers • Precedent for charging hire fees for use of the grounds and entry fees for public events (including some higher end market rates) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounds lack cover and basic facilities • Lack of staff capacity • No current pricing structure and the charging policy to date undertaken on event by event basis • Grounds not widely recognized as an events venue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could stage a number of different events on the same day without impacting on the visitors to the Castle & Museum • Good events experience in staff and volunteer team 	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the perception of the Castle as an events venue • To reach out to new audiences (younger, older, disabled etc.) • To develop a niche events programme suited to the Castles niche nature • Work with others to develop and expand Abergavenny’s event offer • To undertake more joint marketing / joint ticketing arrangements with other local event organisers. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclement weather and the impact that this can have on ground conditions during and ground recovery after an event • Not getting the event offer ‘right’ • Not building enough momentum to attract a loyal/regular event attending audience • Enforced or voluntary limitations placed on event development as a result of complaints from the general public

4.5 General Business Case Assumptions

The costs provided for the building of the Events Pavilion are based on estimated quotes provided by Sarah Browne, the architect responsible for the design. We have also taken into consideration on-going maintenance costs on completion of the build.

The income and expenditure related to the events programme proposed for the outdoor structure are based on a proposal created by Gareth Kiddie Associates following their comprehensive research study. The table below identifies the long-list of proposed events.

Following the Feasibility Study the Museums Service carried out some pilot events in Summer 2018 to test suggestions. A further pilot season of events will take place in summer 2019 in order to test these suggestions and identify the optimum programme in Autumn/Winter 2019. In association with the structure there will be a 5 year programme – with Year 1 being in 2020 and Year 5 in 2024. There will be ongoing provision for review during this period.

No events are planned to take place in the out-of-season months and a phased programme of event and activity development will be considered to counter the risk of the Museum Service taking on too much too soon. Hence the pilot events in 2018 and 2019. A full marketing strategy will also be developed and deployed.

The Museum Service is committed to its obligation to minimise the risk of noise and other disturbances to its neighbours and will undertake to; give notice of evening events taking place, restrict event finish times, careful screening and positioning of pa equipment, conducting noise monitoring during events and using areas of the castle that are less likely to create a noise disturbance wherever possible. The Museums Service has prepared a document of proposed events which clearly sets out our intention and shows timings and location of events. Appendix 5 (Select Committee, Nov 2018)

The Museums Service have also prepared a Heritage Impact Assessment to understand the impact of increased events on the Castle grounds and help us to mitigate against any damage. Events will be scheduled to enable a sensible time for ground recovery.

We are aiming to secure a sufficient level of surplus income from the Events Programme to fund a new dedicated 0.4 FTE Events Co-ordinator post for Abergavenny Museum & Castle by the end of year 3. This role will be critical if the events programme is to become sustainable, therefore grant support will be sought to fund the first 3 years of delivery. The post will be supported by a limited number of occasional staff and volunteers.

Financial surpluses provide an income generation opportunity for the museum service.

4.7 Income and Expenditure Projections

The events income generation strategy is focused on building on the strengths of the existing events programme and realising the opportunities for income growth whilst maintaining and building relationships with key stakeholders.

No events are to be designed to run at a loss. There is also no expectation that one type of event will subsidise the staging of another. The minimum expected is for each event type to break even over the course of a year.

The targets for income generation for each type of event will be set prior to the start of each event year and will be based on the income generating potential of each event and in the light of the relative 'performance' of that type of event in the previous year. Each type of event will have its own 'mini-business plan' based on a simple forecast of income and expenditure with set targets for the surplus to be generated in the year ahead. A clear pricing structure for each type of event/activity is to be established.

The Events Programme as a whole is to complement and add value to the local event 'offer' in Abergavenny and be designed to support the growth of local event management expertise.

Income and expenditure projections have been carried out for the first five years.

Detailed figures on income and expenditure can be seen in Appendix 4 (Select Committee Nov 2018).

4.8 Project Capital Costs

The building of the Events Pavilion will take place between October 2019 and February 2020. We are seeking to appoint the builders after April 2019 after a robust procurement process has been undertaken.

The work will comprise the construction and installation of the Events Pavilion and associated works including installation of lighting.

A geophysical survey of the site was completed in June 2017. On advice a tree and ecological survey were not required, and a previous bat survey was referred to. A heritage impact survey and noise management plan have been completed. In November 2018 a bat report was completed relating to the toilet area.

All procedures and legislations required for a build of this kind (e.g. planning permission, building regulation fees) have been identified and are acknowledged in the project plan and budget.

The full breakdown of project costs for the building of the Events Pavilion are listed in Table 2.

Building costs have been calculated by Sarah Browne, Architect. These are estimates which will become final costs when the builders are appointed. Fees are standard fees (Building Regulations and Planning Costs) or agreed as part of the tendering process (Architect Fees and Property Services Costs).

The current designs are those that have been submitted with the planning application. They are of course subject to change as part of that process. Please see Appendix A for up to date design drawings.

Table 2 - Indicative Project Costs

Project Costs	Amount £	Amount £
Build Cost	£129,250	
Topographical Survey	£1,000	
Planning Application Fees	£1,520	
Architect Fees for Planning	£2,500	
Architect Fees Post Planning/Costing/Tender Purposes	£4,000	
Building regulation plans fee to MCC (approx.)	£2,000	
Structural engineer – provision sum	£4,500	
Property Service fees	£15,000	
Contingency	£1,730	
Sub Total		£161,500
Archaeology Survey	£4,450	
Electrics (Supply and Lighting)	£29,850	
Screening and planting	£16,000	
Wi-Fi	£7,500	
Noise Management Plan	£1,200	
Archaeological Trenching	£3500	
Sub Total		£62,500
Toilets – Provisional Sum		
Fees	£2350	
Construction Costs	£30,050	
Bat Report	£600	
Sub Total		£33,000
Total		£257,000

4.9 Community Benefits

This project will contribute to the community in a number of ways:

Access to Culture

The proposed events programme has been designed to appeal to a wide range of people from all backgrounds and cultures. Our events will be open to all and we will refer to the MCC equal opportunities policies in our planning. We are aiming to use these events to engage under-represented audiences, in particular those facing significant existing barriers to their enjoyment of the Museum and

Castle, for example those with disabilities or mental health issues, older people, carers and people from different ethnic groups.

The structure being proposed will be fully DDA compliant and we have spoken to CAIR (Monmouthshire based Disability Support Group) during the design process to ensure practical needs are taken into account.

Our site's location close to railway and bus lines, as well as being on a major cycle route also contributes to our accessibility. We will consider these transport services when setting times of our events, to encourage the use of public transport and support those who do not have access to their own transport.

Marketing and communications will include social media and digital marketing to ensure a wide a reach as possible. For residents and visitors who do not use social media, a series of digital noticeboards have been installed throughout the town, which will enable us to publicise forthcoming events. We will of course continue to make use of non-digital methods such as the use of posters, on site publicity and direct mailings to local organisations and individuals to ensure those that are digitally excluded do not also become socially excluded.

The town of Abergavenny is currently embracing the benefits of digital communication as an effective method of reaching both local citizens and visitors to the town. A free Wi-Fi system is currently being installed within the town with presence analytics capability. We are looking to extend this provision to the castle grounds as an associated aspect of this project. The system will provide local businesses and attractions such as the castle to track not only visitor numbers but also visitor frequency and will enable targeted marketing of events to users of the system that have signed up to receive such communications.

We will adhere to the MCC policy relating to the Welsh Language in all of our events. We have a strong history of putting on events relating to Welsh Culture and Language, including a strong involvement in the provision of events at the 2016 National Eisteddfod. We anticipate our continuing events programme within the structure to have a strong focus on Welsh culture.

Effective community engagement has been important throughout the development of this proposal, as evidenced in the community and local business consultation that was carried out during the Events Feasibility Study. The Castle has been a publically accessible community asset since the 19th century. Ensuring the Castle site continues to be a relevant and accessible site is central to our vision of creating an outdoor structure in the Castle grounds.

Learning/Training/Volunteering

Events make a fantastic platform for learning within heritage/historic sites, particularly now that more traditional approaches seem to be waning. At present there is no dedicated education space at Abergavenny Castle and Museum. This structure will give the Museums Service the opportunity to run free and low cost family events in the grounds that support family integration and early learning.

In addition the introduction of a coordinated and extended events programme within the town will provide increased employment and skills opportunities whilst increasing more opportunities for social interaction and inclusion, and greater exposure to the culture and heritage that Abergavenny has to offer. The increased footfall in the town will also be beneficial for businesses within the area.

An increased volunteer base will be needed to support the events programme (e.g. welcoming and safety, community archaeological dig). We plan to target local people, in particular young people, in order to help build stronger relationships with our community. This volunteering offer would provide essential employability and life skills to those involved and would link into MCC's 'A County That Serves' programme which provides support, guidance and training opportunities for volunteers within Monmouthshire. There may even be potential to run apprenticeships as part of the events programme once it is established.

4.10 Tourism Benefits

Abergavenny Museum and Castle has a great opportunity and a strong platform on which to build. The opportunity is afforded by strong tourism growth which Monmouthshire is currently enjoying. This growth is fuelling an increase in visitor numbers and consequently a bigger target market. The most recent tourism statistics indicate that the majority of visitors are domestic, and that 'couples and families with young children' form the biggest share of that market. Further, it is clear that visiting castles and museums is the first and third most popular thing to do in Monmouthshire. At the other end of the spectrum the least represented audiences are those in the 16-30 and 80+ age brackets. It is the express intention of the Events Project to both build on existing interests and to address perceived gaps in the market, helping to attract new and under-represented audiences to enjoy what the Museum and Castle has to offer through a carefully designed and targeted Events Programme.

Events are an important means of attracting new visitors to a destination – often the primary or sole reason for a visit – and a thriving events programme will contribute to the Museum Services offer to our tourists. There are Tourist Information centres in Chepstow and Abergavenny, as well as Tourist Information Outlets in Caldicot, Monmouth and Usk; all of which are able to help promote the site and any events taking place there. There are already close links with the TIC's with some staff and Monmouthshire Ambassadors assisting at events as volunteers. There is the opportunity to grow this. For example through events such as the Sculpture Exhibition which was hosted in partnership with Abergavenny Arts Festival. This is an example of the drive to maximise the grounds as a whole not just to run events.

4.11 Capital Funding

We have been successful in obtaining funding from the Rural Community Development Fund to cover part of the cost of the building of the Events Pavilion.

We are currently putting together a Stage 2 funding application to the Museums, Libraries and Archives Division for the remaining funding.

We have obtained funding from Abergavenny Town Council to be spent on capital costs or initial running costs as required.

4.12 Other Benefits

In the Museums Forward Plan, Strategic Aim 1 is to create a cross-county museum offer to encourage a sense of pride and community identity whilst identifying opportunities for arts and culture development. Proposed activities will include the centralisation of facilities to create a county wide 'Collections Centre' which will free up space in town museum sites to enable opportunities to increase community use and income generation potential.

The main impetus at Abergavenny to address promotion of arts and culture is to focus on the atmospheric outdoor space within the castle walls. The grounds are already used for outdoor theatre, food festival, some music events as well as re-enactments. In 2018 we hosted events for the first Abergavenny Arts Festival, this included a sculpture exhibition within the castle grounds. Increasing this use also increases the possibilities of bad weather affecting the events and their financial viability.

Providing a covered space would not only offer some security against the elements but could make an interesting and attractive venue for functions, corporate or private.

5. Health and Safety

MCC as an organisation has a strong track record of managing events and the programme will be subject to all of processes already in place to ensure, above all else, the Health & Safety of the visitors taking part in our events and activities.

Two of the main event management practices undertaken are as follows:

- Generic **Event Plans** for each type of event that takes place with individualised Event Plans for large-scale Flagship Events
- **Risk assessments** undertaken for all events

During the construction of the building the successful contractors will be required to follow all legislation and guidelines appropriate to building sites. We will ensure all staff and visitors are aware of and follow these guidelines and will take appropriate steps to support them on advice from the MCC Health and Safety Officer and MCC Property Services.

5.1 Risks

What is the risk?	What is the likelihood of it happening?	What would the consequences be if it did happen?	What might avoid it happening or, how might the effect be reduced?	Risk Owner
One or more of the grant applications being unsuccessful	Low	The Project could not start	We have addressed all criteria in the applications. We have referred to the evidential material in the Feasibility Study throughout.	Museums Manager
Planning permission being refused	Medium	The process would be delayed if it was felt it could be obtained with reasonable adjustments. The project could be stopped if obtaining permission was impossible.	We have been consulting with relevant departments, individuals and organisations throughout the process: Seeking expert advice from Planning/Conservation/Environmental Health/CADW/Property Services/Architect. Talking with community organisations, local businesses and nearby residents. We are also preparing appropriate mitigating documents – Heritage Impact Assessment and information on control of noise and our events programme.	Museums Manager
Not able to realise design of structure within the budget and capabilities of builders.	Low	We would have to redesign the building during the build process.	Through the procurement process we will make it clear what design the builders are expected to follow and will appoint builders that can deliver that design. We will request written evidence of the costs as part of the tender process. We will insert penalty clauses if builders cannot deliver.	Architect/ Property Services/Museums Manager
Weather conditions slowing down the building progress.	Medium	If there was a significant delay it may disrupt the planned events season.	We are proposing a long lead in time so the builders are able to start the build well ahead of when we need it finished so we have already allowed for delay. There is also the potential for much of the build to be done off site under cover. We will also consider programming	Property Services

			events that would not suffer too badly if we had to substitute with a marquee.	
Discovery of archaeology slowing down the building progress.	Low	As above	As above. A geophysical survey has been carried out so we are aware of the archaeology under the surface. We have also proposed a design which does not require foundations that impact significantly underground.	Museums Manager
Issues with builders and contractors causing a delay in building	Medium	As above	As above (Long lead time etc.) There will also be penalty clauses built in to minimise risk of delays.	Property Services
Potential threat of vandalism	Medium	Cost of putting things right, or affecting the events planned.	We will make the building vandal resistant where possible. We have included the Manager of the local youth centre within our early discussions. We will work with local groups to involve youngsters within the project so that they feel the building belongs to them. We will consider joining anti-social behaviour programme. There is also the potential that more events occurring will mean less opportunity for vandalism.	Museums Manager/Property Services
Opposition from neighbours	High	Bad feeling, local negativity.	We will keep neighbours informed at all times about the project and the subsequent events program. Where appropriate we will consult. Following the build we will adhere to conditions imposed on events and we will be mindful of neighbours in our programming.	Museums Manager
Not enough demand for the events.	Low	Underuse of an expensive asset.	We will follow the advice given in the Events Feasibility Study. We will follow their suggestions regarding an events programme and marketing advice.	Museums Manager/Museums Curator

Clash between community and commercial, in house and external programming	Low	Negative publicity for the Castle and Museum.	We will follow the advice given in the Events Feasibility Study. We will retain links made with community and commercial groups. We will be flexible and respond to change. We will also limit types of certain events to ensure that we balance potential for income generation with retaining our role as a key community asset.	Museums Manager/Museums Curator
Competition from other venues	Low	Underuse of an expensive asset.	As above	Museums Manager/Museums Curator
Lack of staffing to build up a programme of events before we can justify taking on additional staff.	Medium	Issues re staffing capacity.	The funding from Abergavenny Town Council will mitigate this. We will follow the advice given in the Events Feasibility Study, so can predict what happens and can plan staff accordingly.	Museums Manager/Museums Curator

6. Conclusion

We are seeking support for the building of an outdoor covered events structure ('Events Pavilion') within the grounds at Abergavenny Castle & Museum. An accompanying Events Programme will run alongside from 2018. Subject to funding and planning the Events Pavilion will be built in Autumn/Winter 2019/20

The total cost of the project is £257k. External funding has been applied for to cover the majority of the project and we have applied for the final amount. There will be a profit from events on an ongoing basis.

7. Recommendations

To offer support to the Events Pavilion at Abergavenny Castle & Museum and the associated events programme.