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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 21 January 2026

Notice of meeting:

Place Scrutiny Committee

**Thursday, 29th January, 2026 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK**

**Please note that a pre meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting for
members of the committee**

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action List.	1 - 6
4.	Cabinet and Council Work Planner.	7 - 14
5.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	15 - 20
6.	<p>Public Open Forum.</p> <p>Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council website</p> <p>If you would like to speak under the Public Open Forum at an upcoming meeting you will need to give three working days' notice in advance of the meeting by contacting Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p> <p>The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the Chair's discretion, but to enable us to accommodate multiple speakers we ask that contributions be no longer than 3 minutes.</p> <p>Alternatively, if you would like to submit a written, audio or video representation, please contact the team via the same email address to arrange this. The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm</p>	

	<p>three clear working days in advance of the meeting. If combined representations received exceed 30 minutes, a selection of these based on theme will be shared at the meeting. All representations received will be made available to councillors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>If you would like to suggest future topics for scrutiny by one of our Scrutiny Committees, please do so by emailing Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	
7.	Cultural Strategy - To conduct pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the decision at Cabinet.	21 - 192
8.	Biodiversity and Resilience - To scrutinise the Section 6 Report to Welsh Government on Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems. Report to follow.	193 - 270
9.	Next Meeting: Thursday 19th March 2026 at 2.00pm.	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Emma Bryn	Wyesham;	Independent Group
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Lisa Dymock	Portskewett;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jane Lucas	Osbaston;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jackie Strong	Caldicot Cross;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tudor Thomas	Park;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor John Crook	Magor East with Undy;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Public Information

Please note that Monmouthshire County Council will film this meeting and it will be made available to view in live and archive form online. It is possible that the public seating areas could be filmed and by entering the Chamber you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting purposes. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed.

Recordings of the meeting will be stored in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. Archived webcasts or parts of webcasts shall only be removed from the Council's website if the Monitoring Officer considers that it is necessary because all or part of the content of the webcast is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision or common law doctrine, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information.

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A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Public Speaking

Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council [website](#)

If you would like to speak under the Public Open Forum at an upcoming meeting you will need to give three working days' notice in advance of the meeting by contacting Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the Chair's discretion, but to enable us to accommodate multiple speakers we ask that contributions be no longer than 3 minutes.

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If you would like to suggest future topics for scrutiny by one of our Scrutiny Committees, please do so by emailing Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

To become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced.
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency.
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop.
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in.
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued.
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.

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.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Question Guide

Role of the Pre-meeting

1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)
 2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?
 3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?
- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
 - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

Questions for the Meeting

Scrutinising Performance

1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why?
2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why?
3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why?
4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic?
5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service?
6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings?
7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives?
8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?

Scrutinising Policy

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome?
3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective?
4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?
5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence?
6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
7. Does this policy align to our corporate

	<p>objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards?</p> <p>8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications</p> <p>9. been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?</p> <p>12.</p> <p>13. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated</p>
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General Questions:

Empowering Communities

- How are we involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services to suit local need?
- Do we have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future?
- Is the service working with citizens to explain the role of different partners in delivering the service, and managing expectations?
- Is there a framework and proportionate process in place for collective performance assessment, including from a citizen's perspective, and do you have accountability arrangements to support this?
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? If so, can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers provide members with copies and a detailed explanation of the EQIA conducted in respect of these proposals?
- Can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers assure members that these proposals comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation? Do the proposals comply with the Local Authority's Strategic Equality Plan?

Service Demands

- How will policy and legislative change affect how the council operates?
- Have we considered the demographics of our council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?
- Have you identified and considered the long-term trends that might affect your service area, what impact these trends could have on your service/your service could have on these trends, and what is being done in response?

Financial Planning

- Do we have robust medium and long-term financial plans in place?
- Are we linking budgets to plans and outcomes and reporting effectively on these?

Making savings and generating income

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?
- How are we maximising income?
- Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

- Were the intended outcomes of the proposal achieved or were there other results?
- Were the impacts confined to the group you initially thought would be affected i.e. older people, or were others affected e.g. people with disabilities, parents with young children?
- Is the decision still the right decision or do adjustments need to be made?

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...

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Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

All meetings at 2pm unless otherwise stated				
29 th January 2026	Cultural Strategy	To conduct pre-decision scrutiny ahead of decision at Cabinet.	Tracey Thomas	Pre-decision Scrutiny
	Biodiversity and Resilience	To scrutinise the Section 6 Report to Welsh Government on Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems.	Kate Stinchcombe Colette Bosley	Policy Development
19 th March 2026	Animal Welfare	To understand the roles and responsibilities of the council's Animal Welfare team, and its relationship with the RSPCA.	Gareth Walters Zoe Phillips	Performance Monitoring
	Local Flood Strategy?			
21 st May 2026 (provisional)				
2 nd July 2026 (provisional)				
To be confirmed	Local Flood Strategy (<i>invite PS members</i>)	<i>To scrutinise the strategy in light of the consultation responses received.</i>	Ross Price Deb Hill-Howells Cllr Maby	<i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i>
To be confirmed	Sustainable Drainage Systems	<i>To scrutinise SuDs and drainage on estates in the county.</i>	Ross Price Deb Hill-Howells	<i>Policy Development</i>

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

All meetings at 2pm unless otherwise stated				
			<i>Cllr Griffiths</i>	
To be confirmed – likely Sep/Oct 26	Road Safety Strategy	<i>To scrutinise the Road Safety Strategy.</i>	<i>Graham Kinsella Geraint Roberts Deb Hill-Howells Carl Touhig Cllr Maby</i>	<i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i>
To be confirmed	Pavement Café Policy	<i>To scrutinise the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences.</i>	<i>? Cllr Griffiths</i>	<i>Policy Development</i>
To be confirmed	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan	<i>To scrutinise performance against the action plan.</i>	<i>Lucinda Boyland Cllr Sandles</i>	<i>Performance Monitoring</i>
To be confirmed	Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy	<i>To scrutinise progress of the strategy prior to Cabinet decision.</i>	<i>Deb Hill-Howells Ian Hoccom Cllr Maby</i>	<i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i>
To be confirmed	Monlife Heritage Strategy		<i>Tracey Thomas</i>	<i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i>
To be confirmed	Surplus Council Assets (link to Property Assets review under P&O?)		<i>Nick Keyse Peter Davies Cllr Callard</i>	<i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i>
Increase the use of local produce in schools and				

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

All meetings at 2pm unless otherwise stated				
care homes and new food strategies and policies approved by Cabinet				
Nature Isn't Neat expansion				
Development of a new station at Magor and improvements at Severn Tunnel Junction Creating plans for a metro that links Monmouthshire to Bristol, Newport and Cardiff				
Develop a county-wide digital solution that matches those who need to travel with				

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

All meetings at 2pm unless otherwise stated				
those who have car spaces				
Find new ways to progress refurbishment of Caldicot Leisure Centre				
Deforestation and school meals procurement - Food Strategy - Jointly with P&O				

Place Scrutiny Committee

Action List

6th November 2025

Minute Item:	Subject	Officer / Member	Outcome
4	For the Cabinet Member to respond in writing to the Scrutiny Committee and the Lead Petitioner within 6 weeks, including addressing the suggestion that a working group be created with relevant stakeholders.	Robert McGowan, Ben Callard	Sent to members 18 th November.
6	To provide a response to the committee answering how much money is lost in revenue from car parking due to the presence of the two market stalls in Cattle Market car park, Monmouth	Mathew Wooles, Simon Parfitt, Daniel Fordham, Craig O'Connor	Requested 7 th November; reminder sent
7	To follow up with officers about scrutiny of Surplus Council Assets.	Robert McGowan, Peter Davies, Nick Keyse	Requested 7 th November; request for further steer sent by Nick Keyse to Cllr Brown
9	To include the minutes of the Destination Management Plan scrutiny on the Cabinet agenda 19th November	Democratic Services	Done.

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Committee / Decision Maker	Meeting date / Decision due	Report Title	Cabinet member	Purpose	Author	Date item added to the planner
Cabinet	Deferred	Pavement Café Policy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To adopt the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences	Carl Touhig	4-Oct-22
	05-Mar-26	PUBLICATION OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT AS REQUIRED BY THE LOCALISM ACT	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.	Philippa Green	14-Jan-26
Council	05-Mar-26	2026/27 Capital Strategy and 2026/27 Treasury	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the Council's 2026/27 Capital and	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Council	05-Mar-26	COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION and REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2026/27	Ben Callard - Resources	thompson	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Council	05-Mar-26	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025 - 2028	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Reason is to endorse a new Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2025 - 2028	Jane Rodgers	24-Oct-25
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Revenue and Capital Budget 2026/27 – Final proposals following scrutiny and public consultation	Ben Callard - Resources	To update Cabinet with the consultation responses to the draft budget proposals issued in respect of the Capital and Revenue budgets for 2026/27. To make recommendations to Council on the Capital and Revenue budgets including the level of Council Tax for 2026/27. To receive the statutory report of the Responsible Financial Officer on the budget process and the adequacy of reserves. To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Prudential Indicator calculations for capital financing.	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	2026/27 WCF/Mon Farm treasury strategy	Ben Callard - Resources	To present to Cabinet for approval the 2026/27 Investment and Fund strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee. To approve the 2026/27 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund.	Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	Development of a Supported Accommodation Provision for Care Experienced Young People	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	To provide details and seek approval for the acquisition and refurbishing of a residential property in Monmouth for the purpose of developing a supported accommodation provision for care experienced children.	Jane Rodgers	16-Jan-26
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	2025/26 Budget - Financial update 3	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide the third update of the financial year of the Councils progress against the 2025/26 revenue and capita budget	Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	26/27 recommendations for allocation of UK Government Pride in Place Impact Fund and Welsh Government Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant funding by local placemaking partnership groups.	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To agree funding allocations for Welsh Government Transforming Towns and Pride in Place. Impact Fund.	Craig O Connor	19-Dec-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	Cultural Strategy	Sara Burch		Tracey Thomas	20-May-25
ICMD	11-Feb-26	Submission of Section 6 Biodiversity duty report to WG	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To submit report outlining how the Council maintains and enhances biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems	Craig O Connor	7-Jan-26

ICMD	28-Jan-26	Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 The Local Authorities (PRECEPTS) (WALES) Regulations 1995 - Determination of Payment Schedule	Ben Callard - Resources	To determine the schedule of precept payments to precepting authorities for 2026/27 as required by statute and following the results of the consultation process.	Ruth Donovan	28-Jan-26
Council	22-Jan-26	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27	Ben Callard - Resources	The purpose of this report is to: • present arrangements for the implementation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and to approve it for 2026/27. • agree to adopt the amendments to the Regulations, proposed by Welsh Government, • affirm that annual uprating amendments will be carried out each year without a requirement to adopt the whole Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	Ruth Donovan	28-Nov-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	2026/27 Draft Revenue & Capital budget proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Review of Nursery provision at Durand Primary School	Laura Wright - Education	To seek permission to enter into statutory consultation processes regarding proposals to replace the Local Authority Nursery at Durand Primary School with a non maintained setting.	Matthew Jones	23/12/25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Disposal of two farm cottages at Leechpool Holdings	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval for the disposal of two vacant farm cottages located in Leechpool Holdings, Portskewett, identified as surplus to requirements following internal review with services that no longer have an identified need.	Nick Keyse	26-Nov-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Agree S106 Funding for Caldicot Multi-User Route that connects the newly constructed Caldicot Links/Greenway Active Travel route with the Country Park	Sara Burch	To agree additional funding for the Caldicot Multi-User Route	Colette Bosley	15-Oct-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Annual Health and Safety Report 2024/25	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek the cabinet members approval of the 2024/25 Annual Health and Safety Report including priorities for 2025/26	Kate Thompson	19-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Revoking the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To inform the Cabinet Member (Cllr Angela Sandles) of the need to revoke the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 and agree the principal steps for doing so.	Huw Owen	17-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	Ben Callard - Resources	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Meeting 3 held on Thursday 04th December 2025	Dave Jarrett	10-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Museum Service - Collections Rationalisation	Sara Burch - Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism	To agree the removal of 2 collections - one of newspapers and one of books from the museum collections, to offer to more appropriate homes. (This is part of a series of similar decisions)	Rachael Rogers	2-Dec-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Various Traffic Regulation Orders - Amendment Order No 18	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	The report seeks Cabinet Member approval to proceed with the making and implementation of the MCC Traffic Regulation, speed limit and parking regulations Consolidation Order 2019 (Amendment Order No.18) 2025	Gareth Freeman	26-Nov-25

ICMD	17-Dec-25	Council TaxBase 2026/27 and associated matters	Ben Callard - Resources	To agree the Council Tax base figure for submission to Welsh Government, together with the collection rate to be applied for 2026/27 and to make other necessary related statutory decisions.	Ruth Donovan	28-Nov-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Annual Performance Report - Planning	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Report the Annual Performance Report to Welsh Government	Andrew Jones	15-Oct-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Section 6 Report to Welsh Government on Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Report of Councils' actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity	Kate Stinchcombe/Colette Bosley	15-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter 2024-25	Angela Sandles - Engagement	1) To consider the data in this letter, to understand MCC's performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and our compliance with recommendations made by the PSOW's office. 2) To inform the PSOW of the outcome of MCC's considerations and any proposed actions on the above matters.	Annette Evans	
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Joint Committee of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Joint Committee of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales - to consider a Deed of Variation to the current Joint Committee Agreement regarding the required quoracy level for committee meetings	Jane Rogers	24-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Socially Responsible Procurement Policy	Ben Callard - Resources	1. To approve the adoption of the Socially Responsible Procurement Policy. 2. To delegate authority to approve any	Cath Fallon	20-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	29-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Craig O Connor	17-Nov-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Community and Corporate Plan - Q2 Progress Update	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress that has been made to deliver the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.	Hannah Carter	29-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Appointment of Paul Matthews to the board of CCR Energy Ltd			James Williams	27-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2024/25	Angela Sandles - Engagement		James Williams	27-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Annual Safeguarding Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Diane Corrister	18-Jul-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2024/2025	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Natasha Harris (Torfaen)	24-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Director's Annual Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Jane Rogers	18-Jul-25
ICMD	26-Nov-25	LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 1994 THE LOCAL AUTHO	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek Member approval of the proposals for consultation purposes regarding payments to precepting authorities during the 2026/27 financial year as required by statute	Peter Davies	7-Nov-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Medium Term Financial Plan update - November 2025	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Nov-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	2025/26 Revenue & Capital Monitoring Update 2	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Destination Management Plan	Sara Burch & Paul Griffiths		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25

Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Car Parking Review	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	That Cabinet endorses the following recommendations 1.That Cabinet agrees the strategic objectives for the Council's parking strategy 2.That Cabinet agrees the proposed MCC actions in response to the recommendations made in the Monmouthshire car parking review	Craig O Connor	9-Oct-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy	Laura Wright - Education	The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the Inclusion Strategy and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the local priorities as outlined in the Learning Place section of the Community and Corporate Plan.	Morganna Wagstaff	13-Oct-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Panel Performance Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide an update on the proposed approach for the Council's Panel Performance Assessment which is a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Matt Gatehouse	28-Aug-25
Council	23-Oct-25	RLDP for Adoption	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Rachel Lewis	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	2025/26 Revenue Monitoring Update 1	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12/76/25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	Connect to Work and Future Focus programmes	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones / Rory Clifford	21-Jul-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	A strategy to take forward a whole authority approach to wellbeing and prevention	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Jane Rogers	19-Jun-25
ICMD	08-Oct-25	WELSH CHURCH FUND WORKING GROUP	Ben Callard - Resources	1.1 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Meeting 2 held on Thursday 18th September 2025.	Dave Jarrett	
ICMD	24-Sep-25	Health & Safety Annual Report	ben Callard - Resources		Kate Thompson	5-Aug-25
Council	18-Sep-25	Self-assessment 2024/25		To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2024/25 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	richard Jones	10-Jun-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Proposed endorsement of the Monmouthshire Local Area Energy Plan	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Welsh Government commissioned the production of Local Area Energy Plans for Local Authority areas which will be used to develop a regional and national Energy Plan. The Local Area Energy Plan for Monmouthshire provides data on the energy requirements of the county and the transition that will be required to support carbon neutrality of the energy demands. The report seeks Cabinets endorsement of the Local Area Energy Plan to enable the development of the regional Area Energy Plan and a supporting Investment Prospectus.	Deb Hill Howells	28-Jul-25

Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Real Living Wage Employer Accreditation	ben Callard - Resources	Further to Cabinet's decision on Wednesday 6th November 2024, and an evaluation of the authority's supply chain, to bring forward a further report detailing the plan to pay the real living wage rate to employees of third parties contracted to work at the authority's sites, and to seek approval to pursue accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer.	Philippa Green	13-Jun-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	County of Sanctuary Strategy	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To approve a county of sanctuary strategy which establishes clear principles which will run through all council services and which promotes inclusion and welcome across the wider community.	Sharran Lloyd and Jane Harvey	27-May-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Review of Housing Support Grant Programme.	Sara Burch		Ian Bakewell	23-May-25
ICMD	20-Aug-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 17	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Gareth Freeman	4-Aug-25
ICMD	23-Jul-25	Lloyds tour of Britain Stage 5 Pontypool to Tumble	Angela Sandles - Engagement		Nick John	2-Jul-25
ICMD	23-Jul-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	Ben Callard - Resources		Dave Jarrett	2-Jul-25
Council	17-Jul-25	Chepstow Integrated Transport LUF project			Deb Hill Howells	24-Jun-25
Council	17-Jul-25	Strategic Director's Report, Children, Learning, Skills and the Economy'	Laura Wright - Education		Will Mclean	18-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	2024/25 Revenue & Capital monitoring Outturn (incl early update on 2025/26)	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	2026/27 Revenue & Capital MTFP update and process	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	ADD AS FIRST ITEM Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023: Monmouthshire County Council's Annual Report	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval of the Social Partnership Duty Report 2025, setting out how the Council will build on existing practice, and work collaboratively with trade unions, to ensure compliance with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.	Philippa Green	6-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Play Sufficiency Update	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Play sufficiency assessment update.	Nick John	28-Mar-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Shire Hall Delivery Stage - Financial Approval	Ben Callard - Resources		Tracey Thomas	25-Mar-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Strategic OfficerLeadership and Organisation Structure changes	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Paul Matthews	5-Jun-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Separation of Licensing Functions	Angela Sandles - Engagement		Linda O Gorman	28-May-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Appointments to Outside Bodies	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	23-May-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Licensing Act Policy 2025	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Policy has to be approved by Full Council and it needs to be in place by 1 st July 2025	Linda O Gorman	10-Jan-25
Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Strategic Risk Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	richard Jones	10-Jun-25
Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Nature Recovery Action Plan & Green Infrastructure Strategy	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Placemaking Grant 25/26 & 26/27	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Craig O Connor	29-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies / Cath Fallon	1-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Active Gwent Sports Partnership	Angela Sandles - Engagement	For Monmouthshire County Council to formally enter into the Active Gwent sport partnership.	Nick John	28-Mar-25

Cabinet	21-May-25	Digital, Data and Technology Collaboration	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To develop proposals to build on existing collaborative arrangements in place for the provision of technology services through the Shared Resource Service. Expanding on these to include digital and data services will generate economies of scale enabling the authority to access expertise to accelerate progress against delivery of priorities set in the Community and Corporate Plan.	Peter Davies & Matt Gatehouse & Sian Hayward	14-Mar-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Y Prentis Update	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	26-Feb-25
Council	15-May-25	SAC Membership Report	Martyn Groucutt - Education	To inform Council of SAC recommendations to appoint members of SAC	Sharon Randall-Smith	16-Apr-25
Council	10-Apr-25	Constitution Review	Angela Sandles - Engagement		James Williams	25-Mar-25
Council	10-Apr-25	Senior Pay Review	Ben Callard - Resources		Julie Anthony	3-Mar-25
ICMD	09-Apr-25	PSPO Lane Closure to prevent fly tipping & off roading	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Mark Cleaver	13-Mar-25
ICMD	09-Apr-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 4	Ben Callard - Resources			
Cabinet	02-Apr-25	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies - Lead (Cath Fallon)	3-Mar-25
Cabinet	02-Apr-25	Reponse to Boundary Commission Electoral Review Consultation	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	12-Feb-25
ICMD	26-Mar-25	Proposal to increase the fee payments to Monmouthshire Foster Carers	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Charlotte Drury	4-Feb-25
ICMD	12-Mar-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 16	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment			
Council	06-Mar-25	Appointment of Chief Officer - Head of Transport - Exempt info	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Deb Hill Howells	21-Jan-25
Council	06-Mar-25	Publication of the Councils Pay Policy	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.	Matt Gatehouse / Pip Green	17-Jan-25
Council	06-Mar-25	Contract Procedure Rules	Ben Callard - Resources		Scott James	9-Jan-25
Council	06-Mar-25	2025/26 Final Budget sign off including CT resolution	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Council	06-Mar-25	2025/26 Capital Strategy & Treasury Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	Approval of a Discretionary Policy for Council Tax Premiums	Ben Callard - Resources		Ruth Donovan	27-Jan-25
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	2025/26 Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	2025/26 WCF/Mon Farm Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
ICMD	26-Feb-25	County of Sanctuary: Homes for Ukraine	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To confirm future support arrangements for Ukranian's living in Monmouthshire as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme following changes to the national arrangement for both funding & visas	Richard Drinkwater/Matt Gatehouse	7-Feb-25
ICMD	26-Feb-25	Housing Allocations Policy				
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	UK Shared Prosperity Fund post March 2025 – financial implications and impact	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	10-Jul-24
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	2024/25 Revenue and Capital Monitoring Month 9	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24

ICMD	29-Jan-25	2025/26 Community Council and Police Precepts final	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	17-Dec-24
Council	23-Jan-25	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Council	23-Jan-25	Council Diary 2025/26	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	
Council	23-Jan-25	GWENT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD (RPB) AREA PLAN AND RPB ANNUAL REPORT 23/24	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Natasha Harris (Torfaen)	
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	Business case for the purchase of a property in Abergavenny to develop supported accommodation for care experienced young people	Ben Callard - Resources		Jane Rogers	7-Jan-25
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	Education Middle Tier	Martyn Groucutt - Education		Will McLean	20-Nov-24
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Decision to transfer Dixton Archive from Monmouth Museum to Herefordshire Record Office			Rachael Rogers	9-Dec-24
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 3	Ben Callard - Resources		Dave Jarrett	13-Jun-24
ICMD	18-Dec-24	2025/26 Community Council and Police Precepts draft	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadryr USK on Thursday, 6th November, 2025 at 2.00 pm

Councillors Present

County Councillor Jane Lucas (Chair)
County Councillor Lisa Dymock, (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Louise Brown, Emma Bryn, Jackie Strong, Tudor Thomas, John Crook, Martyn Groucutt, and Paul Pavia (substituting for Tomos Davies)

Also in attendance County Councillors:
Martin Newell

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Craig O'Connor, Chief Officer, Place and Community Well-being
Daniel Fordham, Regeneration Manager
Nicholas Keyse, Head of Landlord Services
Simon Parfitt, Asset Surveyor
Mathew Wooles, Operations Manager

APOLOGIES: County Councillors Tomos Davies

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Public Open Forum

1. Cllr Philip Bowyer for Placemaking ~ Abergavenny Town Council

Councillor Bowyer expressed his gratitude to all contributors to the Abergavenny plan, including local residents, consultants, and council officers, recognising the collaborative effort over 18 months. He emphasised that the plan was developed through consensus, with Abergavenny Town Council voting unanimously in support, regardless of political divisions. Highlighting key proposals, he mentioned the ambitious idea of diverting the A40 from the town centre but focused on more achievable goals such as improving access to the railway station and exploring advanced bus systems, including hopper and potentially driverless buses, to reduce traffic and pollution during major festivals. He stressed the urgent need to redevelop the Castle Street car park toilet block and shop mobility cabin into a modern hub with accessible toilets and facilities for bicycles. Describing the extensive consultation process, he noted that over 500 people from diverse groups, including those with accessibility needs, businesses, and young people, were involved in shaping the plan. Finally, he suggested that traditional elections alone are insufficient for democracy and advocated for ongoing, innovative consultation methods to strengthen local governance and engage more young people.

2. Cllr Roger Hoggins for Placemaking ~ Monmouth Town Council

Councillor Hoggins thanked members of both Monmouth Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council, as well as officers and consultants, for their collaborative work on the Monmouth Town Placemaking Plan. He noted that the plan has been formally adopted by Monmouth Town Council,

recognising its importance for residents, visitors, and businesses in shaping future priorities. He stressed that successful delivery depends on securing funding and highlighted that joint council commitment signals seriousness to potential funders. While acknowledging the extensive consultation process, he anticipated some criticism but emphasised that multiple opportunities for public input were provided. He warned against the plan becoming inactive, urging councils to deliver projects and adapt the plan as circumstances evolve. Finally, he underlined the economic benefits of investing in town centres to support retail and overall county prosperity, encouraging continued commitment to implementing the plan.

3. Bridges Community Centre ~ Steve Pospisil (Vice-Chair of Bridges Trustees)

Mr Pospisil introduced himself as a trustee of Bridges in Monmouth and a chartered accountant, focusing on issues concerning Drybridge House, the charity's home. He explained that Bridges has invested heavily to restore the property and spends significant funds on maintenance, yet faces challenges due to the council's policy of market rent leases with only a three-year rental grant guarantee against a 30-year lease. He stated that the absence of a long-term grant commitment exposes Bridges to insolvency risk if the grant is removed or reduced, which trustees cannot legally accept, arguing that this risk is not comparable to normal business practice as Bridges is a charity and cannot operate under such uncertainty. He noted that break clauses create further instability and block access to major funding sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is essential for repairs and upgrades. Addressing concerns about commercial activities, he clarified that charity law and their constitution ensure a charitable focus and even proposed mechanisms for sharing excess income but had been told these concerns were a "red herring." He also argued that the council's financial analysis is flawed, explaining that most reserves are restricted and cannot be used for rent. Finally, he urged the council to turn public statements into meaningful action to secure the long-term future of Bridges and Drybridge House, rather than relying on short-term guarantees.

3. Bridges Petition

Councillor Martin Newell introduced the petition urging the Council to provide Bridges Centre with a Sustainable Long-term Lease without Rebate Reviews.

Councillor Newell expressed his support for Steve Pospisil's remarks and acknowledged his work with Bridges and its trustees. He highlighted that a petition with over 3,100 signatures is being presented, reflecting significant local concern about the issue. Emphasising the vital role Bridges plays in hosting local events and supporting charities, he warned that its loss would negatively impact community organisations, including those serving vulnerable groups. He stressed the urgency of securing a fair lease for Bridges and Drybridge House, arguing that no business would accept such insecure terms for a long-term agreement. Demonstrating a willingness to collaborate, he offered to work with all parties to find a solution and emphasised the duty to safeguard Bridges and Drybridge House for the future. Finally, he pledged to continue advocating for a fair lease and urged council colleagues to help resolve the situation quickly.

Councillors acknowledged the vital role Bridges plays in the Monmouth community and agreed on the need to secure its future. They considered options for handling the petition, including referring it to full council, requesting a written response from the cabinet member, or involving a working group. While several councillors proposed forming a working group of Monmouth councillors and officers to address the lease issue, it was clarified that scrutiny cannot create such a group directly, as this is an executive function. The committee reached a consensus to refer the matter to the Cabinet Member with a

recommendation to consider establishing a working group, viewing this as the most expedient approach. Emphasising urgency to reduce uncertainty for Bridges and the community, the committee voted to proceed with this option rather than sending the petition back to full council. – **ACTION: for the Cabinet Member to provide a response**

4. Placemaking Plans

Daniel Fordham introduced the report, delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions with Craig O'Connor:

Councillor Crook questioned the wording in the Magor with Undy Placemaking Plan in paragraph 3.14, which states that the recently opened walkway train station had made the area accessible to all. He pointed out that the station is not yet open and suggested the language could be misleading.

The officer clarified that the section is written from a future perspective, describing what the area would be like after the plan's delivery in 10-15 years. It was acknowledged that, out of context, the wording could be confusing, and a suggestion was made to clarify this in the document.

Councillor Groucutt highlighted the positive impact of recent changes in Abergavenny, such as restricting traffic in the town centre, despite initial opposition, and noted how these changes have improved the area. Councillor Groucutt emphasized the importance of local history and heritage, mentioning notable historical events and figures connected to Abergavenny, and how these contribute to community pride. He commended the Placemaking Plan process for bringing together councillors and community members, fostering collaboration, and supporting the town's continued progress into the 21st century.

Councillor Thomas praised the collaborative process of developing the Placemaking Plan, which involved county councillors, town councillors, and local groups, ensuring wide scrutiny and good discussion. He highlighted the positive impact of pedestrianisation since 2017, making the town centre more pedestrian- and user-friendly. Councillor Thomas commended the plan for building on previous successes, especially improving gateways and enhancing green spaces like Bailey Park. He concluded by supporting the plan, emphasising the extensive consultation and agreement, and urged moving forward with its approval and implementation.

Councillor Pavia asked how the proposed delivery groups for the Placemaking Plans will have the authority, capacity, and continuity to move from planning to actual delivery, especially for large-scale projects involving multiple funding sources and agencies. He queried whether the regeneration team has sufficient capacity to support the delivery of all town plans, and asked how resident and business participation will be maintained during the delivery phase and how community input will influence future project sequencing.

The Chief Officer acknowledged the importance of resource capacity and stated that, following Cabinet consideration of the plans, the next stage will focus on setting up delivery groups and assessing resource needs, including funding. The officer clarified that the plans are not solely the responsibility of the County Council's regeneration team; delivery will involve town councils, businesses, and community groups, with resource requirements spread across these partners. The officer also explained that delivery groups, likely mirroring the steering groups, will play a key role in maintaining engagement and that the most effective way to sustain participation is through the delivery of individual projects, which naturally engage residents and businesses

Councillor Dymock asked how community engagement will be maintained and evolve throughout the delivery of the Placemaking Plans, expressing concern that public participation might diminish over time.

She requested clarification on what specific metrics and timelines will be used to evaluate the success of the plans across different towns, referencing the report's mention of outputs and outcomes.

The officer responded that ongoing community engagement will likely focus on the development and delivery of individual projects, with continued involvement from the County Council, town councils, and other partners as projects progress. He explained that the evaluation section in the Placemaking Plans provides initial ideas for assessing project impact, but detailed metrics and evaluation methods will be developed as individual projects are further defined and delivered.

Councillor Brown asked about progress with Chepstow's Placemaking Plan.

The officer explained that Chepstow's Placemaking Plan, called the Transforming Chepstow Master Plan, was adopted by both the County Council and Chepstow Town Council in 2023. A delivery group has been established, bringing together town and county councils, and has overseen the delivery of several projects, including improvements to buildings, bringing vacant properties back into use, and small-scale public realm projects. Delivery is well underway.

Councillor Dymock asked officers to explain the difference between a 'Placemaking Plan' and a 'Place Plan'.

The Chief Officer explained that Placemaking Plans are strategic regeneration documents focused on enhancing town or city centres, while Place Plans are local-level guidance documents related to land use and development, mainly for planning purposes. He noted that the names are unfortunately similar but refer to different types of plans.

Councillor Newell expressed strong support for the Placemaking Plans, thanking Roger Hoggins for chairing the group and the officers for their work on the report. As someone who has lived and worked in Monmouth all his life, the Councillor said he is excited about the plans, fully endorses them as both a ward county councillor and town councillor, and looks forward to seeing them come to fruition.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair concurred with the positive comments made about the Placemaking Plans and emphasised the importance of ongoing consultation with residents, highlighting that they are the ones who pay the bills and elect the council. The committee agreed the recommendations.

5. Markets and Stalls

Mathew Wooles and Simon Parfitt delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions, with Craig O'Connor and Nick Keyse:

Councillor Dymock asked how more stallholders could be encouraged to attend Caldicot market, noting its accessibility and suggesting that the lack of a structure or cover might be a barrier. She enquired about the possibility of a temporary structure in the town centre to increase footfall and attract more traders. She suggested collaboration with Caldicot Town Team for storage solutions, as they have premises near the church, and mentioned that improved advertising by both the County Council and members could help make the market more vibrant. She also asked if the Town Team is involved in the placemaking delivery group.

The main barrier identified was the lack of structure and storage at Caldicot market, making it difficult to attract new traders, especially given weather dependency. Providing a structure and storage for gazebos/tables would help reduce the initial outlay for new traders. The Chief Officer agreed these are problems that need solving and suggested the placemaking delivery group should work with local partners, such as the Town Team, to find solutions for storage and weather protection. He emphasized

the need for collaboration and said the issue would be taken to the delivery group. It was clarified that the decision on Town Team involvement in the delivery group would be made by the group itself.

Councillor Brown asked why Monmouthshire County Council does not promote a market for Chepstow during the week on a regular basis, and enquired about how the Chepstow market operates, specifically whether stallholders have to bring and take away their own stalls.

Officers clarified that Chepstow market is run by a volunteer group and is not one of Monmouthshire County Council's markets.

Councillor Strong commented on the decline of Caldicot market over the years, noting it has gone from a wide range of stalls to just two regular ones, and asked what the team has done to scope what local people want from their market, including whether Tuesday is the best day and if the market is in the right location. She suggested possibly moving the market nearer to the library and Asda for more footfall and asked about the ownership of the land outside the library. She also enquired if the seasonal markets at the castle are run by the council or a private company, and emphasized the need for a collaborative approach to regenerate Caldicot's town centre.

The officers acknowledged agreement with her points, explaining that the initial focus had been on stabilizing Abergavenny market but now attention would turn to strengthening Caldicot market, including increased advertising. It was stated that the County Council likely owns the High Street and possibly the area outside the library, but this would need to be confirmed with a plan. The importance of market location for generating footfall was noted, and openness to exploring different areas and solutions was expressed. The ongoing challenge of maximizing market success and the impact of COVID on footfall and traders was also highlighted.

Councillor Groucutt asked to hear more about the Abergavenny night market, describing it as an exciting development that brought vibrancy to the town centre during summer evenings.

The response agreed with his positive assessment and explained that the street food market was reintroduced by the previous manager and has grown significantly in the past year. Increased marketing, collaboration with the Abergavenny market traders, and investment in infrastructure (such as additional power outlets and a distribution box) have helped attract more traders. The night market also features open mic nights and karaoke, and works well when coordinated with theatre events, helping to develop Abergavenny as a cultural hub.

Councillor Bryn asked how the markets, especially themed and night markets, are promoted, noting she had not seen much advertising and wondered about strategies to attract new visitors. She also asked if there are "boot sale" style markets to allow non-traders, especially young people, to try trading at low cost. Finally, she questioned whether splitting Monmouth market into two locations is beneficial or detrimental, suggesting it might be better to consolidate stalls in one place until numbers increase.

The officers explained that advertising is mainly done via social media, the Abergavenny market traders' page, the council's website, local publications, posters in the market, and a digital screen in town. For "boot sale" style markets, it was clarified that all traders must have £5 million public liability insurance, so casual trading is not currently possible, though there is interest in attracting younger traders. Regarding Monmouth market's split locations, officers stated that consolidating into one location would likely be more beneficial, but convincing traders of this change is a challenge.

Councillor Brown asked why Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) does not promote or assist with a regular market in Chepstow, mentioning the existence of a covered area near Marks & Spencer that could host stalls, and questioned who owns that land. She also noted that the Sunday market in Chepstow is only occasional and not held during the week.

The officers clarified that Chepstow Town Council, not MCC, is responsible for the Chepstow market, which is why MCC does not promote or manage it. However, it was acknowledged that MCC could explore opportunities to support or cross-promote Chepstow's market in collaboration with the Town Council.

Councillor Thomas commented on the importance of Abergavenny market as a destination and raised concerns about the building's conditions, specifically the cold in winter and extreme heat in summer due to the glass roof. He asked if there are long-term plans to address these issues, such as heating or covering the outdoor area to improve trading conditions, especially in winter.

The officers acknowledged the challenges of maintaining a listed building, including the costly roof repairs and difficulties in adding heating or structures. They stated that solutions require investment and discussions with heritage authorities, and while some heating schemes are being considered, funding and long-term sustainability remain unresolved. The importance of keeping the market thriving was emphasized.

Councillor Lucas raised several points about market operations, focusing on Abergavenny and Monmouth. She questioned the market's financials, specifically the apparent deficit between income and expenditure, and asked how it is managed and whether MCC subsidizes it. She also enquired about investment strategies, environmental considerations like solar panels, and how to support and advertise markets, especially in Monmouth.

The officers clarified that the market actually operates at a small surplus, not a deficit, and that recent budgets show growth. It was agreed that consolidating Monmouth's market to one location (preferably Shire Hall) would be beneficial, but challenges exist with similar traders and space. The team acknowledged the need for better advertising and collaboration with Monmouth Town Council, and confirmed ongoing discussions about maintaining market operations during Shire Hall renovations. They also noted that expanding market areas would require obtaining a street trading licence for new locations.

*Councillor Lucas also asked how much money is lost by putting two traders in the one car park and therefore losing car parking fees. – **ACTION: to provide a response***

6. Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action Lists

Councillor Brown reiterated an interest in scrutinising surplus council assets, arguing that it should come to Place committee rather than be covered by a review of Property Assets at Performance & Overview committee. – **ACTION: to check again with officers**

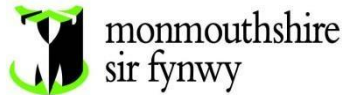
7. Cabinet and Council Work Planner

8. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2025

The minutes were confirmed. Councillor Brown requested that these minutes be included in the Cabinet report concerning the Destination Management Plan – **ACTION**

9. Next Meeting: 11th December 2025

The meeting ended at **4.34 pm**



SUBJECT:	MONMOUTHSHIRE'S DRAFT CULTURAL STRATEGY 2026-2036
MEETING:	PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	THURSDAY 29th January 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To present the draft Monmouthshire Cultural Strategy 2026-36 and Action Plan prior to being considered at Cabinet on 11th February 2026.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To scrutinise the draft Monmouthshire Cultural Strategy and action plan, and consider how it seeks to champion cultural activity, and create sustainable and inclusive cultural growth in Monmouthshire

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Cultural Activity in Monmouthshire is important to community and individual wellbeing. Culture is a blanket term to describe all the activities which people undertake for enjoyment and recreation, as audience or participant, and which bring people together. Cultural Industries are important to our economy and being a place of vibrant, varied and inclusive cultural activity is part of our 'brand' as a visitor destination and underpins quality of life for our communities. Being able to take part in social, recreational and cultural activities of choice and having access to new experiences underpins the wellbeing of individuals and families. Research shows that access to cultural activity, the arts and heritage enhance mental health, reduces social isolation, and improves overall well-being.

3.2 Monmouthshire Council plays a number of roles in supporting cultural activity in the county. The Council is a direct provider of services, and a custodian of heritage objects and buildings. We hold responsibility for the public realm, and work with other public bodies to ensure public safety. We are a landlord and partner with business and the community and voluntary sector. We co-ordinate activity to raise Monmouthshire's profile and to encourage and support creative industries and the hosting of events and filming

3.3 Monmouthshire is at an exciting point as it acknowledges the importance of its past and looks to use its cultural significance to shape its future. In the Community and Corporate Plan under a Fairer Place to Live we committed to developing an inclusive cultural strategy working with our partners and communities across the county. The draft document presented is the result of a collaborative process which has brought creative practitioners and diverse organisations together, as well as reviewing where Monmouthshire Council can maximise community value from new opportunities. A number of new events, projects and collaborations have come forward as a result of this process.

3.4 We are now able to share a draft Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire that honours the unique character of this county, drawing strength from its people, landscapes and heritage.

3.5 The aim of the draft Cultural Strategy is to strengthen community identity, drive economic growth, enhance well-being, and ensure that the county's diverse voices are heard and valued.

3.6 The draft cultural strategy is a coherent plan that sets out purpose, priorities, and actions for nurturing and sustaining the arts, heritage, and creative industries within our county. It provides a framework for decision-making, seek to secure funding, fosters partnerships, and measures progress.

4 Themes of the draft Strategy:

4.1 Our cultural strategy will commit to making culture accessible to all, by creating more inclusive events, and removing barriers to participation. In Monmouthshire, culture is a source of pride and resilience, helping individuals and communities to flourish.

4.2 Cultural engagement is a powerful catalyst for learning, creativity, and innovation. By working with our schools, youth groups, libraries, and community organisations, the cultural strategy will nurture the next generation of creative thinkers and makers. This is not only about developing future artists; it's about fostering curiosity, confidence, and the skills needed in a rapidly changing world. Heritage trails, artist residencies, and digital platforms can all play a role in inspiring lifelong learning.

4.3 Monmouthshire is home to a wealth of creative talent from writers, musicians, actors, craftspeople, and more. Our cultural strategy can support this ecosystem through established partnership, by offering training, networking,

low cost/affordable spaces, and opportunities to showcase work. By strengthening the sector, Monmouthshire can retain talent, attract new voices, and foster innovation.

4.4 The creative industries are one of the fastest-growing sectors in the UK, and Monmouthshire is well-placed to benefit from this boom. By mapping assets, identifying gaps, and focusing investment, a cultural strategy can unlock new economic opportunities. Heritage sites can be developed as sustainable tourism destinations; local artists and makers can be supported to reach wider markets; and town centres can be revitalised through cultural events and public art. A bold, clear strategy can attract inward investment, support small businesses, and help diversify the local economy.

Development Process:

4.5 No cultural strategy can succeed without the active involvement of the people it is meant to serve. Monmouthshire's communities are diverse, ranging from long-established families rooted in rural villages, to recent arrivals seeking new beginnings, to lively market towns where tradition and innovation meet. This diversity is a source of strength, creating opportunities for collaboration, learning, and mutual support.

4.6 Over the past year we have worked in collaboration with local community and town councils, stakeholders, voluntary groups, and creative practitioners to foster inclusive cultural networks to share experiences, create opportunities and to gather intelligence to inform the draft cultural strategy.

4.7 To date, 93 individuals have been engaged directly in the development of the draft cultural strategy to ensure that is shaped by local people and creative businesses (including 18 MCC councillors and officers; 6 key cultural representatives and 69 individuals from across the creative industries).

Workshops held:-

- Thursday 17th July – The Melville Centre Abergavenny, 12- 2pm
- Thursday 17th July – Shire Hall, Monmouth, 6– 8pm
- Monday 21st July – Caldicot Castle, 12– 2pm
- Tuesday 22nd July – Chepstow Leisure Centre, 1– 3pm
- Friday 18th July – Virtual online session 10-12noon
- Tuesday 11th November – Tintern Village Hall 1-3pm
- Tuesday 11th November – Chepstow TIC 5-7pm

4.8 At each workshop the same questions were asked of participants to give consistency and ensure the scope of the themes of the strategy were being addressed, whilst giving individuals the freedom to share their experiences,

knowledge and expertise. A summary has been drawn up and can be found in Appendix 3.

4.9 The wider consultation through Let's Talk Monmouthshire was made available through an online survey from 31 October to 14th December 2025). 135 responses were received (Appendix 4) which have been collated, analysed and comments received are now reflected in the draft Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire.

4.10 Of the 135 responses received, **68.1%** were female; **62.2%** were over 55 years old; **28.1%** took part in cultural activity a couple of times a month whereas **26.7%** took part in cultural activity at least twice a week. **50.8%** of respondents who took part in cultural activity did so within their own town/village area of Monmouthshire.

85% of respondents indicated that taking part in cultural activity gave them a sense of wellbeing with **73%** saying it made them feel part of their community and **70%** stated that cultural activity supported the local economy. Most people who responded participated in cultural activity as an audience member but significant amounts also as volunteers, performers and artists.

4.11 Comments received were mostly positive and supportive of a cultural strategy for Monmouthshire. We acknowledge that we need to ensure that there is more inclusion of children and young people throughout the strategy and how to promote and encourage people into employment within the cultural sector; acknowledging the difference between north and south, each town and village across the county whilst still being part of the whole; the vast range of twinning and cultural exchanges across the county; a central webpage/database available to the cultural sector to promote events and how to get to them, and find out about opportunities for training and funding.

4.12 Inclusion of the following events and activities were submitted and are now reflected in the draft Cultural Strategy – Magor Frost Fayre; Usk Choral Festival; Kingfisher choir; Monmouth Choral Society; Happy Dragon Theatre; Abergavenny Film Club; Monnow Valley Studio; The Boar Penallt; U3A; WI; Plas Gunter Mansion; local church bells ringers and Morris dancers.

Other generic comments and specific suggestions for work programmes received will be collated and passed on the Cultural Partnership Forum to review and include in future action plans and work programme.

4.13 Whilst the development of the Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire has been led by the council, it's been coproduced to ensure that Monmouthshire's stories are told, its creativity is celebrated, and its communities are empowered to

shape their own futures and creating strong foundations for resilience, prosperity, and well-being.

4.14 To support delivery of the strategy, it is proposed that the Council establish a Cultural Partnership Forum empowered and resourced to make a difference and lead on the action plan. The Partnership forum will meet quarterly and will be made up of 12 nominated individuals and council representatives who signify the many types of cultural activity in Monmouthshire.

4.15 We are working with the Centre for Creative Economy at Cardiff University to understand and establish benchmarks and key cultural outcomes for Monmouthshire including economic, environmental and social benefits; alongside developing initiatives that will see an increase in employment and wellbeing through engagement with the cultural sector.

4.16 The action plan is modest and achievable for its initial first year. Subsequent years will be strengthened through the Partnership Forum as key themes and projects are identified and presented with these community representatives. Using the identified key cultural outcomes for Monmouthshire, that reflect our county, this strategy will help inform place specific local policy and supportive initiatives for local sector growth, adding value to our county and its rich creative ecosystem.

4.17 The Monmouthshire Cultural Strategy will support the council's suite of other plans and strategies including the Placemaking Plans to support the creation of vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive spaces; the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy to support existing jobs and create new opportunities for businesses and creative industries across the county, and the Monmouthshire Destination Management Plan to ensure that our county is a sought-after tourism destination, to grow our visitor economy and be an inspiring, connected and welcoming place.

4. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT, (includes equality, future generations, social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting).

Integrated Impact Assessment attached. (Appendix 5)

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefit	Risk	Comment
Place Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on the draft Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire	Any feedback received will be reflected upon, appropriate amendments made and reported to Cabinet on 11 February 2026		This is the preferred option. The draft Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire and Action Plan, as drafted, is considered <i>To inspire thriving, connected communities and a prosperous, sustainable future by empowering creative talent, celebrating diversity and fostering wellbeing for all.</i>

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The baseline for evaluating performance against a wide range of economic and wellbeing objectives will be set by the Cultural Partnership Forum when established. It is proposed that progress on delivery will be reported through the Service Business Plan, and annually with a report from the Chair of the Cultural Partnership Forum, with updates to Place Scrutiny Committee as needed.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To adopt the first Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire that will assist in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the county, ensuring that future generations can appreciate and learn from it.
- 7.2 The Strategy will contribute to the Council's ambitions for Monmouthshire - A prosperous county, supporting well-being, health, and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. A Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres, where businesses can grow and develop; and where people feel part of a community and are valued.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Officer time and costs associated with the preparation of the Draft Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire has been met from the Heritage and Culture budget within Place and Community Wellbeing.

- 8.2 The implementation of the strategy will be led by the Head of Culture, Community Learning and Events and colleagues within Place and Community Wellbeing. It is anticipated that officer time and costs will be met from internal directorate budgets for the initial year, to cover the development and design of a central webpage for cultural activities and information, and networking events to bring together and promote sectors of the cultural community. Once the Cultural Forum is established, and along with partners, additional grants will be sourced to support the continued development of cultural activity and implementation of the strategy across the county.

9. CONSULTEES:

Lead Portfolio Cabinet Member
Chief Officer for Place and Community Wellbeing
SLT
Business Cabinet
Place Scrutiny Committee

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

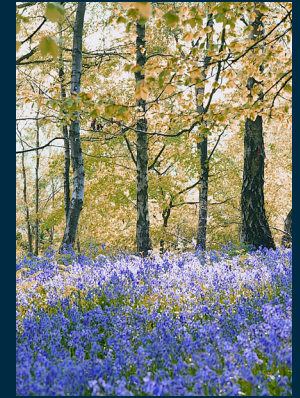
Appendix 1 – Original draft Cultural Strategy used for consultation -
Appendix 2 - Revised draft Cultural Strategy and Action Plan (changes highlighted in pink text)
Appendix 3 Summary of Consultations with Creatives and Stakeholders
Appendix 4 Survey Response Report Let's Talk Monmouthshire
Appendix 5 Integrated Impact Assessment

11. AUTHORS:

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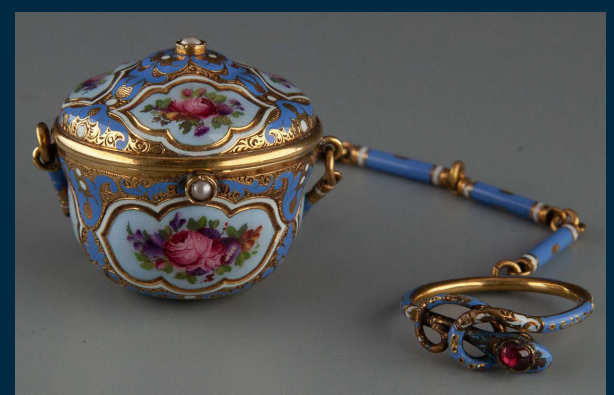
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A Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire

2025 - 2035



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Welcome

from Council Leader, Mary Ann Brocklesby

I am always amazed at the excellence and diversity of culture in Monmouthshire. Our county really does have something for everyone. What's more I am inspired by the extraordinary breadth of talent of all ages who contribute to the vibrancy and quality of our cultural life.

Monmouthshire Council has a wonderful inheritance of historic buildings, exciting museum collections, beautiful parks, the Borough Theatre and Caldicot Castle which we hold in trust for future generations and manage on behalf of the public.

Even more importantly, and alongside Town and Community Councils, we have a role in supporting the many volunteers who make community events and performances happen, bringing people together and brightening all our lives.

The cultural industries are important to our economy. Monmouthshire is home to hundreds of amazing people – from poets to musicians, textile artists to ceramicists and film makers to landscape painters to name but a few - who create the culture we all consume and bring wealth and visitors to our county.

This Strategy aims to bring all these strands together, as part of working towards a greener, fairer Monmouthshire, where everyone can enjoy their chosen activities in our thriving towns and beautiful landscapes.



Welcome

from Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism, Sara Burch

Monmouthshire is a wonderful place to live and visit because there is always something happening. This Cultural Strategy sets out our plans to support and amplify our county's rich cultural life.

We want a future where everyone, at every stage of life can be creative and active, can find the thing that makes their heart sing, and find other people who share their passion.

We want to be a county where strange and delightful things occur in the landscape, that hosts world-class events as well as the intimate and local, contemporary as well as traditional, and where people visit as much for cultural experience as for our breathtaking scenery. So many people give their time to run events, share their skills and enrich life in Monmouthshire towns and villages.

Our county is also full of people making a living through their creativity and by providing experiences and hospitality that give pleasure and bring people together. This strategy aims to celebrate their achievements and address how, by working together, we can create even more opportunities, more employment and more moments to treasure.

1. Monmouthshire's Cultural Strategy

Nestled between the gentle curves of the River Wye and the rolling hills of the Brecon Beacons, Monmouthshire stands as a vibrant testament to the interplay of natural beauty and human ingenuity. From historic towns where stories of Roman legions and mediaeval monarchs mingle with the bustle of local life to the tranquil countryside dotted with stone cottages and hidden abbeys, Monmouthshire's landscape is a canvas painted with centuries of culture, history and resilience.

These landscapes offer not only visual splendor, but also serve as places of inspiration, recreation, and connection. Artists, writers, and musicians have long turned to these hills and rivers for creative spark. The walking trails, cycle routes, and waterways invite residents and visitors alike to experience the outdoors, fostering well-being and a sense of belonging.

Monmouthshire is blessed with a wealth of tangible and intangible heritage. Its castles, such as those at Caldicot, Raglan, Chepstow, and Abergavenny, stand as enduring witnesses to the county's strategic significance across centuries of conflict and alliance. Market towns bustle with echoes of medieval trade, while rural churches, bridges, and stone cottages speak of lives lived.

But heritage in Monmouthshire is not only found in stone and mortar. It lives in stories passed down by families, in local festivals, crafts, and traditions. Agricultural fairs, music gatherings, and seasonal celebrations all contribute to a rich calendar of cultural expression anchoring communities in a shared sense of place and memory.

The Welsh language holds a cultural and historical significance for Monmouthshire, serving as a vital expression of local identity and heritage. Hosting the National Eisteddfod of Wales created a sense of excitement around the language and local eisteddfodau are regularly held in towns across the county. Integrating the Welsh language into the county's cultural strategy strengthens community cohesion, supports educational opportunities, and attracts visitors who are keen to experience authentic Welsh culture. The preservation and promotion of the Welsh language not only honours the region's rich linguistic heritage but also ensures that future generations remain connected to their roots, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.





Faith has equally played a formative role in shaping Monmouthshire's cultural landscape, with its rich tapestry of churches, chapels, and faith-based traditions reflecting centuries of spiritual and communal life. Recognising and embracing the diverse expressions of faith within the county's cultural strategy supports inclusive community engagement and mutual understanding. By embedding both language and faith into its cultural strategy, Monmouthshire reaffirms its commitment to celebrating diversity, nurturing cultural vibrancy, and strengthening the unique character of the county.

Creating a cultural strategy for Monmouthshire will assist in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the county, ensuring that future generations can appreciate and learn from it. Implementing this strategy now is crucial because it aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of culture in enhancing the quality of life. By bringing this strategy to our communities, we can ensure that cultural resources are accessible to everyone, promoting inclusivity and diversity. This approach not only enriches the lives of individuals but also strengthens the social fabric of Monmouthshire - a well-defined cultural strategy will attract tourism, boost the local economy and create job opportunities.

The cultural strategy for Monmouthshire is an investment in the county's future. It is a statement of confidence in the power of culture to unite, inspire, and transform.

It will ensure that Monmouthshire's stories are told, its creativity is celebrated, and its communities are empowered to shape their own futures. The county's historic bridges, connected routes, and river crossings have always brought people together, fostering the exchange of ideas, customs, and commerce. By encouraging new ways of experiencing and interpreting our environment through festivals, art, storytelling, and sustainable tourism, we aim to ensure that Monmouthshire remains alive with meaning for present and future generations.

By working together across boundaries and generations, we can build a cultural legacy that will inspire, sustain, and connect us for years to come. Whether you are a lifelong resident, a creative professional, a newcomer or a visitor, you have a role to play in shaping the cultural life of this remarkable county.

Monmouthshire's story is still being written. With imagination, commitment, and collaboration, we can ensure that its next chapters are rich with possibility.

The impact and influence of culture

Culture is a living, breathing force that shapes the fabric of our lives and communities. At its heart, culture is a vessel of shared stories, one that anchors individuals within a larger collective. Participation in cultural traditions, celebrations, and rituals strengthens the sense of belonging. Whether through language, cuisine, music, or dress, culture provides markers of identity, affirming individual worth and connection to others.

Culture broadens horizons and opens doors. Exposure to diverse artistic forms, narratives, and perspectives encourages curiosity. It provides opportunities to learn, to dream, and to imagine new possibilities. For many, cultural activities are gateways to discovering hidden talents, developing skills, and pursuing passions.

One of the most significant contributions of cultural engagement lies in its ability to support mental health and well-being. Participation in culture can reduce stress, enhance mood, and contribute to better physical health by encouraging active lifestyles. Culture supports emotional resilience and lifelong personal growth, enriching individual lives and the wider community. The act of participating in a concert or bellringing group or attending a theatre performance can lift spirits and alleviate feelings of isolation.

The community values difference and celebrates slowness - not as a lack of action, but as space to breathe, reflect, and grow.

The creative arts demand imagination, discipline, and resilience, encouraging participants to challenge themselves and explore new aspects of their personalities.



Overall, involvement in cultural activities supports emotional resilience and lifelong personal growth, enriching both individual lives and the wider community. The act of participating in a concert, attending a theatre performance or bellringing group can lift spirits and alleviate feelings of isolation.

The creative arts demand imagination, discipline, and resilience, encouraging participants to challenge themselves and explore new aspects of their personalities.



For some, the journey leads to professional paths in the creative industries - artists, writers, technicians, performers, designers, and craftspeople whose contributions enrich society. The cultivation of creative skills through cultural participation not only drives personal development but also helps build vibrant economies.

Creative industries generate employment, attract tourism, and stimulate innovation across sectors, such as film, music, fashion and design, contributing significantly to local prosperity. Events also act as an economic driver, providing opportunities to support local businesses in areas such as event management, hospitality and transport.

Monmouthshire has provided the backdrop for blockbuster films such as Captain America and long-running BBC series including Doctor Who. The film adaptation of Owen Sheers' 'Resistance' is set in the remote and stunningly beautiful Vale of Ewyas while the more recent Netflix production 'Sex Education' features a variety of picturesque locations within the inspirational Wye Valley. We also have the ITV period drama Sanditon filming extensively at Caldicot Castle, with the Michael Sheen directed BBC drama 'The Way' and Guy Ritchie directed Netflix drama "Young Sherlock Holmes" both filming in Monmouth.

So, what makes Monmouthshire... Monmouthshire?

It's the quiet power of the landscape, the deep roots of heritage and the spark of creativity. Here, culture isn't something we attend, it's something we live.



Cultural Activities intrinsically link with **Tourism**, **Creative Capacity** and **Improved Economy** that ultimately benefit individuals' **Health** and **Wellbeing**.



What is happening across Monmouthshire

Festivals & Shows

Festivals and performances are central to Monmouthshire's cultural life, providing a stage for talent, collaboration, and the sheer joy of gathering. Some highlights of our calendar include:

- **Wye Valley Festival:** Celebrating music, art, and the sublime landscape that inspires them, this festival brings together performers and audiences in venues as varied as ancient churches and outdoor woodland glades.
- **Medieval Festivals:** Reenactments, jousts and historical workshops transform visitors back in time, giving new life to Monmouthshire's castles and historic sites. History is not just preserved here - it is performed and lived.
- **Devauden Festival:** An eclectic music festival with a family-friendly vibe, Devauden draws a passionate crowd for a weekend of concerts, workshops, and fun. Local bands share the stage with national acts, showcasing the county's musical diversity.
- **Abergavenny Food Festival:** This celebrated event draws foodies from across the UK and beyond to sample the region's produce, watch live chef demonstrations, and learn about sustainable food culture. The festival is a feast for the senses, reflecting the county's rich agricultural heritage and innovative spirit.
- **Agricultural Shows:** Shows at Monmouth, Usk and Chepstow play a vital role in supporting local agriculture, stimulating the economy, and nurturing a vibrant community spirit. They unite people, preserve rural traditions and showcase the best of the region's heritage.
- **Literary and Writing Events:** Monmouthshire is a haven for writers and book lovers. Literary festivals, author talks, and book clubs abound, turning market towns into homes for storytelling and the written word.

Festivals are not just fleeting spectacles; they are year-round projects anchored by creative committees and community participation. They help foster new friendships, spark inspiration, and nurture the next generation of artists and performers.

“





Our purpose

By 2035, our ambition is for Monmouthshire to be recognised nationally and internationally as a destination where culture flourishes for both visitors and residents, seamlessly blending history, creativity, and well-being.

Culture can address inequality, enhance personal wellbeing, and foster social connections. By providing shared spaces for expression and dialogue, cultural activities can create opportunities for inclusion, celebrate diversity and bridge divides, helping to reduce social disparities. Research shows engagement with arts and culture supports mental and emotional health and offers outlets for creativity, reflection, and stress relief. Furthermore, cultural events and traditions unite people, strengthening community bonds and a sense of belonging, which are essential for a harmonious and resilient society.

Continued investment in active travel routes promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling, reducing reliance on cars and lowering carbon emissions. They enhance community connectivity, making it easier and safer for people to access local services, schools, and workplaces.

Monmouthshire's outstanding natural heritage will be cherished and protected and together we will ensure our landscapes and biodiversity are valued for generations to come. Whether facing the challenges of climate change, demographic shifts, or economic uncertainty, Monmouthshire will be ready to adapt and respond. Culture is a source of resilience as it helps communities reflect, reimagine, and rebuild.



Our parks and open spaces will continue hosting major events and festivals, drawing thousands of visitors each year and providing local people with spaces to connect, celebrate, and play.

Through ambitious placemaking, we will breathe new life into our communities. Our museums will continue to tell the stories of our communities through their diverse collection of documents and objects, hosting exhibitions that evoke pride, challenge and reflection. Our libraries will continue to host literary events for all ages and we will continue to offer space in our buildings for artists and makers. Town centres will be revitalised, and both towns and villages will be animated by an ever-expanding array of events, creative projects, and public art. By providing safe, connected environments for leisure and recreation, we will empower individuals and families to lead active, healthy lives.

Together we will foster communities that are vibrant, resilient, and connected. Cultural activity will champion the customs, traditions, and figures that shape our rich heritage, celebrating the diversity and depth of our communities. It will contribute to a thriving, sustainable economy by driving skilled employment and creating rewarding jobs.

Monmouthshire will welcome growing numbers of visitors in ways that are sustainable and positive for local communities. Monmouthshire's towns and villages will be alive with cafés, restaurants, galleries, leisure activities, and creative businesses, offering everyone the chance to enjoy and participate in our cultural life.

The strategy is a commitment to place culture and its people's wellbeing at the centre of Monmouthshire's future. By harnessing the power of creativity, heritage, leisure, and community, we will build a county where people and places thrive together, memories are cherished, and new stories are written every day.

3. What makes Monmouthshire Monmouthshire?

Monmouthshire is buzzing with creativity. People speak passionately about the land itself. The Black Mountains, the Usk and Wye Valley, Tintern's mystical atmosphere, and our National Landscapes (previously AONB) create not just stunning backdrops but deep personal connections. For many, the landscape has been life changing. *"I didn't realise I was an artist until I came to Monmouthshire. The county doesn't just support creative practice, it awakens it. The soil is good, the views are better, and the impact on wellbeing and imagination is lasting"* (Workshop Participant).

This is a place where nature and culture are intertwined. The canal rich with history and wildlife is more than a historic route, a place for everyone, from walkers and families to artists and heritage lovers.

Monmouthshire boasts a remarkable density of castles and churches. These heritage assets are not just monuments; they are reminders of the county's long and varied past, and often serve as venues for events, performances, and festivals.

The county's identity as a borderland adds complexity. There is a strong sense of place, of movement and meeting points. Improving cycle and walking routes help people experience the landscape in a more connected and sustainable way.

From Abergavenny to Usk, Chepstow to Monmouth, each town has its own personality and traditions. The living levels at Magor and Undy reflect a rich historical landscape shaped by past industrial and rural activities, significantly influencing local identity, community life, and the preservation of South Wales' cultural heritage. The network of villages creates a cultural patchwork that is unique to Monmouthshire.





What's happening across Monmouthshire

Art

Creativity in Monmouthshire flourishes through a dense network of local groups and clubs and Monmouthshire's landscape is dotted with creative hubs where ideas are born, rehearsed, shared, and celebrated.

- Wye Valley Sculpture Garden provides an opportunity to experience creative practice.
- Artists Meet Ups like Abergavenny & Grosmont Drink and Draw where artists gather to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and find new inspiration in each other's work.
- Dramatic Monmouthshire: From pantomimes to serious theatre, amateur dramatics groups provide a supportive home for aspiring performers and backstage wizards.

This grassroots activity is the lifeblood of the county, ensuring that culture is always evolving and that everyone finds their creative voice.

What's happening in our communities

We asked our local communities what exciting things are happening in the area and their answers painted a vibrant picture of culture, community, and celebration. These are just some of the responses:

Local organisations help drive creativity. Dance Blast brings movement and energy to the community, Suitcase Theatre offers imaginative performances, and the Film Society fosters thoughtful discussion through cinema. The amateur arts scene is thriving too, with passionate people creating and performing across the county.

Music has a strong presence, from world-renowned Rockfield Studios to events like Castell Rock that tie performance directly to place. Pubs such as the Hen & Chickens and the King's Arms in Abergavenny, are part of the cultural ecosystem where local stories, songs, and community gatherings thrive.

The AM and Raglan Music Festivals, and the Wye Valley River Festival bring people together through music, performance, and shared values. VE Day commemorations also stand out, reminding us of the deep connections between culture and history.

Agricultural shows in Monmouth, Usk and Chepstow capture the vibrant spirit of rural life where tradition meets innovation in the heart of the countryside.

Monmouthshire boasts a vibrant sporting scene which enriches its cultural life. Chepstow Racecourse, renowned for hosting prestigious fixtures such as the Welsh Grand National draws crowds from the region and beyond.



Our picturesque countryside is an attractive destination for amateur and professional cyclists, from local sportives to the Tour of Britain. These are opportunities for participation and spectating and bringing local communities together.

But it's not just the big events that people are talking about - smaller, more unique events are equally loved. From the Plant and Seed Swap by Transition Town Monmouth to the wonderfully quirky duck herding at Monmouth Carnival, there's a joyful sense of creativity everywhere. The Wye Makes and Far Open Art Trail give artists a chance to shine. There's even a "May the Fourth Be With You" performance for Star Wars fans.

And whether it's a community archaeological dig, a theatre production in an open space or a cosy book club gathering in a local community centre or even a pub, the cultural calendar is full of surprises.

The places that host these activities are just as important. Beloved venues include the Borough Theatre, Melville Theatre, Bookish and the bustling Abergavenny Market. The Savoy Theatre in Monmouth and the Chapel and Art Shop in Abergavenny offer more intimate cultural experiences. The newly refurbished Drill Hall in Chepstow and Monmouthshire's many community halls hosts events of all kinds.

Creative spaces like TogetherWorks in Caldicot and relaxed settings like The Boat Inn, Penallt, and Robin Hood, Monmouth, a 'Night out' supported cinema showing in a village hall, prove that culture happens everywhere - from formal venues to informal community hubs. Even the natural beauty of Wentwood Forest plays a role in Monmouthshire's cultural life.

These events embody Monmouthshire's ethos of "everyone welcome" - where amateurs and professionals, old hands and curious newcomers, are all encouraged to participate.



What's happening across Monmouthshire

Community

Community is the golden thread running through the fabric of Monmouthshire, evident in the multitude of grassroots and community-led events that light up the calendar year-round. Among them are:

- **Monmouth Lantern Parade:** Each winter, Monmouth's streets are transformed into a river of light as locals craft and carry lanterns, illuminating both the town and the bonds between neighbours. What began as a simple act of gathering has blossomed into a cherished annual tradition, bringing people of all ages together to celebrate creativity and unity.
- **Mari Lwyd Tradition in Chepstow:** Folk heritage is alive and kicking in Monmouthshire. The ancient ritual of Mari Lwyd, where a horse's skull, decked in ribbons, leads a singing procession from pub to pub. This event keeps the myth and magic of Welsh folklore pulsing through Chepstow's streets.
- **Usk in Bloom:** Every summer, the town of Usk explodes in a riot of colour as locals compete and collaborate to make their gardens and public spaces blossom. It's not just about flowers: it's about pride, friendly rivalry, and the collective effort that transforms the entire town.
- **Monmouth Living Windows:** Shopfronts become living canvases, animated by pop-up performances, art installations, and imaginative window displays. This event blurs the lines between everyday life and performance, inviting passers-by to pause, reflect, and connect with the creativity at the community's core.
- **Pride Events:** Monmouthshire's Pride celebrations, wherever they spring up are thriving and growing. These events champion inclusivity, diversity, and the right for everyone to live authentically. From rainbow parades to community discussions, Pride in Monmouthshire is a beacon of acceptance and celebration.

These events thrive on volunteer power, local know-how, and an openness to all, making them the true soul of the county. They are more than just dates in the diary; they are living expressions of Monmouthshire's warmth and togetherness.



4. Accountability and Action

Culture is a vital driver for achieving Monmouthshire's broader ambitions and realising the goals of the council and its partners. Our long-term vision is ambitious but realistic and will bring together a variety of organisations to ensure delivery.

Delivering this strategy will require steady and consistent leadership, good governance, and close collaboration by individuals and organisations from across Monmouthshire and beyond. Delivery will happen through creative arts, heritage and leisure organisations who collectively make up the 'cultural sector' alongside its wider community groups, businesses, education providers, and public bodies, each of whom has a role to play in developing and promoting culture across the county and all benefit from doing so.

Effective delivery also relies on the proactive involvement and leadership of the County Council, community and town councils, alongside stakeholders and partners. Whilst the council ensures that the cultural strategy aligns with wider community goals and local development plans, community and town councils support and fund events and venues and act as vital links to local residents, fostering a sense of ownership, encouraging participation, and ensuring that the strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of the people it serves.

Monmouthshire Council supports cultural activity through several roles:

- **Regulator:** Oversees planning, licensing, and public safety at events through collaboration with internal departments, emergency services and hospitality businesses.
- **Educator:** puts cultural experience at the heart of the school curriculum and provides lifelong adult education opportunities.
- **Public Realm Steward:** Maintains streets, town centres, parks, open spaces and public rights of way to ensure they are clean and accessible culture filled spaces, enjoyable to all.
- **Landlord:** Responsible for venues where cultural activities take place, partnering with tenants, often volunteer-run to improve use, access, and sustainability.
- **Funder:** Channels funding and resources to support cultural initiatives through partnerships.
- **Information Hub:** Our Tourism team and the Visit Monmouthshire website promote the county as a visitor destination. Working in partnership with Town Councils, hospitality and culture businesses and events promoters we can do more to raise the profile of Monmouthshire and develop audiences.
- **Service Provider:** We operate museums, theatres, heritage sites leisure centres and libraries.

As a body with county wide responsibility in the areas listed above we will strive to create opportunities for culture to thrive and develop within Monmouthshire in partnership with our communities and creative practitioners.

Engaging with local businesses, cultural organisations, and educational providers broadens the reach of the strategy, leverages expertise, and fosters innovative approaches to cultural development. The council with its partners can maximise the cultural, social, and economic impacts of the strategy, contributing to the vibrancy and resilience of Monmouthshire's communities.

Within the first year, a Cultural Partnership Forum (CPF) for Monmouthshire will be established. This Forum will be responsible for overseeing the implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the cultural strategy. The Cultural Partnership Forum will comprise representatives drawn from the public, private, and voluntary sectors, ensuring a broad mix of expertise and perspectives relevant to Monmouthshire's cultural landscape.

- The Forum will provide strategic leadership for the cultural strategy, shaping priorities and ensuring alignment with local and national agendas.
- It will monitor delivery against agreed objectives in the action plan, review outcomes and impact, and make recommendations for adaptation or improvement as needed.
- Forum members will continue to engage with communities who have in participated bringing this Cultural Strategy to fruition.

- Forum members will engage with hard-to-reach community groups ensuring that everyone is able to participate
- Members will act as ambassadors, engaging their respective networks and communities to foster participation and gather feedback.
- An annual report will be developed to give an update to reflect progress, challenges, and emerging opportunities.

By establishing a robust framework, Monmouthshire aims to create a sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic cultural sector, ensuring that cultural activity is embedded in decision-making and delivers meaningful benefits for communities, partners, and visitors alike.



The strategy has an initial 2-year action plan that will establish clear foundations for delivery. Establishing baseline data in the action plan is crucial as it will allow the CPF to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of stated actions against a clear starting point.

The CPF will develop this initial action plan to create a 10-year plan.

The actions within the plan have been grouped into three key themes: Places, People and Creative Capacity. The right combination of Places (buildings, spaces and facilities) and a great programme of events and activities can inspire People, creating opportunities and learning, which will ensure we grow Creative Capacity through our communities and county.

Places - our buildings, spaces, and facilities provide the canvas upon which cultural activity takes place. They must be accessible, flexible, and welcoming, designed to host a rich programme of events and activities that spark curiosity, inspire learning, and forge lasting connections.

People – culture in Monmouthshire doesn't exist in a vacuum – it lives and breathes through its people. From community volunteers and storytellers to ambitious artists and active audiences. It is people who bring vibrancy, meaning and connection to the county's cultural life.

More than just events or venues, culture here is a living network of relationships, shared memories and mutual care. Monmouthshire's cultural life also helps tackle social isolation, especially in rural areas offering social connection, safe, inclusive spaces and renewed purpose. Culture offers something vital in these moments: the opportunity to be part of something meaningful.

Community participation has the power to build empathy, belonging and emotional resilience. Cultural moments often feel bigger than just entertainment – they are transformative.

Ultimately, people make culture possible. They show up, create, organise, volunteer, remember and imagine. When people feel included, respected and supported, that culture becomes stronger and truly alive.

Creative Capacity is the heartbeat of a vibrant cultural ecosystem. It is the measure of our ability to nurture and unleash imagination, innovation and artistic excellence within our communities.

However, creativity needs care, attention and investment if it's to thrive. Across the county, there's a shared desire not just to protect our cultural life, but to nurture the creative capacity of our communities from early years through adulthood.





Monmouthshire is blessed with a rich tapestry of stories, landscapes, and creative energy. Its cultural strategy is a declaration of confidence in that heritage and a commitment to future prosperity. With a carefully designed action plan, Monmouthshire can ensure that its cultural strategy is more than a statement of intent, it becomes a catalyst for genuine change.

It will enable the county to set priorities, mobilise resources, build partnerships, and measure progress in a transparent and inclusive way. Most importantly, it will empower communities to shape their own cultural destiny, ensuring that Monmouthshire's legacy endures for generations to come.

The strategy and action plan together will guide Monmouthshire toward a future where culture is not just preserved, but celebrated, developed, and shared by all.

5. Measuring our Success

This chapter outlines a detailed Cultural Strategy Action Plan for Monmouthshire for a two-year period, focusing on enhancing creative capacity, community engagement, and place development through a series of targeted actions. The plan emphasizes partnerships, education, accessibility, and sustainable cultural growth to benefit residents and visitors alike. In March 2027, a new action plan will be developed and published which will have clear baseline data within to show transparency, changes made to focus the strategy and identify emerging impacts.

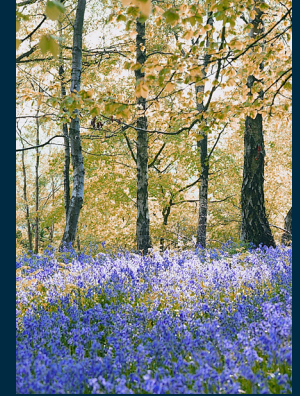
Theme	Creative Capacity				
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
1	Establish a Culture Partnership to facilitate the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and its future development	<p>Appointment of Cultural Forum and Chair</p> <p>Agreed existing workplan for first 12 months</p> <p>First review/revision of action plan – January 2027</p> <p>Developing and agree a 3-year action plan from April 2027 – March 2030</p>	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf	MCC and partners	April 2026
2	Establish clear baseline data that provides a factual starting point against which all future progress and changes can be measured	<p>Agree baseline data for effective monitoring and evaluation by setting measurable indicators of success, and offering transparent evidence of what has changed due to the strategy's implementation</p>	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf	Cultural Forum and Creative Cardiff	June 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
3	Sustained focus on shared marketing and publicity resources for the cultural sector in Monmouthshire	<p>Review of current opportunities for creative community to share information</p> <p>Develop an events calendar that utilises our spaces to deliver events for residents and visitors making a positive contribution to the local economy.</p>	<p>Destination management - Visit Monmouthshire</p> <p>New version to be added</p>	MCC	June 2026
4	Review current community education course offer and identify opportunities to align with Cultural Strategy to enhance opportunities to our communities	<p>Review completed and action plan devised on existing or new courses offered</p> <p>Number of additional venues offering community learning courses to extend offer to communities</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf</p> <p>Library Strategy 2025-2030</p>	MCC Community Learning Services	August 2026
5	Create a funding database that encourages organisations to work together and coordinate applications to avoid duplication where possible	Create a funding database that developed and made widely available for cultural activity	Monmouthshire Economic and Employment Strategy	MCC Economy and Employment service	December 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
6	To design and deliver a Creative Alliance across Monmouthshire that will create peer support and shared resources for those involved in events and activity planning.	<p>Establish a Monmouthshire wide Creative Alliance in 2026</p> <p>Create a database of resources available to local events and activities</p> <p>Number of events and activities supported through the Creative Alliance</p> <p>Establish cost benefit of shared resources to local events and activities</p>	The National Events Strategy for Wales 2022 to 2030	Cultural Partnership Forum	December 2026
Theme	People				
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
7	Establish baseline data of those currently engaging in cultural activity	Baseline data established ready to engage wider audiences	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf Destination management - Visit Monmouthshire	MCC	December 2026
8	To bring together high-quality opportunities for cultural volunteering with a particular emphasis on increasing the diversity of volunteers.	<p>Collate and analyse volunteering data from cultural, arts and leisure organisations</p> <p>Identify key areas for improving volunteering based on data and stakeholder consultation</p>	Volunteering - Monlife Vision for Volunteering sets out 10-year plan for volunteer work - Museums Association	MCC / GAVO and WCVA and volunteering partners	February 2027

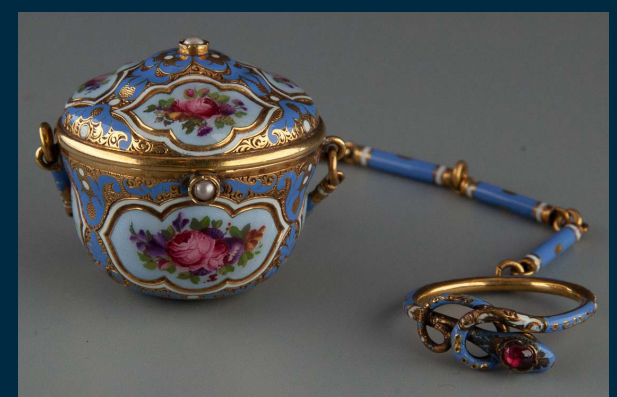
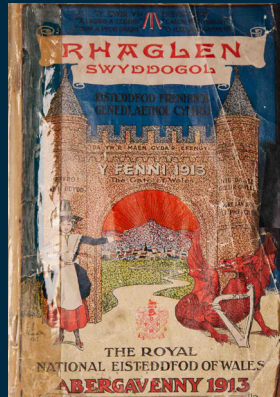
Theme	Place				
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
9	Develop and deliver public art exhibitions in locations which are underrepresented in the county and which will increase footfall to the area.	<p>Establish a Public Arts Policy and Guidance for Monmouthshire</p> <p>Identify and support locations for art exhibitions</p> <p>Procure and invite an identified cohort of artists to exhibit</p>	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf	<p>MCC</p> <p>Cultural Partnership Forum</p>	March 2027
10	To ensure that consideration is given to the infrastructure for events and activities to enable participants to attend safely	All new public realm initiatives have considered appropriate lighting, accessibility and safety to increase cultural opportunities across our county	Placemaking	Cultural Partnership	March 2027

All Themes					
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
11	Continue to implement our: Annual Culture, Heritage and Arts Delivery Plans. Heritage Strategy	Appointment of Cultural Forum and Chair Agreed existing workplan for first 12 months First review/revision of action plan – January 2027 Developing and agree a 3-year action plan from April 2027 – March 2030		MCC and partners	Ongoing
12	Review this Action Plan annually, maintaining a three-year detailed forward plan	First review of Action Plan January 2027 and additional action plan written and publicised		Cultural Partnership Forum	January 2027



A Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire

2025 - 2035 - DRAFT



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Welcome

from Council Leader, Mary Ann Brocklesby

I am always amazed at the excellence and diversity of culture in Monmouthshire. Our county really does have something for everyone. What's more I am inspired by the extraordinary breadth of talent of all ages who contribute to the vibrancy and quality of our cultural life.

Monmouthshire Council has a wonderful inheritance of historic buildings, exciting museum collections, beautiful parks, the Borough Theatre and Caldicot Castle which we hold in trust for future generations and manage on behalf of the public.

Even more importantly, and alongside Town and Community Councils, we have a role in supporting the many volunteers who make community events and performances happen, bringing people together and brightening all our lives.

The cultural industries are important to our economy. Monmouthshire is home to hundreds of amazing people – from poets to musicians, textile artists to ceramicists and film makers to landscape painters to name but a few - who create the culture we all consume and bring wealth and visitors to our county.

This Strategy aims to bring all these strands together, as part of working towards a greener, fairer Monmouthshire, where everyone can enjoy their chosen activities in our thriving towns and beautiful landscapes.



Welcome

from Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism, Sara Burch

Monmouthshire is a wonderful place to live and visit because there is always something happening. This Cultural Strategy sets out our plans to support and amplify our county's rich cultural life.

We want a future where everyone, at every stage of life can be creative and active, can find the thing that makes their heart sing, and find other people who share their passion.

We want to be a county where strange and delightful things occur in the landscape, that hosts world-class events as well as the intimate and local, contemporary as well as traditional, and where people visit as much for cultural experience as for our breathtaking scenery. So many people give their time to run events, share their skills and enrich life in Monmouthshire towns and villages.

Our county is also full of people making a living through their creativity and by providing experiences and hospitality that give pleasure and bring people together. This strategy aims to celebrate their achievements and address how, by working together, we can create even more opportunities, more employment and more moments to treasure.

1. Executive Summary

Monmouthshire stands at a pivotal moment in its cultural journey. Our landscapes, our people, and our heritage together form an extraordinary foundation from which we can build a thriving and connected future. This Cultural Strategy sets out a bold and necessary vision for the next decade, one that recognises culture not as an isolated activity, but as a powerful force shaping wellbeing, economic growth, community resilience, and our sense of identity.

Across Monmouthshire, culture is lived. It is expressed in our festivals and performances, in our castles and market towns, in our community halls and creative hubs, and in the small moments of connection that happen every day. It is reflected in the passion of our artists, volunteers, audiences, and local organisations who bring imagination and energy to every corner of the county. Their work enriches the lives of our children, young people and maturer residents and reinforces a deep sense of belonging and pride.

Culture also drives prosperity. Creative industries, heritage tourism, and community events play a crucial role in supporting local businesses, skilled employment and the visitor economy. This strategy seeks to build on that momentum by strengthening creative capacity, promoting collaboration, and improving how we share Monmouthshire's story with the world.

This strategy recognises that culture thrives when communities thrive. It places people at the centre ensuring that opportunities to participate, create, learn, and celebrate are accessible to all. The ambitions set out here will help reduce inequality, foster inclusion, and support mental and physical wellbeing through shared experiences, active travel, and vibrant public spaces.

In adopting this Cultural Strategy, we affirm our confidence in Monmouthshire's creativity, resilience, and potential. We commit to celebrating what makes this place unique while nurturing new ideas and opportunities. Above all, we recognise culture as a shared endeavour - one that belongs to every resident, every visitor, and every generation to come.

Together, we can ensure that Monmouthshire's cultural future is vibrant, sustainable, and inspiring.

2. Monmouthshire's Cultural Strategy

Located between the curves of the River Wye and the rolling hills of the Brecon Beacons, Monmouthshire stands as a vibrant testament to the interplay of natural beauty and human ingenuity. From historic towns where stories of Roman legions and medieval lords mingle with the local life to the tranquil countryside dotted with stone cottages and hidden abbeys, Monmouthshire's landscape is a canvas painted with centuries of culture, history and resilience.

These landscapes offer not only visual splendour, but also serve as places of inspiration, recreation, and connection. Artists, writers, and musicians have long turned to these hills and rivers for creative spark. The walking trails, cycle routes, and waterways invite residents and visitors alike to experience the outdoors, fostering well-being and a sense of belonging.

Monmouthshire is blessed with a wealth of tangible and intangible heritage. Its castles, such as those at Caldicot, Raglan, Chepstow, and Abergavenny, stand as enduring witnesses to the county's strategic significance across centuries of conflict and alliance. Market towns bustle with echoes of medieval trade, while rural churches, bridges, and stone cottages speak of lives lived.

But heritage in Monmouthshire is not only found in stone and mortar. It lives in stories passed down by families, in local festivals, crafts, and traditions. Agricultural fairs, music gatherings, and seasonal celebrations all contribute to a rich calendar of cultural expression anchoring communities in a shared sense of place and memory.

The Welsh language holds a cultural and historical significance for Monmouthshire, serving as a vital expression of local identity and heritage. Hosting the National Eisteddfod of Wales created a sense of excitement around the language and local eisteddfodau are regularly held in schools and towns across the county. Integrating the Welsh language into the county's cultural strategy strengthens community cohesion, supports educational opportunities, and attracts visitors who are keen to experience authentic Welsh culture. The preservation and promotion of the Welsh language not only honors the region's rich linguistic heritage but also ensures that future generations remain connected to their roots, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.

Everyone has a right to participate in the cultural life of Monmouthshire, whether that be as a child, a teenager, a young person or an older adult. It is important to have opportunities to access it in a variety of ways. This could include at home, in school, in our village and town halls, in open spaces, through organised events and at informal get-togethers.





Faith has equally played a formative role in shaping Monmouthshire's cultural landscape, with its churches, chapels, and faith-based traditions reflecting centuries of spiritual and communal life. Recognising and embracing the diverse expressions of faith within the county's cultural strategy supports inclusive community engagement and mutual understanding. By referencing both language and faith into its cultural strategy, Monmouthshire demonstrates its commitment to celebrating diversity, nurturing cultural vibrancy, and strengthening the unique character of the county.

Creating a cultural strategy for Monmouthshire will assist in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the county, ensuring that **children, young people, older adults** and future generations can appreciate and learn from it. Implementing this strategy now is crucial because it aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of culture in enhancing the quality of life. By bringing this strategy to our communities, we can ensure that cultural resources are accessible to everyone, promoting inclusivity and diversity. This approach not only enriches the lives of individuals but also strengthens the social fabric of Monmouthshire - a well-defined cultural strategy will attract tourism, boost the local economy and create job opportunities.

The cultural strategy for Monmouthshire is an investment in the county's future. It is a statement of confidence in the power of culture to unite, inspire, and transform.

It will ensure that Monmouthshire's stories are told, its creativity is celebrated, and its communities are empowered to shape their own futures. The geography of the county contributes to this, with its historic bridges, connected routes, and river crossings bringing people together, fostering the exchange of ideas, customs, and commerce. **This is further strengthened by our strong twinning and cultural exchanges that offer international experiences thus further enriching learning and knowledge.** By encouraging new ways of experiencing and interpreting our environment through festivals, art, storytelling, and sustainable tourism, we aim to ensure that Monmouthshire remains alive with meaning **for children, young people and older adults** and for present and future generations.

By working together across boundaries and generations, we can build a cultural legacy that will inspire, sustain, and connect us for years to come. Whether you are a lifelong resident, a creative professional, a newcomer or a visitor, you have a role to play in shaping the cultural life of this remarkable county.

Monmouthshire's story is still being written. With imagination, commitment, and collaboration, we can ensure that its next chapters are rich with possibility.

'Culture is the sea we swim in' (quote from survey participant)

The impact and influence of culture

Culture is a living, breathing force that shapes the fabric of our lives and communities. At its heart, culture is a vessel of shared stories, one that anchors individuals of all ages within a larger collective. Participation in cultural traditions, celebrations, and rituals strengthens the sense of belonging. Whether through language, cuisine, music, or dress, culture provides markers of identity, affirming individual worth and connection to others.

Culture broadens horizons and opens doors. Exposure to diverse artistic forms, narratives, and perspectives encourages curiosity. It provides opportunities to learn, to dream, and to imagine new possibilities. For many, cultural activities are gateways to discovering hidden talents, developing skills, and pursuing passions.

One of the most significant contributions of cultural engagement lies in its ability to support mental health and well-being. Participation in culture can reduce stress, enhance mood, and contribute to better physical health by encouraging active lifestyles. Culture supports emotional resilience and lifelong personal growth, enriching individual lives and the wider community. The act of participating in a concert or bellringing group or attending a theatre performance can lift spirits and alleviate feelings of isolation.

Opportunities exist to combine education and cultural enrichment within formal learning settings and community organisations.

The community values difference and celebrates slowness - not as a lack of action, but as space to breathe, reflect, and grow.



We understand the importance and value of cultural activities for children and young people, nurturing their creativity, self-expression, boosting their confidence and promoting a sense of identity. By participating in music, art, drama, dance, or heritage projects, young people develop essential skills such as teamwork, communication, critical thinking and transferable skills that can support their future ambitions, while also enriching society as a whole.

Overall, involvement in cultural activities supports emotional resilience and lifelong personal growth, enriching both individual lives and the wider community.

The creative arts demand imagination, discipline, and resilience, encouraging participants to challenge themselves and explore new aspects of their personalities.

Comments from residents on how culture impacts or affects their lives:

It offers a bit of peace from the relentless day to day and whether you are exploring a ruin, listening to music or trying new food at the night market, it gives you a sense of belonging and a place in the world. (Quote from survey participant)

It enhances my life when I can find things to do, makes me feel invigorated and inspired. (Quote from survey participant)

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For some, the journey leads to professional paths in the creative industries - artists, writers, technicians, performers, designers, and craftspeople whose contributions enrich society. The cultivation of creative skills through cultural participation not only drives personal development but also helps build vibrant economies.

Creative industries generate employment, attract tourism, and stimulate innovation across sectors, such as film, music, fashion and design, contributing significantly to local prosperity. Events also act as an economic driver, providing opportunities to support local businesses in areas such as event management, hospitality and transport. **We recognise the difficulty in getting into these areas of employment and will look to support apprenticeship opportunities for young people entering the profession and those looking at a career change at a later stage in life.**

Monmouthshire has provided the backdrop for blockbuster films such as Captain America and long-running BBC series including Doctor Who. The film adaptation of Owen Sheers' 'Resistance' is set in the remote and stunningly beautiful Vale of Ewyas while the more recent Netflix production 'Sex Education' features a variety of picturesque locations within the inspirational Wye Valley. We also have the ITV period drama Sanditon filming extensively at Caldicot Castle, with the Michael Sheen directed BBC drama 'The Way' and Guy Ritchie directed Netflix drama "Young Sherlock Holmes" both filming in Monmouth.

So, what makes Monmouthshire... Monmouthshire?

It's the quiet power of the landscape, the deep roots of heritage and the spark of creativity. Here, culture isn't something we attend, it's something we live.



An increase in **creative capacity** leads to **cultural activities** which have individual and community benefits. We see a better **tourism** offer which at a societal level leads to an **improved economy** and at a personal level we see improvements in **health** and **wellbeing**.



What is happening across Monmouthshire

Festivals & Shows

Festivals and performances are central to Monmouthshire's cultural life, providing a stage for talent, collaboration, and the sheer joy of gathering. Some highlights of our calendar include:

- **Wye Valley Festival:** Celebrating music, art, and the landscape that inspires them, this festival brings together performers and audiences in venues as varied as ancient churches and outdoor woodland.
- **Medieval Festivals:** Reenactments, jousts and historical workshops transform visitors back in time, giving new life to Monmouthshire's castles and historic sites. History is not just preserved here - it is performed and lived.
- **Devauden Festival:** An eclectic music festival with a family-friendly vibe, Devauden draws a passionate crowd for a weekend of concerts, workshops, and fun. Local bands share the stage with national acts, showcasing the county's musical diversity.
- **Abergavenny Food Festival:** This celebrated event draws foodies from across the UK and beyond to sample the region's produce, watch live chef demonstrations, and learn about sustainable food culture. The festival is a feast for the senses, reflecting the county's rich agricultural heritage and innovative spirit.
- **Agricultural Shows:** Shows at Monmouth, Usk and Chepstow play a vital role in supporting local agriculture, stimulating the economy, and nurturing a vibrant community spirit. They unite people, preserve rural traditions and showcase the best of the region's heritage.
- **Literary and Writing Events:** Monmouthshire is a haven for writers and book lovers. Literary festivals, author talks, and book clubs abound, turning market towns into homes for storytelling and the written word.

Festivals are year-round projects anchored by creative committees and community participation. They help foster new friendships, spark inspiration, and nurture the next generation of artists and performers.

“



Our purpose

By 2035, our ambition is for Monmouthshire to be recognised nationally and internationally as a destination where culture flourishes **for visitors and residents, children and adults, teenagers and older people, seamlessly blending history, creativity, and well-being across generations.**

Culture can address inequality, enhance personal wellbeing, and foster social connections. By providing shared spaces for expression and dialogue, cultural activities can create opportunities for inclusion, celebrate diversity and bridge divides, helping to reduce social disparities. Research shows engagement with arts and culture supports mental and emotional health and offers outlets for creativity, reflection, and stress relief. Furthermore, cultural events and traditions unite people, strengthening community bonds and a sense of belonging, which are essential for a harmonious and resilient society.

To support culture we will, with partners. source and facilitate funding to invest in resources, in our cultural venues, landscapes and historic spaces and our community volunteers.

Continued investment in active travel routes promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling, reducing reliance on cars and lowering carbon emissions. They enhance community connectivity, making it easier and safer for people to access local services, schools, and workplaces **as well as participating in cultural events across the county.**

Monmouthshire's outstanding natural heritage will be protected and ensuring our landscapes and biodiversity are valued for generations to come. Whether facing the challenges of climate change, demographic shifts, or economic uncertainty, Monmouthshire will be ready to adapt and respond. Culture is a source of resilience as it helps communities reflect, reimagine, and rebuild.





Our parks and open spaces will continue hosting major events and festivals, drawing thousands of visitors each year and providing local people with spaces to connect, celebrate, and play.

Through ambitious placemaking, we will breathe new life into our communities. Our museums will continue to tell the stories of our communities through their diverse collection of documents and objects, hosting exhibitions that evoke pride, challenge and reflection. Our libraries will continue to host literary events for all ages and we will continue to offer space in our buildings for artists and makers. Town centres will be revitalised, and towns and villages will be animated by events, creative projects, and public art. By providing safe, connected environments for leisure and recreation, we will empower individuals and families to lead active, healthy lives.

Together we will foster communities that are vibrant, resilient, and connected. Cultural activity will champion the customs, traditions, and figures that shape our rich heritage, celebrating the diversity and depth of our communities. It will contribute to a thriving, sustainable economy by driving skilled employment and creating rewarding jobs.

Monmouthshire will welcome visitors in ways that are sustainable and positive for local communities. Monmouthshire's towns and villages will be alive with cafés, restaurants, galleries, leisure activities, and creative businesses, offering everyone the chance to enjoy and participate in our cultural life.

The strategy is a commitment to place culture and its people's wellbeing at the centre of Monmouthshire's future. By harnessing the power of creativity, heritage, leisure, and community, we will build a county where people and places thrive together, memories are made, and new stories are written.

4. What makes Monmouthshire Monmouthshire?

Monmouthshire is buzzing with creativity. People speak passionately about the land itself. The dramatic Black Mountains, the picturesque Usk and Wye Valley, Tintern's mystical atmosphere, and our National Landscapes (previously AONB) create not just stunning backdrops but deep personal connections. For many, the landscape has been life changing;

"I didn't realise I was an artist until I came to Monmouthshire. The county doesn't just support creative practice, it awakens it. The soil is good, the views are better, and the impact on wellbeing and imagination is lasting" (Workshop Participant).

This is a place where nature and heritage are intertwined. The canal rich with history and wildlife is more than a historic route, a place for everyone, from walkers and families to artists and heritage lovers. Improving cycle and walking routes help people experience the landscape in a more connected and sustainable way.

Monmouthshire boasts a remarkable density of castles and churches. These heritage assets are not just monuments; they are reminders of the county's long and varied past, and often serve as venues for events, performances, and festivals.

The county's identity as a borderland adds complexity. There is a strong sense of place, of movement and meeting points. Influences come from different directions which contribute to our unique culture.

"The communities of Monmouthshire and adjoining co-communities are special with our own histories and friendships. This is authentic culture of people living and working together across the imaginary boundaries between counties and countries". (Quote from survey participant)

From Abergavenny to Usk, Caldicot and Chepstow to Monmouth, each town has its own personality and traditions. It is important that we acknowledge the different characteristics in the North and South of the county alongside recognising its whole. The living levels at Magor and Undy reflect a rich historical landscape shaped by past industrial and rural activities, significantly influencing local identity, community life, and the preservation of South Wales' cultural heritage. The network of villages creates a cultural patchwork that is unique to Monmouthshire.





What's happening across Monmouthshire

Visual and Performing Arts

Creativity in Monmouthshire flourishes through a dense network of local groups and clubs and Monmouthshire's landscape is dotted with creative hubs where ideas are born, rehearsed, shared, and celebrated.

- Wye Valley Sculpture Garden provides an opportunity to experience creative practice.
- Artists Meet Ups like Abergavenny & Grosmont Drink and Draw where artists gather to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and find new inspiration in each other's work.
- Dramatic Monmouthshire: From pantomimes to serious theatre, amateur dramatics groups provide a supportive home for aspiring performers and backstage wizards, **alongside writers and directors, in conjunction with those for whom theatre is part of their professional life.**
- **Choirs play an important role in our communities with Kingfisher Choir, Monmouth Community Choir and Monmouth Choral society being some examples.**

This grassroots activity is the lifeblood of the county, ensuring that culture is always evolving and that everyone finds their creative voice.

What's happening in our communities

We asked our local communities what exciting things are happening in the area and their answers painted a vibrant picture of culture, community, and celebration. These are just some of the responses:

Local organisations help drive creativity. Dance Blast brings movement and energy to the community, **Happy Dragons Theatre creates performances for, with and about the people of Wales**; Suitcase Theatre offers imaginative performances, and the Film Society **including Abergavenny Film club**, fosters thoughtful discussion through cinema. The amateur arts scene is thriving too, with passionate people creating and performing across the county.

Music has a strong presence, from world-renowned Rockfield Studios and **Monnow Valley Studio to events like Usk Choral Festival and Castell Rock that tie performance directly to place**. Pubs such as **The Boat Penallt**, Hen & Chickens and the King's Arms in Abergavenny, are part of the cultural ecosystem where local stories, songs, and community gatherings thrive.

Thriving U3A's, Women's Institute groups and local History Societies provide a rich diverse menu of experiences and opportunities across the county.

The AM and Raglan Music Festivals, **local church bell ringing groups, Morris dancers** and the Wye Valley River Festival bring people together through music, performance, and shared values. VE Day commemorations also stand out, reminding us of the deep connections between culture and history. **Festive markets including Magor Frost Fayre bring sparkle and enjoyment alongside the annual turning on of the christmas lights across our towns and rural communities.**

Monmouthshire boasts a vibrant sporting scene which enriches its cultural life. Chepstow Racecourse, renowned for hosting prestigious fixtures such as the Welsh Grand National draws crowds from the region and beyond.



Our picturesque countryside is an attractive destination for amateur and professional cyclists, from local sportives to the Tour of Britain. These are opportunities for participation and spectating and bringing local communities together.

But it's not just the big events that people are talking about - smaller, more unique events are equally loved. From the Plant and Seed Swap by Transition Town Monmouth to the wonderfully quirky duck herding at Monmouth Carnival, there's a joyful sense of creativity everywhere. The Wye Makes and Far Open Art Trail give artists a chance to shine. There's even a **Chepstow Elvis Festival**, and a "May the Fourth Be With You" performance for Star Wars fans.

The locations where cultural activity happens are varied.

Whether it's a community archaeological dig, a theatre production in an open space, **artists and makers in our markets** or a cosy book club gathering in a local community centre or even a pub, the cultural calendar is full of surprises.

The places that host these activities are just as important. **Well loved** venues include the Borough Theatre, Melville Theatre, Bookish and the bustling Abergavenny Market.

The Savoy Theatre in Monmouth and the Chapel and Art Shop in Abergavenny offer more intimate cultural experiences. **Shire Hall and Plas Gunter Mansion are both embarking on ambitious refurbishment projects which will revitalize and regenerate their towns.** The newly refurbished Drill Hall in Chepstow and Monmouthshire's many community halls hosts events of all kinds. **And our cultural spaces go beyond being venues for events, they are also spaces where communities can come for support in times of trouble whether that be for practical assistance or somewhere to reflect.**

Creative spaces like TogetherWorks in Caldicot and relaxed settings like The Boat Inn, Penallt, and Robin Hood, Monmouth, a 'Night out' supported cinema showing in a village hall, prove that culture happens everywhere - from formal venues to informal community hubs. The natural beauty of Wentwood Forest plays a role in Monmouthshire's cultural life **as do those venues in many of our villages and towns – our schools and village halls.**

These events embody Monmouthshire's ethos of "everyone welcome" - where amateurs and professionals, old hands and curious newcomers, are all encouraged to participate.



What's happening across Monmouthshire

Community

Partnership is the golden thread running through the fabric of Monmouthshire, evident in the multitude of grassroots and community-led events that light up the calendar year-round. Among them are:

- **Monmouth Lantern Parade:** Each winter, Monmouth's streets are transformed into a river of light as locals craft and carry lanterns, illuminating both the town and the bonds between neighbours. What began as a simple act of gathering has blossomed into a well loved annual tradition, bringing people of all ages together to celebrate creativity and unity.
- **Mari Lwyd Tradition in Chepstow:** Folk heritage is alive and kicking in Monmouthshire. The ancient ritual of Mari Lwyd, where a horse's skull, decked in ribbons, leads a singing and **Morris dancing procession** from pub to pub. This event keeps the myth and magic of Welsh folklore pulsing through Chepstow's streets.
- **Usk in Bloom:** Every summer, the town of Usk explodes in a riot of colour as locals compete and collaborate to make their gardens and public spaces blossom. It's not just about flowers: it's about pride, friendly rivalry, and the collective effort that transforms the entire town.
- **Monmouth Living Windows:** Shopfronts become living canvases, animated by pop-up performances, art installations, and imaginative window displays. This event blurs the lines between everyday life and performance, inviting passers-by to pause, reflect, and connect with the creativity at the community's core.
- **Pride Events:** Monmouthshire's Pride celebrations, wherever they spring up are thriving and growing. These events champion inclusivity and diversity. From rainbow parades to community discussions, Pride in Monmouthshire is a beacon of acceptance and celebration.
- **Remembrance Parades:** These countywide events provide an opportunity for all generations with a physical reminder of all those who have served and sacrificed ensuring that no-one is forgotten.

These events thrive on volunteer power, local know-how, and an openness to all, making them the true soul of the county. They are more than just dates in the diary; they are living expressions of Monmouthshire's warmth and togetherness.



5. Accountability and Action

Culture is a vital driver for achieving Monmouthshire's broader ambitions and realising the goals of the council and its partners. Our long-term vision is ambitious but realistic and will bring together a variety of organisations to ensure delivery.

Delivering this strategy will require steady and consistent leadership, good governance, and close collaboration by individuals and organisations from across Monmouthshire and beyond. Delivery will happen through creative arts, heritage and leisure organisations who collectively make up the 'cultural sector' alongside its wider community groups, businesses, education providers, and public bodies, each of whom has a role to play in developing and promoting culture across the county and all benefit from doing so.

Effective delivery also relies on the proactive involvement and leadership of the County Council, community and town councils, alongside stakeholders and partners. Whilst the council ensures that the cultural strategy aligns with wider community goals and local development plans, community and town councils support and fund events and venues and act as vital links to local residents, fostering a sense of ownership, encouraging participation, and ensuring that the strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of the people it serves.

Monmouthshire Council supports cultural activity through several roles:

- **Regulator:** Oversees planning, licensing, and public safety at events through collaboration with internal departments, emergency services and hospitality businesses.
- **Educator:** puts cultural experience at the heart of the school curriculum and provides lifelong adult education opportunities.
- **Public Realm Steward:** Maintains streets, town centres, parks, open spaces and public rights of way to ensure they are clean and accessible culture filled spaces, enjoyable to all.
- **Landlord:** Responsible for venues where cultural activities take place, partnering with tenants, often volunteer-run to improve use, access, and sustainability.
- **Funder:** Channels funding and resources to support cultural initiatives through partnerships.
- **Information Hub:** Our Tourism team and the Visit Monmouthshire website promote the county as a visitor destination. Working in partnership with Town Councils, hospitality and culture businesses and events promoters we can do more to raise the profile of Monmouthshire and develop audiences.
- **Service Provider:** We operate museums, theatres, heritage sites leisure centres and libraries.

As a body with county wide responsibility in the areas listed above we will strive to create opportunities for culture to thrive and develop within Monmouthshire in partnership with our communities and creative practitioners.

Engaging with local businesses, cultural organisations, and educational providers broadens the reach of the strategy, leverages expertise, and fosters innovative approaches to cultural development. The council with its partners can maximise the cultural, social, environmental and economic impacts of the strategy, contributing to the vibrancy and resilience of Monmouthshire's communities.

Within the first year, a Cultural Partnership Forum (CPF) for Monmouthshire will be established. This Forum will be responsible for overseeing the implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the cultural strategy. The Cultural Partnership Forum will comprise representatives drawn from the public, private, and voluntary sectors, ensuring a broad mix of expertise and perspectives relevant to Monmouthshire's cultural landscape.

- The Forum will provide strategic leadership for the cultural strategy, shaping priorities and ensuring alignment with local and national agendas.
- It will monitor and review delivery against an **agreed evaluation framework with clear impacts and outcomes** and make recommendations for adaptation or improvement as needed.
- Forum members will continue to engage with communities who have participated bringing this Cultural Strategy to fruition.

- Forum members will engage with hard-to-reach community groups ensuring that everyone is able to participate
- Members will act as ambassadors, engaging their respective networks and communities to foster participation and gather feedback.
- An annual report will be developed to give an update to reflect progress, challenges, and emerging opportunities.

By establishing a robust framework, Monmouthshire aims to create a sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic cultural sector, ensuring that cultural activity is embedded in decision-making and delivers meaningful benefits for communities, partners, and visitors alike.



The strategy has an initial 2-year action plan that will establish clear foundations for delivery. Establishing baseline data **in the first year** will be crucial as it will allow the CPF to measure progress, impact and evaluate the effectiveness of stated actions against a clear starting point.

The CPF will co-produce and develop this initial action plan to create a 10-year plan.

The actions within the plan have been grouped into three key themes: Places, People and Creative Capacity.

Places - our buildings, spaces, and facilities provide the canvas upon which cultural activity takes place. They must be accessible, flexible, and welcoming, designed to host a rich programme of events and activities that spark curiosity, inspire learning, and forge lasting connections.

People – culture in Monmouthshire lives and breathes through its people. From community volunteers and storytellers to ambitious artists and active audiences. It is people who bring vibrancy, meaning and connection to the county's cultural life.

More than just events or venues, culture here is a living network of relationships, shared memories and mutual care. Monmouthshire's cultural life also helps tackle social isolation, especially in rural areas offering social connection, safe, inclusive spaces and renewed purpose. Culture offers something vital in these moments: the opportunity to be part of something meaningful.

Community participation has the power to build empathy, belonging and emotional resilience. Cultural moments often feel bigger than just entertainment – they are transformative.

Ultimately, people make culture possible. They show up, create, organise, volunteer, remember and imagine. When people feel included, respected and supported, that culture becomes stronger and truly alive.

Creative Capacity is the measure of our ability to nurture and unleash imagination, innovation and artistic excellence within our communities.

However, creativity needs care, attention and investment if it's to thrive. Across the county, there's a shared desire not just to protect our cultural life, but to nurture the creative capacity of our communities from early years through adulthood.





Monmouthshire is blessed with stories, landscapes, and creative energy. Its cultural strategy is a declaration of confidence in that heritage and a commitment to future prosperity. With a carefully designed action plan, Monmouthshire can ensure that its cultural strategy is more than a statement of intent, it becomes a catalyst for genuine change.

It will enable the county to set priorities, mobilise resources, build partnerships, and measure progress in a transparent and inclusive way. Most importantly, it will empower communities to shape their own cultural destiny, ensuring that Monmouthshire's legacy endures for generations to come.

The strategy and action plan together will guide Monmouthshire toward a future where culture is not just preserved, but celebrated, developed, and shared by all.

Moments in time across Monmouthshire

Page 78

Mesolithic period – Monmouthshire was occupied by people who were largely nomadic following herds of animals. Long bows and arrows were being developed and flints were traded from the east for tools. As the climate warmed the landscape became more wooded and wet.

Bronze Age - People were starting to use bronze although stone tools were still in use. Round barrows (burial mounds) and hillforts are being built.

Romans– Romans arrive in Monmouthshire establishing forts and settlements like Blestium (Monmouth), Usk (Burrium), and Abergavenny to control the local Silures tribe, with later development into important towns such as Caerwent (Venta Silurum), a major tribal capital featuring impressive defensive walls and remains of temples and houses.



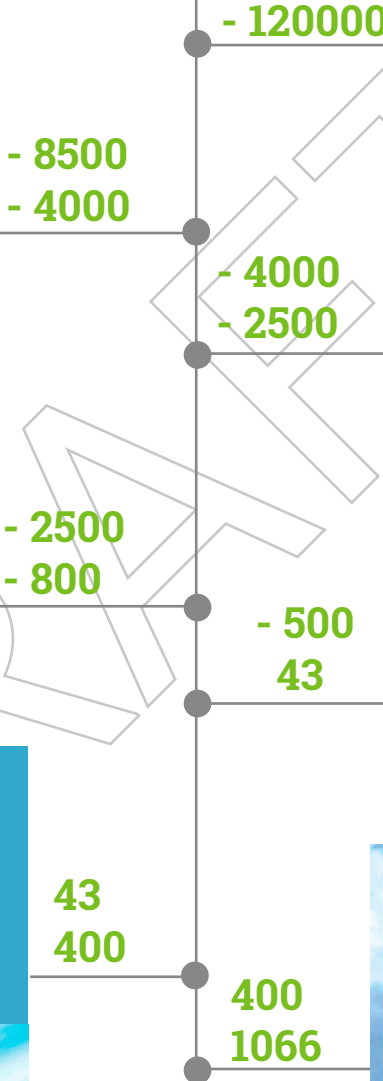
End of the last ice age - Ice had covered much of Monmouthshire but as it retreated people return to Britain. Remains from King Athur's Cave on Little Doward show that mammoths, woolly rhinoceros and hyena lived in the Wye Valley.

Neolithic Period- Developments in stone tools. Beginnings of more settled communities and farming. Starting to build tombs and monuments such as the standing stones at Trellech. Trading was taking place between Britain and the European continent.



Iron Age - Evidence of many Iron Age hillforts in Monmouthshire such as Symonds Yat and Coed y Bwnydd.

Post Roman, Anglo Saxon and Normans - Christianity arrives in Monmouthshire. Important early churches included Llandogo Lancut and Ganerew. Offa, King of Mercia reigned from 757 to 796. Under his rule the Offa's Dyke was built which marks a boundary between the kingdoms of Mercia and Powys.



Medieval/Middle ages - Several castles were built by the Normans to control the contested Welsh border, with key examples including the "Three Castles" (White, Grosmont, Skenfrith) and major sites like Chepstow Castle, Raglan Castle, Monmouth Castle, and Abergavenny Castle.

1066
1200

1400
1415

Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion turned Monmouthshire into a pivotal battleground during the last major Welsh uprising for independence.

Tintern Abbey, the first Cistercian Monastery in Wales, was founded, and dissolved 400 years later by Henry VIII.



1131

1500
1700

Post Medieval – Monmouthshire played a pioneering role in Britain's industrial history. In 1536, the first brass in Britain was produced in the Angidy Valley, and by 1690, the first commercial copper smelting took place at Redbrook. These innovations relied on the River Wye, which served as the vital transport route for raw materials and finished products, driving industrial growth along its banks.



In 1175, Abergavenny Castle was the site of a notorious massacre when William de Braose invited local Welsh leaders to a Christmas feast and had them killed. This event deepened tensions between the Norman lords and the Welsh, leaving a lasting mark on the region's history.

1175

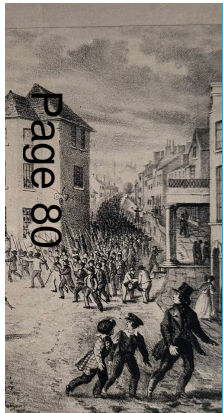
1678

After Henry VIII's break with Rome, Catholicism faced harsh persecution, yet Plas Gunter Mansion in Abergavenny became a secret refuge for priests, with a hidden attic chapel where Mass was celebrated.

1770
1850

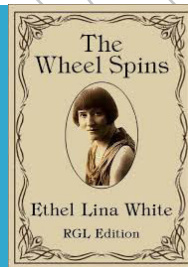
The Picturesque movement in the late 18th and early 19th centuries transformed Monmouthshire into a tourist destination. Visitors flocked to the River Wye for scenic boat tours and explored romantic ruins like Abergavenny Castle, drawn by the movement's celebration of natural beauty and historic charm.





The Chartist trials in Monmouth followed the Newport Rising of November 1839, when thousands of Chartists clashed with troops in Newport. Fourteen men were charged with high treason, and leaders John Frost, Zephaniah Williams, and William Jones were sentenced to death - later commuted to transportation for life, in what became the last major treason trial in British history.

Authors Ethel Lina White (1876) and Dorothy Bowers (1902) are born in Monmouthshire, becoming acclaimed crime writers in their time.



1839
1840

1876
1902

1818

1797
1812

1833
1854

1869

1910



The Construction of Monmouthshire & Brecknock Canal had a major impact on Monmouthshire with improved transport and commerce.

The Abergavenny Eisteddfod became one of the largest Welsh cultural festivals during this period, underlining the county's importance in 19th-century Welsh arts and language

Father Ignatius, a leading figure in the Anglo-Catholic revival, founded a Benedictine monastery at Llanthony in the Vale of Ewyas. His efforts to restore monastic life within the Church of England made the abbey a center of spiritual renewal and a symbol of Victorian religious revival in Monmouthshire.



Charles Rolls, co-founder of Rolls-Royce and a pioneer of aviation, became the first person to complete a non-stop double crossing of the English Channel by airplane.



Monmouthshire becomes home to many Polish people in exile following World War 2, including artist Otto Maciag, Classical Conductor Kazimierz Hardulak and Doctor Wit Tarnawski.

1940s

1926

Former Piercefield Estate land was transformed into Chepstow Racecourse, opening on 6 August 1926. It soon became home to the prestigious Welsh Grand National and remains one of Wales's premier racing venues.

1958

Rockfield Studios opened at Amberley Court Farm in Monmouthshire, becoming the world's first residential recording studio, later hosting legendary artists such as Queen, Oasis, and Coldplay.

1963

On 22 June 1963, the Beatles performed at Abergavenny's Borough Theatre during their early UK tour, bringing global pop culture to Monmouthshire.

1971

The Wye Valley was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1971.



1981

Raglan Castle features in the film "Time bandits".

1999

Abergavenny Food Festival is established.

2011

Green Gathering relaunches at Piercefield Park, Chepstow.

2016

The National Eisteddfod in 2016 is held in Abergavenny.

And we are still creating moments in time across Monmouthshire.

6. Measuring our Success

This chapter outlines a detailed Cultural Strategy Action Plan for Monmouthshire for a two-year period, focusing on enhancing creative capacity, community engagement, and place development through a series of targeted actions. The plan emphasizes partnerships, education, accessibility, and sustainable cultural growth to benefit residents and visitors alike. In March 2027, a new action plan will be developed and published which will have clear baseline data within to show transparency, changes made to focus the strategy and identify emerging impacts.

Theme	Creative Capacity				
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
1	Establish a Culture Partnership to facilitate the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and its future development	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fully established Cultural Partnership Forum with clear governance and leadership structures. Deliver the first year of action plan and develop and agree the proceeding action plan. Impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater coordination and reduced duplication across cultural organisations. A more diverse voice making decisions about culture in Monmouthshire. Cultural activity that feels more relevant, inclusive, and reflective of diverse lived experiences. 	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf	MCC and partners	April - May 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
2	Establish clear baseline data that provides a factual starting point against which all future progress and changes can be measured	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline cultural data captured and used to inform planning. • A countywide cultural data dashboard enabling evidence-led decision-making. • Annual insight reports tracking participation, economic impact, wellbeing and diversity. <p>Impact:</p> <p>A better understanding of our baseline so we can make informed decisions to ensure activity leads to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation among underrepresented groups—including rural residents, young people, older adults and diverse communities. • More equitable access to cultural activity across the county. • More adaptive and responsive cultural planning. • Ability to demonstrate long-term impact to funders, partners, stakeholders and Council with clear evidence. 	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0 Council.pdf	Cultural Forum and Creative Cardiff	June 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
3	<p>Create a digital platform bringing together resources from the cultural sector in Monmouthshire. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared marketing and publicity resources • A funding database that encourages organisations to work together and coordinate applications to avoid duplication where possible • List of approved transport providers to enable safe routes to and from events. • Tool and resource banks • Workshops and courses • Space where artists can share ideas for residencies 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared digital platform providing marketing, funding resources, transport information and creative tools. • Increased opportunities for showcasing local creative talent in both traditional and unexpected places. <p>Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater coordination and reduced duplication across cultural organisations. • Increased visibility and accessibility of cultural events and creative opportunities countywide. • More artists, groups and volunteers benefiting from shared resources and networking. • Stronger cultural brand for Monmouthshire. 	<p>Destination management - Visit Monmouthshire</p> <p>New version to be added</p> <p>Monmouthshire Economic and Employment Strategy</p>	MCC	June 2026 - December 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
4	Review current community education course offer and identify opportunities to align with Cultural Strategy to enhance opportunities to our communities	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to creative skills training. Delivering on the Library strategy outcomes for community and learning opportunities. Expanded opportunities for culture to support mental health, loneliness reduction, intergenerational learning and social cohesion. Impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth of creative industries and freelance opportunities in Monmouthshire. Growth in increase in educational skill levels and knowledge base. Increased footfall and visitor spend in town centres. Measurable increases in wellbeing indicators for participants. Stronger neighborhood connections and reduced social isolation. 	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf Library Strategy 2025-2030	MCC Community Learning Services	August 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
5	To design and deliver a Creative Alliance across Monmouthshire that will create peer support and shared resources for those involved in events and activity planning.	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Creative Alliance formed to support collaboration, resource sharing and professional development. Establish cost benefit of shared resources to local events and activities. <p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More artists, groups and volunteers benefiting from shared resources and networking. Enhanced ability for communities and organisations to plan, promote and deliver cultural work effectively More efficient use of resources, reduced duplication and stronger shared accountability. Greater visibility of cultural provision and strategic coherence countywide. Increase in number of events and activities supported through the Creative Alliance. 	The National Events Strategy for Wales 2022 to 2030	MCC	December 2026

Theme		People			
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
6	To bring together high-quality opportunities for cultural volunteering with a particular emphasis on increasing the diversity of volunteers.	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A coordinated approach to improving the diversity, quality and distribution of cultural volunteering opportunities. Identify key areas for improving volunteering based on data and stakeholder consultation. Impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more diverse, skilled and supported volunteer workforce. Strengthened social connections, reduced loneliness, and improved wellbeing through cultural engagement. 	Volunteering - Monlife Vision for Volunteering sets out 10-year plan for volunteer work - Museums Association	MCC / GAVO and WCVA and volunteering partners	February 2027

Theme Place					
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
7	Develop and deliver public art exhibitions in locations which are underrepresented in the county and which will increase footfall to the area.	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish a Public Arts Policy and Guidance for Monmouthshire. Development and delivery of public art exhibitions in areas of the county currently underrepresented. Impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased footfall in town centres, rural hubs and lesser served areas. Broader distribution of cultural activity beyond traditional venues. 	Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0 Council.pdf	MCC Cultural Partnership Forum	March 2027

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
8	To ensure that consideration is given to the infrastructure for events and activities to enable participants to attend safely.	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New public realm and infrastructure planning incorporates safety, accessibility and lighting for greater participation in events • Impacts • Cultural infrastructure and events aligned with environmental sustainability and climate-resilient design. <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved safety, confidence and comfort for attendees at cultural events. • Reduced carbon footprint of cultural events. • Increased participation due to improved accessibility and safer public spaces. • Enhanced sense of pride and belonging connected to public art and placemaking 	Placemaking	Cultural Partnership	March 2027

All Themes					
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
9	<p>Continue to implement our:</p> <p>Annual Culture, Heritage and Arts Delivery Plans.</p> <p>Heritage Strategy</p> <p>We will ensure that these continue to link to wider policies such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and sector areas such as health, economic development, social care, civic life, citizenship and community cohesion.</p>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued delivery of Monmouthshire County Councils cultural, heritage and arts plans, aligned with broader strategies including wellbeing and economic development. <p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A stronger, more resilient cultural ecosystem embedded across the county. Clear evidence of how culture contributes to health, economic growth, environmental goals, social cohesion, and education. 		MCC and partners	Ongoing

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
10	Review this Action Plan annually, maintaining a three-year detailed forward plan	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review and publication of the Action Plan to maintain transparency and responsiveness. Continued delivery of the county's cultural, heritage and arts plans, aligned with broader strategies including wellbeing and economic development. <p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A stronger, more resilient cultural ecosystem embedded across council planning. Clear evidence of how culture contributes to health, economic growth, environmental goals, social cohesion, and education. Ability to track long term change—showing progress year on year and adapting actions based on data. Cultural activity recognised as central to Monmouthshire's identity and prosperity. 		Cultural Partnership Forum	January 2027

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SumnerMcIntyre Key Messages from Monmouthshire Cultural Strategy Consultations with Creatives and Stakeholders

July-August 2025 and November 2025

SumerMcIntyre held 5 consultation events in July 2025 and two further events in November 2025. 6 events were in-person with invited individuals from the creative community in Monmouthshire, 1 event was held on-line with key stakeholders. The events were held in the Melville Centre, Abergavenny, The Shire Hall, Monmouth, Caldicot Castle and Chepstow Leisure Centre, two further events were held at Chepstow Tourist Information Centre and Tintern Village Hall in November as it was felt that we had not sufficiently captured the views of these areas in the first round of consultation meetings due to low numbers.

Participants included creatives – artists and makers, writers, group leaders, business owners, festival directors and creative industry workers. All participants were fully engaged and participated enthusiastically in the sessions. A number expressed interest in continuing to support the process by being actively involved and others were keen to be kept up to date of progress and to suggest other groups who should be consulted.

Attendance – Abergavenny 17, Monmouth 9, online 11, Caldicot 4, Chepstow 2, Tintern 11, Chepstow 14

The sessions were led to discuss 6 main questions:

Question 1 – What are the three most exciting things happening in your area/you are involved in that you regard as cultural at the moment? Tell us about culture in your area

Question 2 - What are our Cultural Strengths? What makes Monmouthshire Monmouthshire? Help us define what is special about Monmouthshire and how this impacts cultural activity, people and places

Question 3 – What could be better?

Question 4 - How does culture impact you?

Question 5 - What words or phrases would you like to see in the vision following our discussions?

Question 6 - How can we develop new ways of working collaboratively between the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

1. Cultural Activity – What’s Exciting Now?

- **Grassroots & community-led events** like Monmouth Lantern Parade, Monmouth Living Windows, Wassail Mari Lwyd tradition in Chepstow (Greenman Backpackers), Usk in Bloom, Electric Picture Hall, Tintern Fete, Queering the Wye and Pride events are thriving.
- **Festivals and live performances** like Abergavenny Food Festival, Devauden Festival, Wye Valley Festival, Art in Penallt, Medieval Festival, Writing Festival, Walking Festival, Bookish events, Tintern fete, Castell Roc, Bandstand, Folk on the lawn, Green Gathering, Cider & Perry Festival are central to cultural life.
- **Creative hubs** like Savoy theatre, Borough theatre, TogetherWorks, Melville Centre, Danceblast, Wye Valley Sculpture Garden, Chepstow Art Space.
- **Local venues** Pubs such as Kings Arms, Abergavenny The Boat and Robin Hood (with new stage) in Monmouth, The Queens Head and The Three Tons in Chepstow and Churches such as St Michael’s Church, Tintern and St Mary’s Chepstow as venues and particularly church halls such as that at Tintern - all support community participation
- **Local groups** – Artists Meet Abergavenny, Plough House Art Group, Grossmont Drink and Draw, Am-Dram Monmouthshire, writing groups, amateur dramatics, and book clubs, heritage talks, local history engagement
- **Outdoor and adventure culture** – viewpoints, mountain biking, Wye Valley walkers

2. Cultural Strengths – What Makes Monmouthshire Special?

- **Distinctive natural landscape** (Wye Valley, rivers including **River Tourism**, forests, undulating landscape, mountains) that is the inspiration for so much culture in the county. “I didn’t realise I was an artist until I came to Monmouthshire”. Contrasts – mountains, valleys, rivers and forests. Wye Valley landmarks such as Devil’s Pulpit, Eagle’s Nest, Kymin, film locations
- **Rich heritage assets:** density of castles, Tintern Abbey, Llantony Abbey, abundance of small churches and bridges.

- **Diverse market towns with individual identities** and a network of distinctive villages enrich the overall cultural fabric. The challenge and richness of multiple towns with distinct cultures.
- **Border identity** Unique border identity: Wales–England intersections, shared influences gateway to Wales, borders with Herefordshire, Forest of Dean, and cosmopolitan influence from cities such as Bristol
- **Independent cultural organisations** – Rockfield Studios for music/Wye Valley Sculpture Garden/Art Shop and Chapel, Plough Art Group
- **Stories and Traditions** – historical events such as Henry V, Chartist, number of *firsts* in Monmouthshire to celebrate, folklore and traditions, industrial heritage
- **Wellness landscape**: a lot of practitioners, retreats, outdoor yoga, walking, river activities

3. What Could Be Better?

- **Poor communication** – lack of central ‘what’s on’ listing platform, not knowing what’s on in next towns, social media not working, no collective voice, poor advertising infrastructure, Need modernised digital presence: “Headfirst Bristol” used as example.
- **Gaps in cultural infrastructure**: affordable venues, performance spaces, studio spaces, exhibition/art spaces, acoustics, accessibility, capacity issues, teaching spaces, only 2 cinemas across county, lack of community discounts for booking venues such as Chepstow Castle.
- **Poor public transport** limits access across towns, can’t get to cinema for example in different town, can get to Bristol or Gloucester but not across Monmouthshire.
- **Unequal access and funding** – youth and rural communities under-served, Welsh-language, lack of hands-on skills development, representation: PRIDE strong but needs rural support
- **Artists feel unseen and undervalued** – need more public visibility of local talent, wonder if valued up the ladder. Creatives need grant-writing support and structured space/time. Volunteers need structured support and cross-town collaboration
- **Fundraising and sponsorship** – patronage – set up a Monmouthshire Art Fund so businesses can donate and know how to support creativity and artists/creatives can apply for funds or introduction of cultural vouchers to spend in Monmouthshire.

4. How Does Culture Impact People?

- **Enhances mental health** and healing, combats loneliness.
- **Enriches people's lives and opportunities**
- Builds a sense of **belonging and identity**.
- Brings **joy and fun**.
- Provides **shared experiences**.
- **Fosters personal growth** and creative careers.
- Culture seen as an **economic contributor** and needs valuing and nurturing as a creative industry. Provides career pathways and talent.
- Culture as a form of **spiritual nourishment and nature connection**.

How do you capture the impact of culture?

- Sharing data across the county to support future grant applications and encourage investment/support.
- More creative methods of evaluation.
- Importance of shared data to demonstrate impact.

5. Vision Words and Phrases

- 216 words were noted during the sessions.
- Community, Local, Outdoor, Accessible, Inclusive, Joyful, Playful, Sustainable, Creative, Empowering, Valued, Landscape

'A joyful, thriving, accessible county to be creative and to play.'

'Where art is part of daily life, and everyone has a voice.'

'A county where creativity transforms lives and communities.'

'A cultural strategy rooted in landscape, belonging and shared heritage, supporting creative futures for all.'

'Inclusive. Inspirational. Vibrant.'"

'A county whose creativity is visible, valued and celebrated across all towns and generations.'

'A multicultural, open, generous and unifying creative community.'

'Monmouthshire celebrates the life, activities and values of the county, in its culture and events together'.

6. New Ways to Work Collaboratively

- Establish a Monmouthshire-wide cultural platform to showcase and connect.
- Support a community panel with real influence and accountability. Must be inclusive and accessible
- Continue and expand database and news emails about culture in the county, build partnerships across sectors.
- Identify culture and arts ambassadors for mentoring and profile-raising
- Look at innovative initiatives (such as the collectives and Monmouthshire Art Fund)
- Develop annual Cultural Celebration Day (different venues)
- Pay and value artists – move beyond volunteer reliance.
- Establish shared creative spaces and hubs across the county – both digital and physical
- Offer mentoring and development support. Provide a toolkit for event organisers.
- Use diverse engagement methods: visual, online, face-to-face, place-based.
- Each town known for something specific and special.

Strategic Summary

- Monmouthshire's culture is rooted in its landscape, history, border identity and strong community spirit.
- Access, visibility, and connections are the greatest barriers and biggest opportunities.
- Capture local individuality of towns and villages - people, activities and events to highlight grass roots cultural activity - (much is happening in local and rural locations yet to be captured).
- Culture must be visible, valued, and supported to become an economic driver
- Success relies on collaboration, infrastructure, communication, community-led creativity across towns and rural areas and ensuring the cultural strategy is distinct, achievable and creative-led. A strong appetite for collaboration supported by clear structures.

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Culture - your views

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

16 January 2025 - 06 January 2026

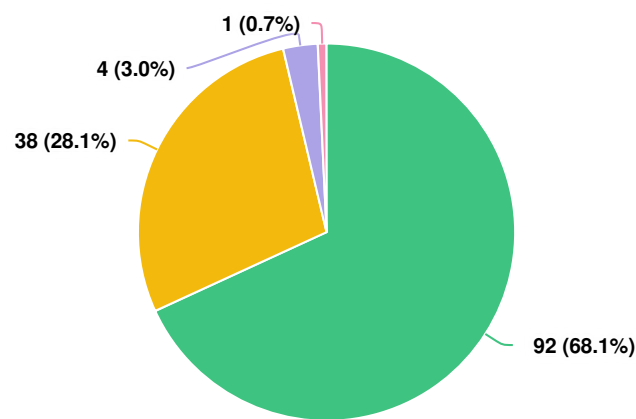
PROJECT NAME:

Let's Talk Culture



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What is your gender?

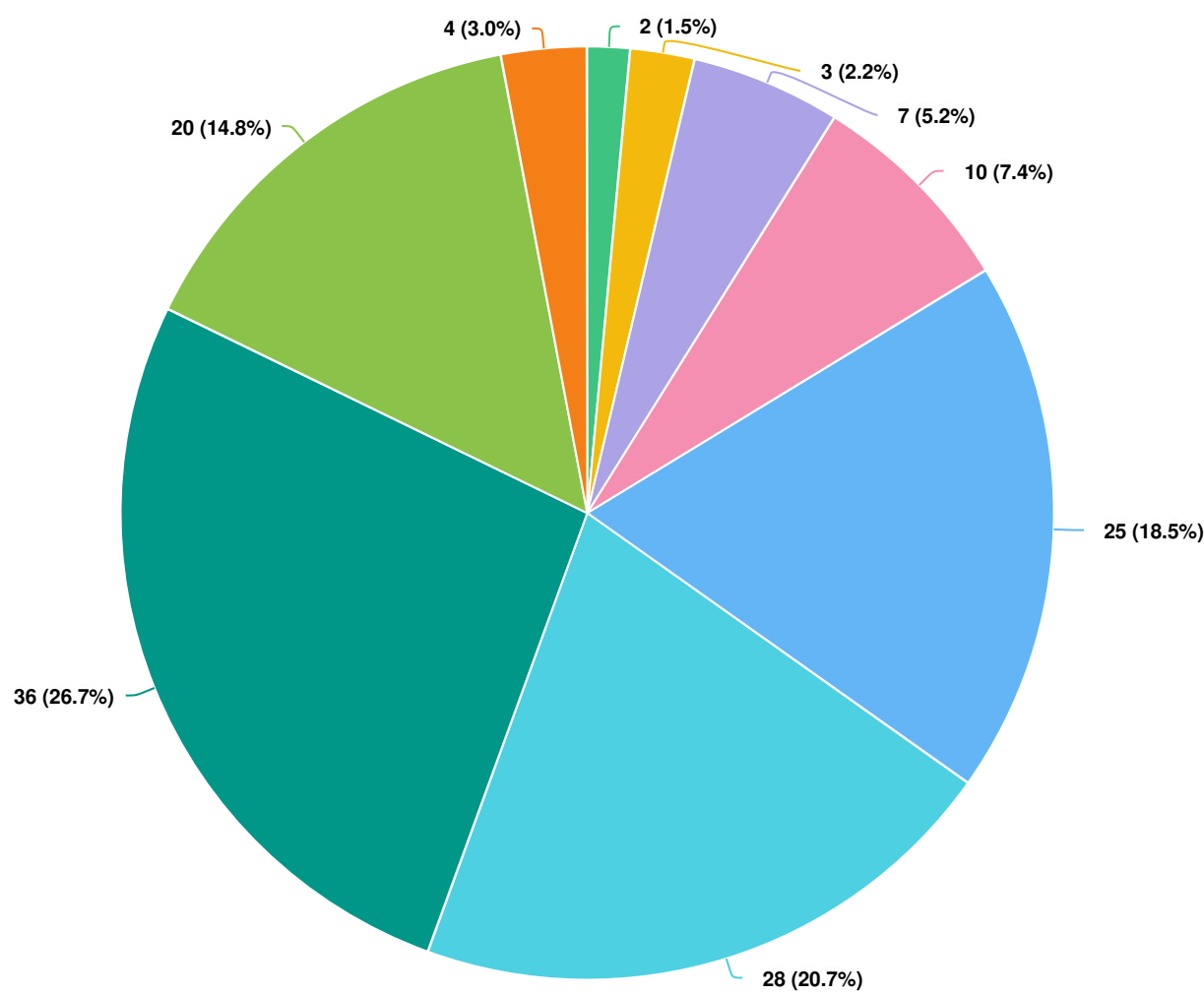


Question options

Female Male Prefer to not to say Prefer to self-describe

Mandatory Question (135 response(s))
Question type: Dropdown Question

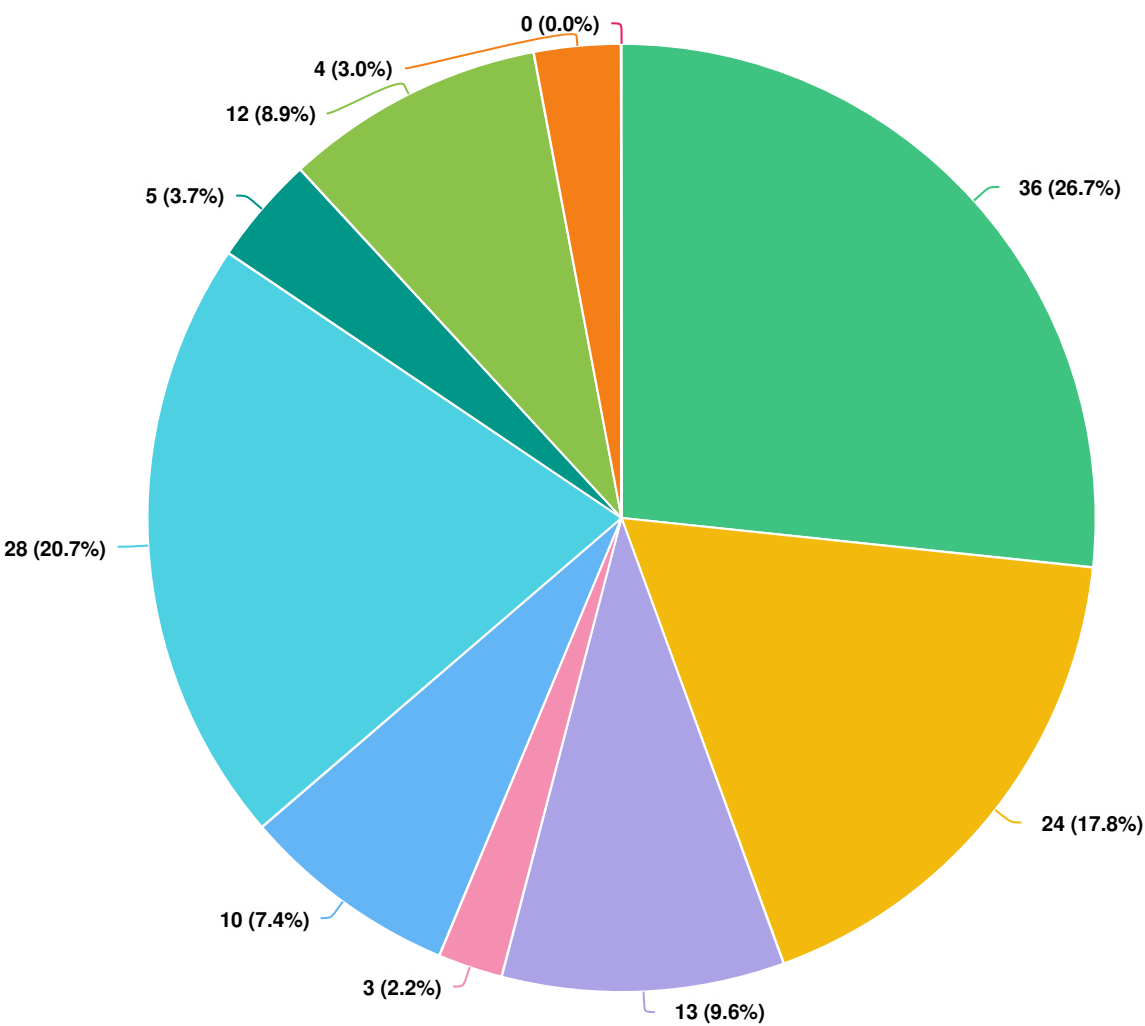
Q2 What age group do you fall within?



Question options
Under 18 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 75+ Prefer not to say

Mandatory Question (135 response(s))
Question type: Dropdown Question

Q3 Firstly, please can you tell us your nearest town or village. Your answer will enable us to identify any themes or popular views that emerge in specific areas of the county.

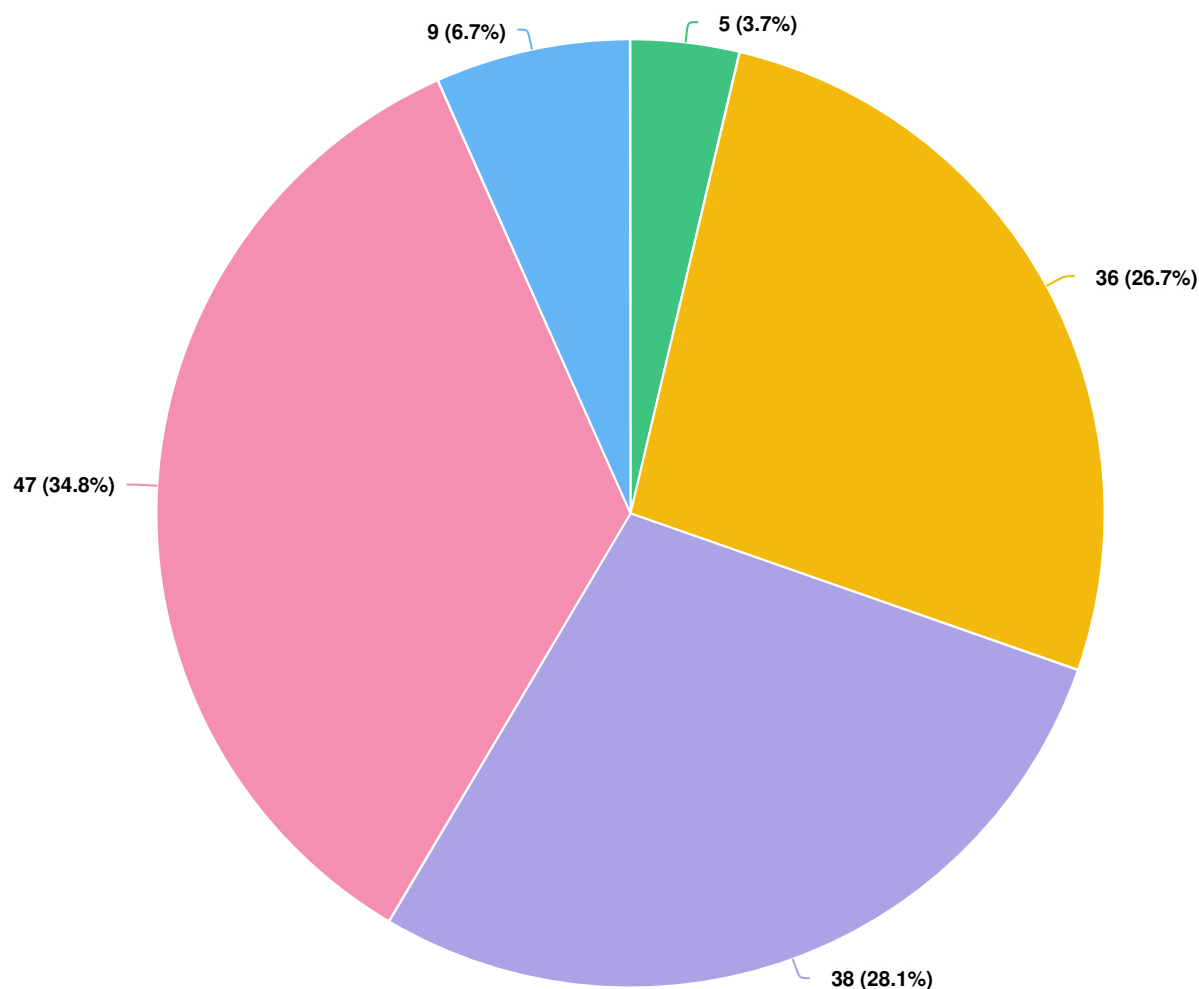


Question options

- Abergavenny Caldicot Chepstow Gilwern Magor with Undy Monmouth Raglan
Usk Prefer not to say Tintern

Mandatory Question (135 response(s))
Question type: Dropdown Question

Q4 | How often do you take part or access a cultural activity in Monmouthshire? *This can include music, theatre, dance, art, crafts, history, etc

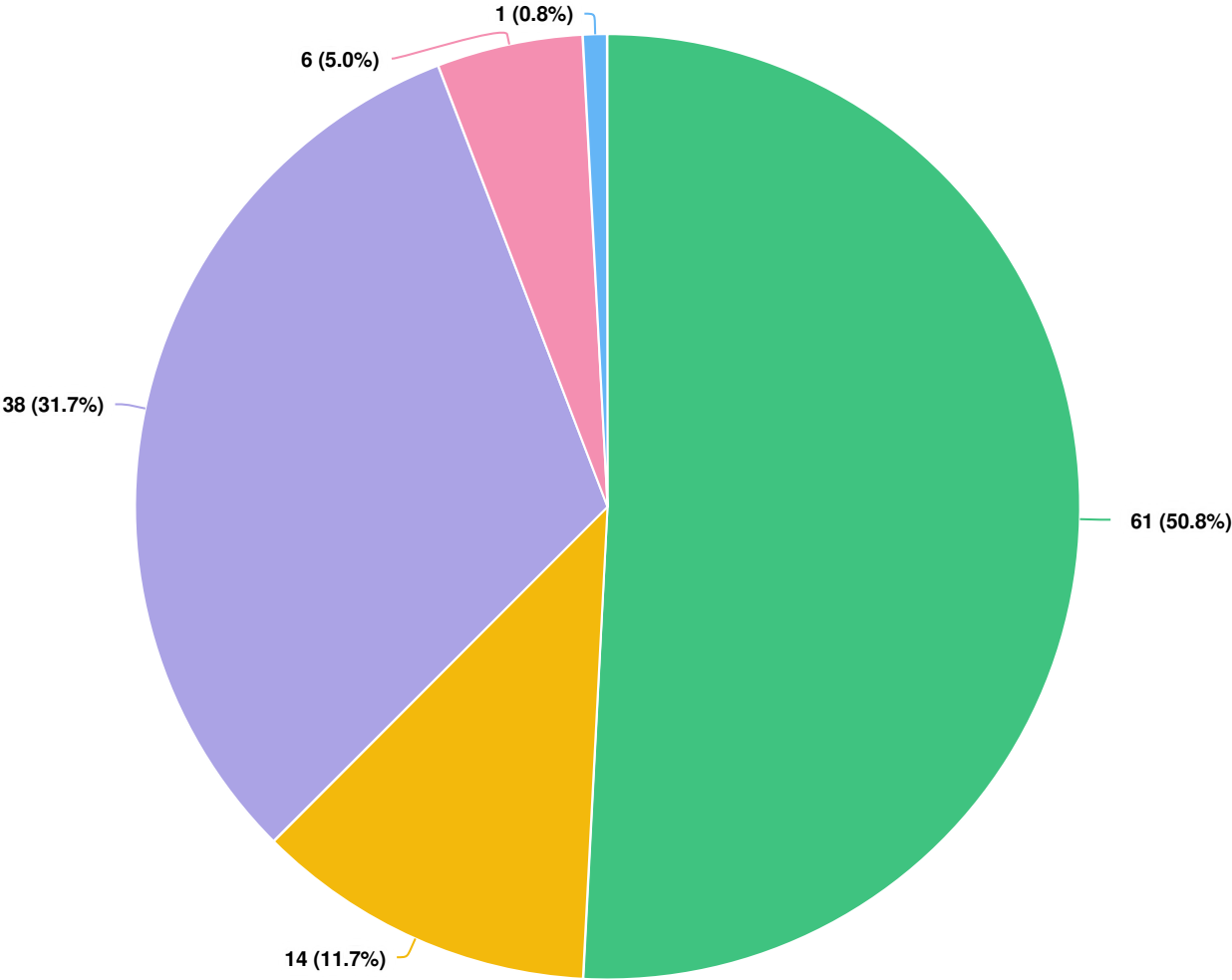


Question options

Every day A couple of times a week A couple of times a month A few times in a year Never

Mandatory Question (135 response(s))
Question type: Dropdown Question

Q5 | If you participated in a cultural activity in the last month, where did it happen?

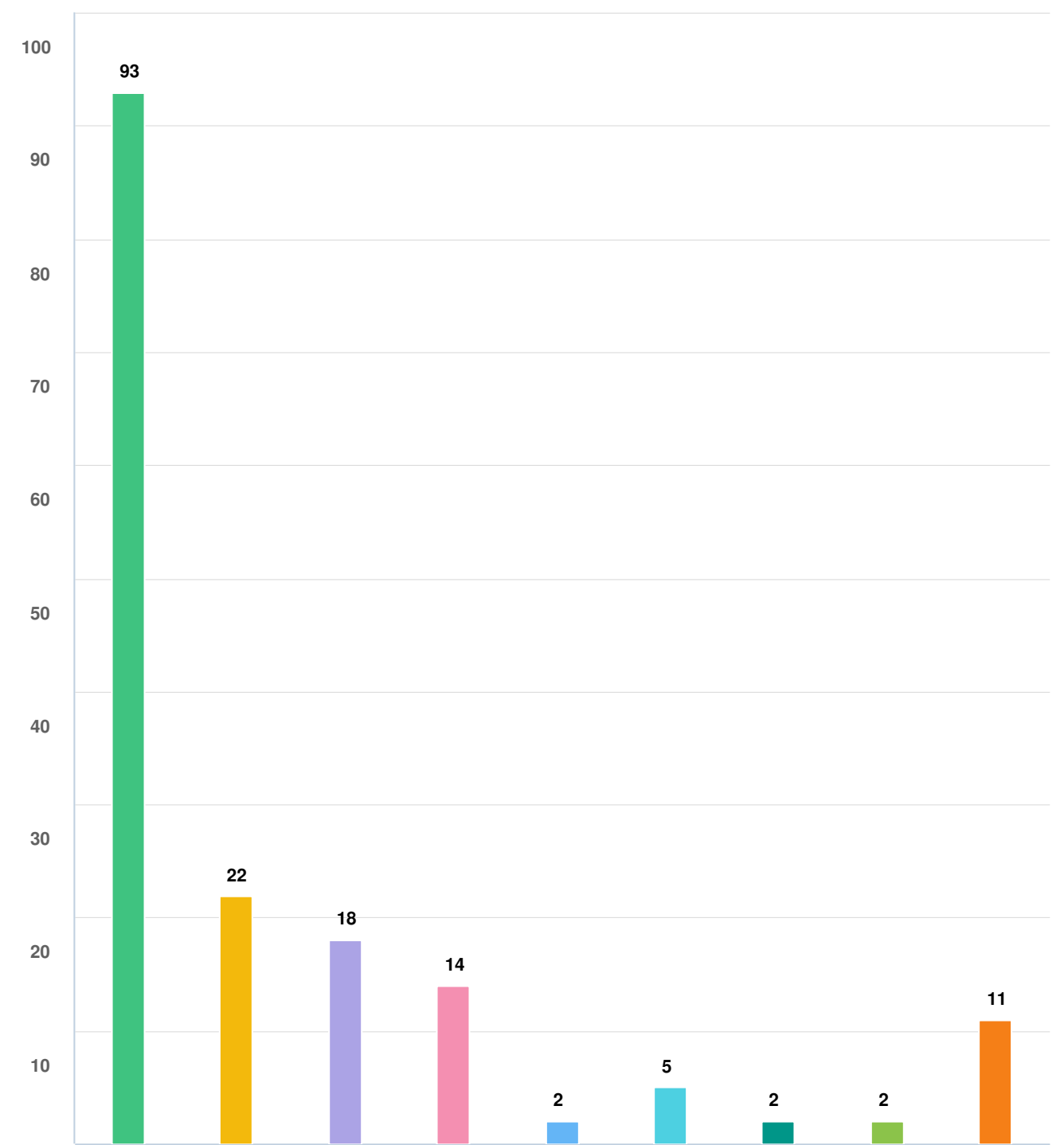


Question options

My local village/town Elsewhere in Wales Within Monmouthshire Elsewhere in the UK Internationally

Optional question (120 response(s), 15 skipped)
Question type: Dropdown Question

Q6 At the last cultural event you attended, how did you take part? Tick as many as apply.



Question options

- As an audience member
- As a volunteer
- As a performer
- As an artist
- As a technician
- As a venue host
- As a hospitality provider
- As a retail provider
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (128 response(s), 7 skipped)
Question type: Checkbox Question

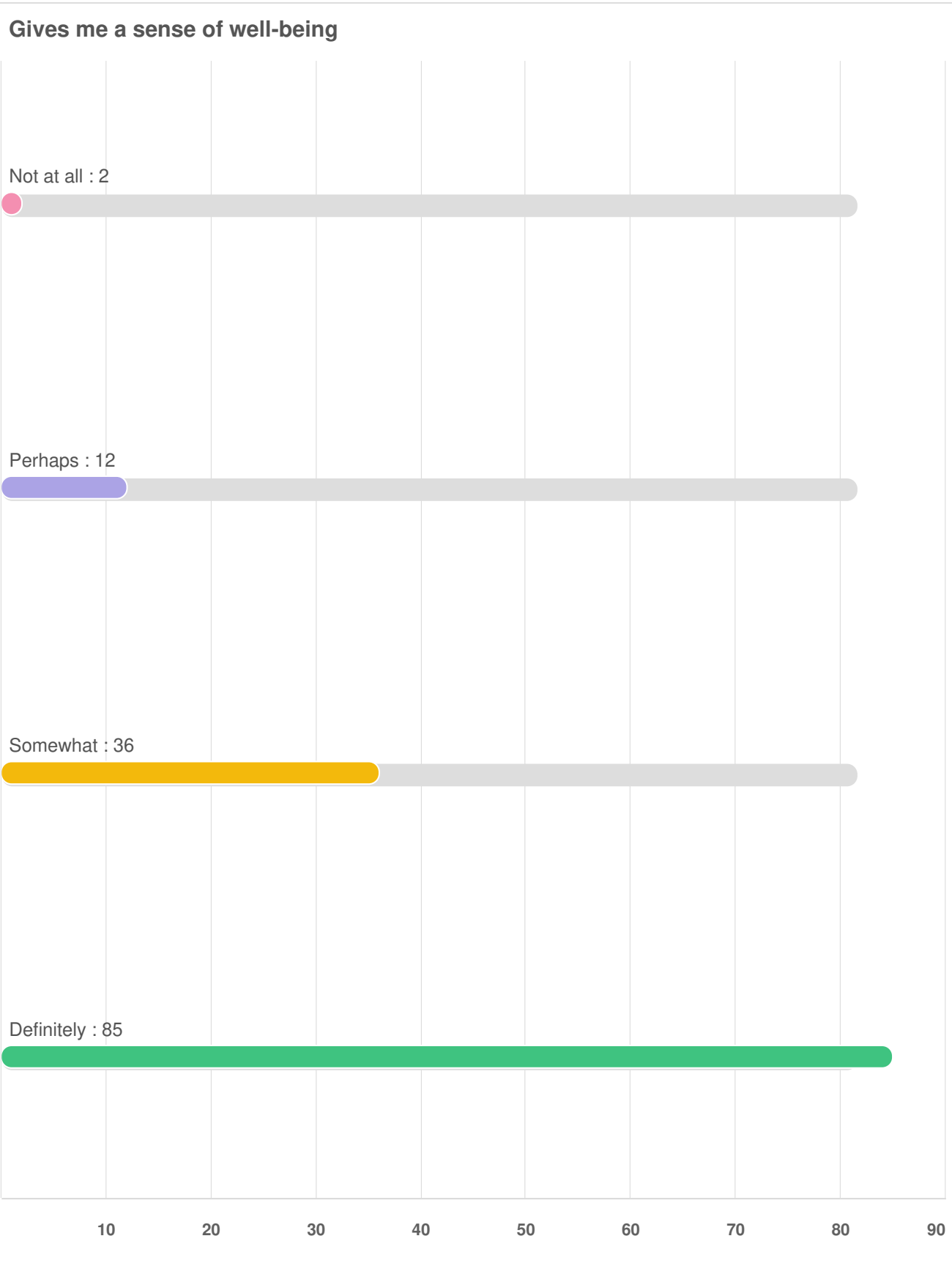
Q7 Please let us know what encourages you to take part/access cultural activities. What are the things that motivate you?



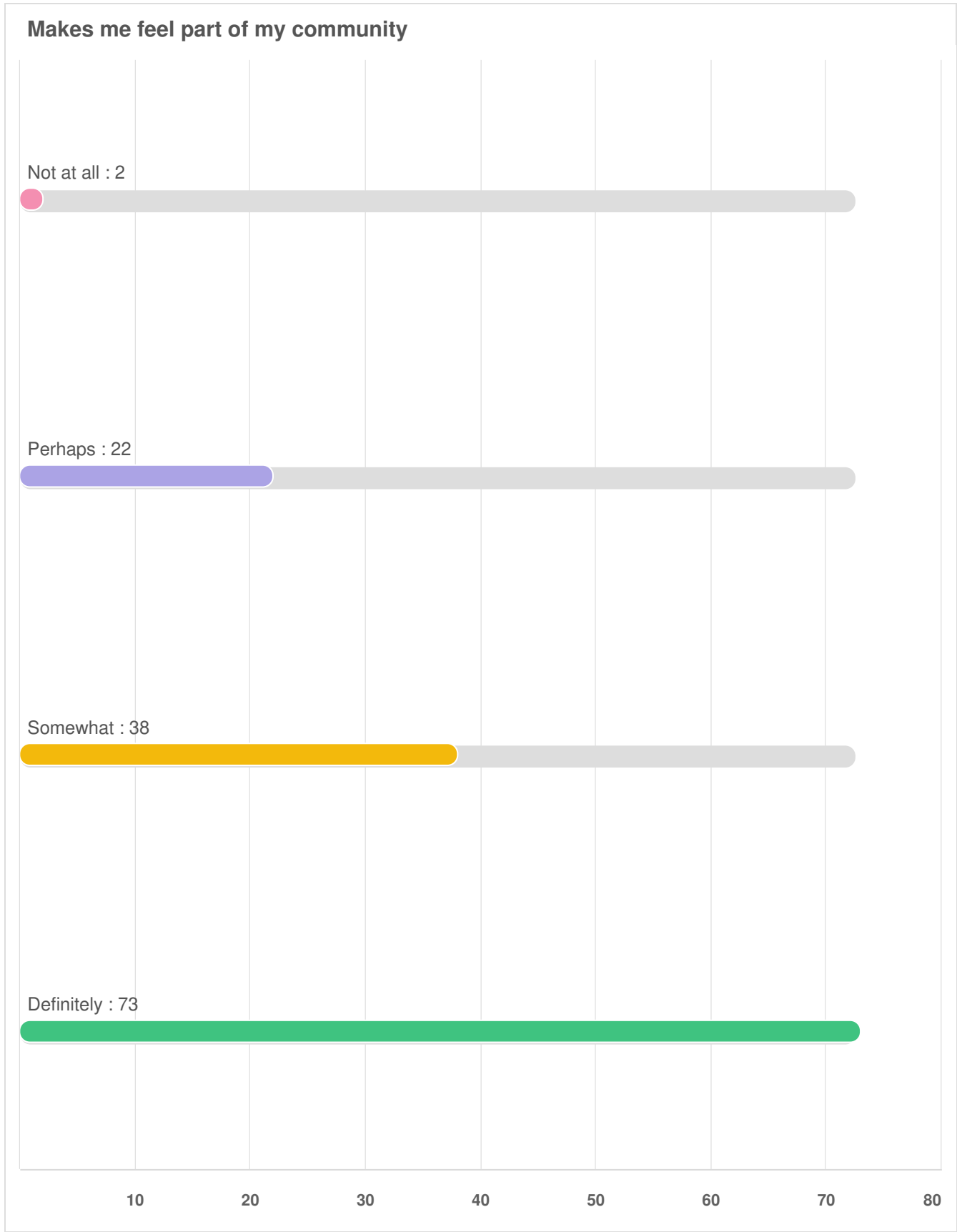
Mandatory Question (135 response(s))

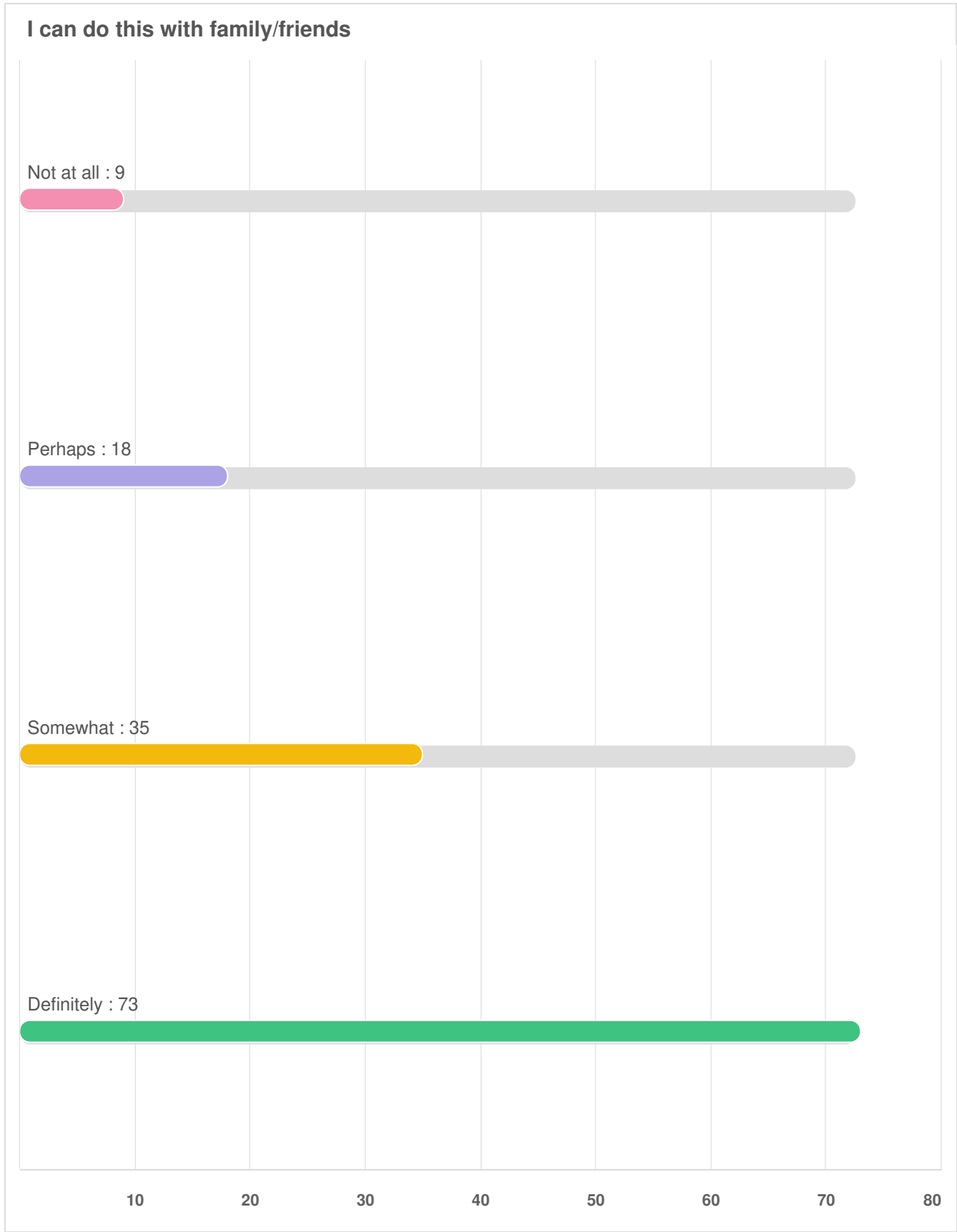
Question type: Likert Question

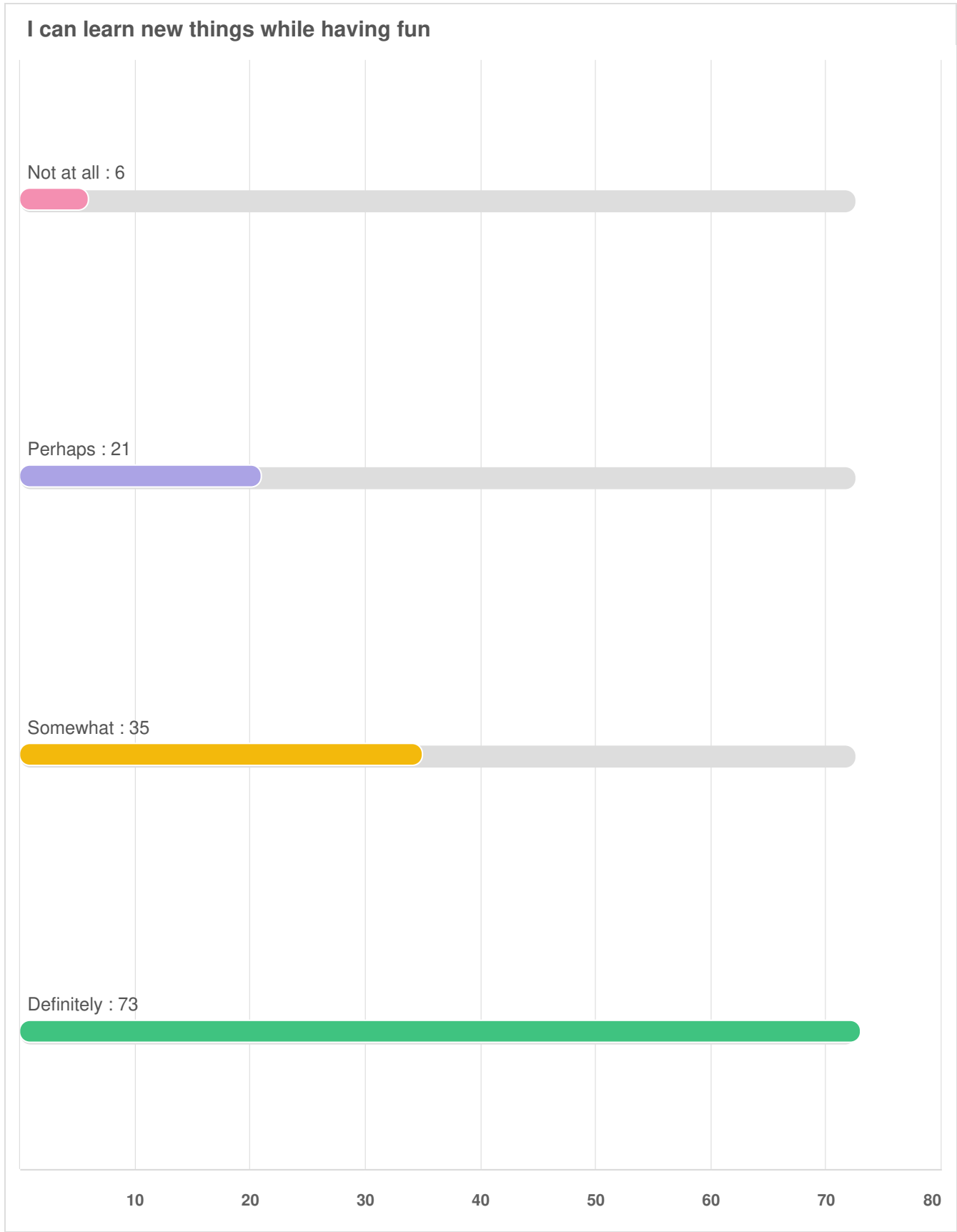
Q7 | Please let us know what encourages you to take part/access cultural activities.
What are the things that motivate you?

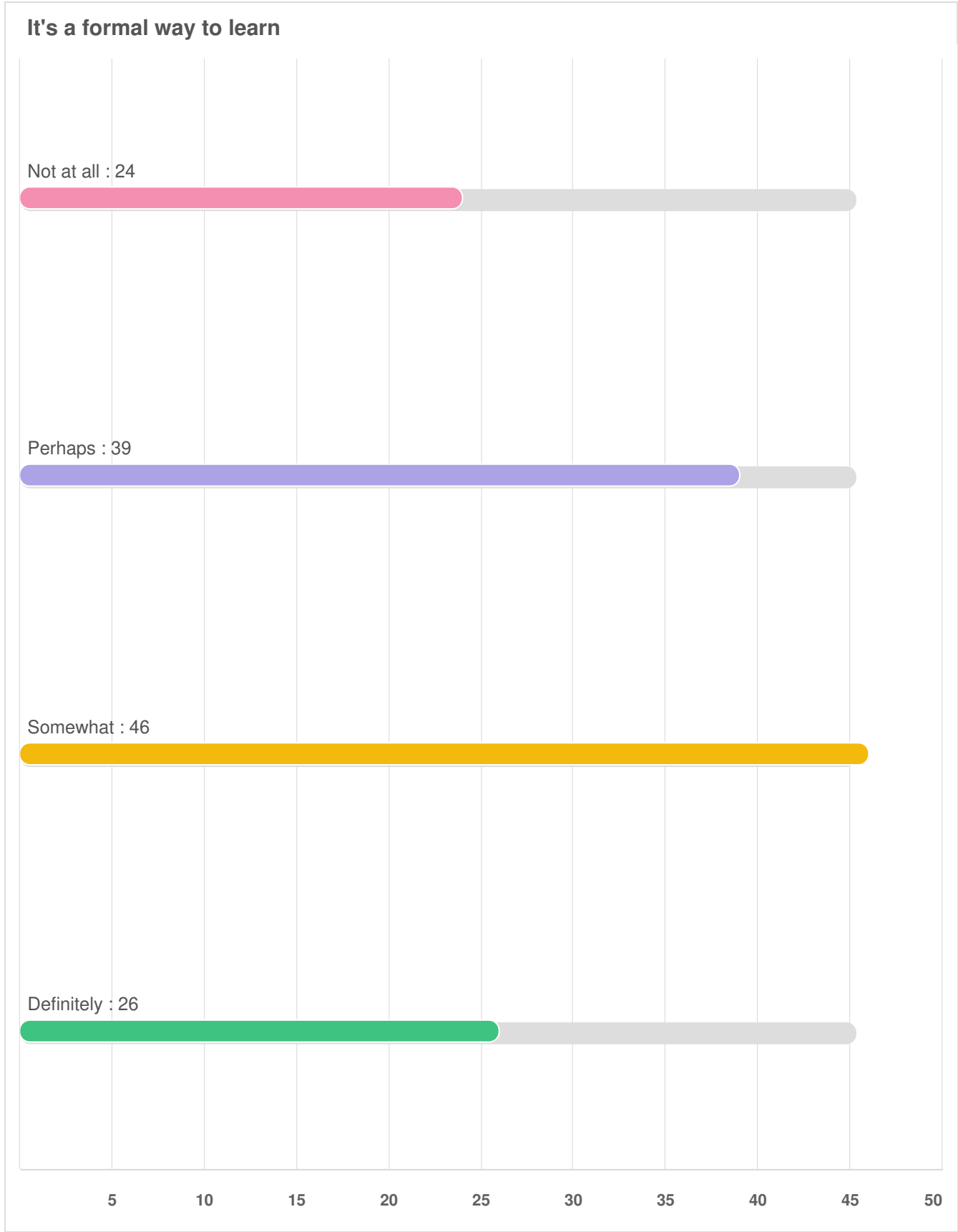


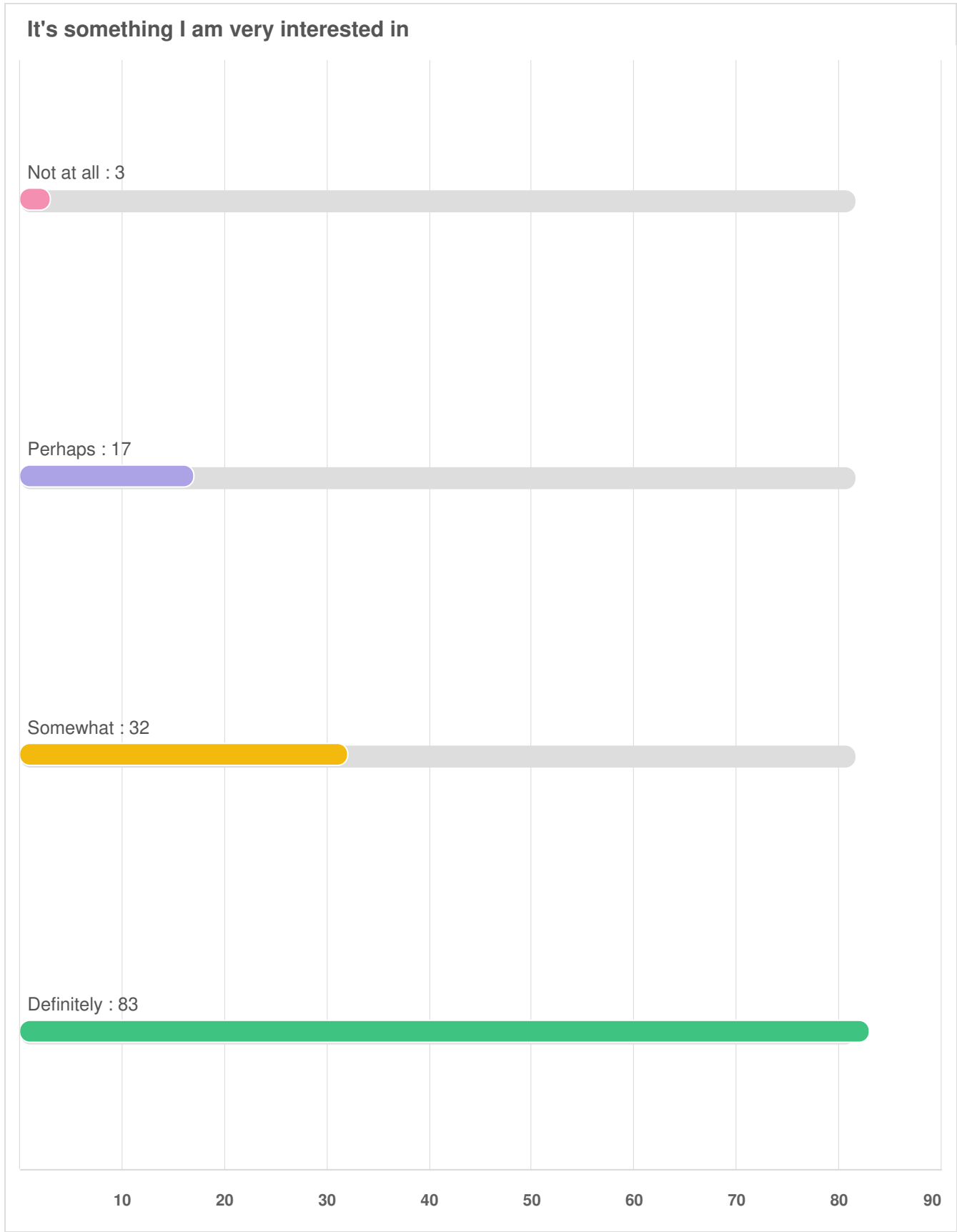
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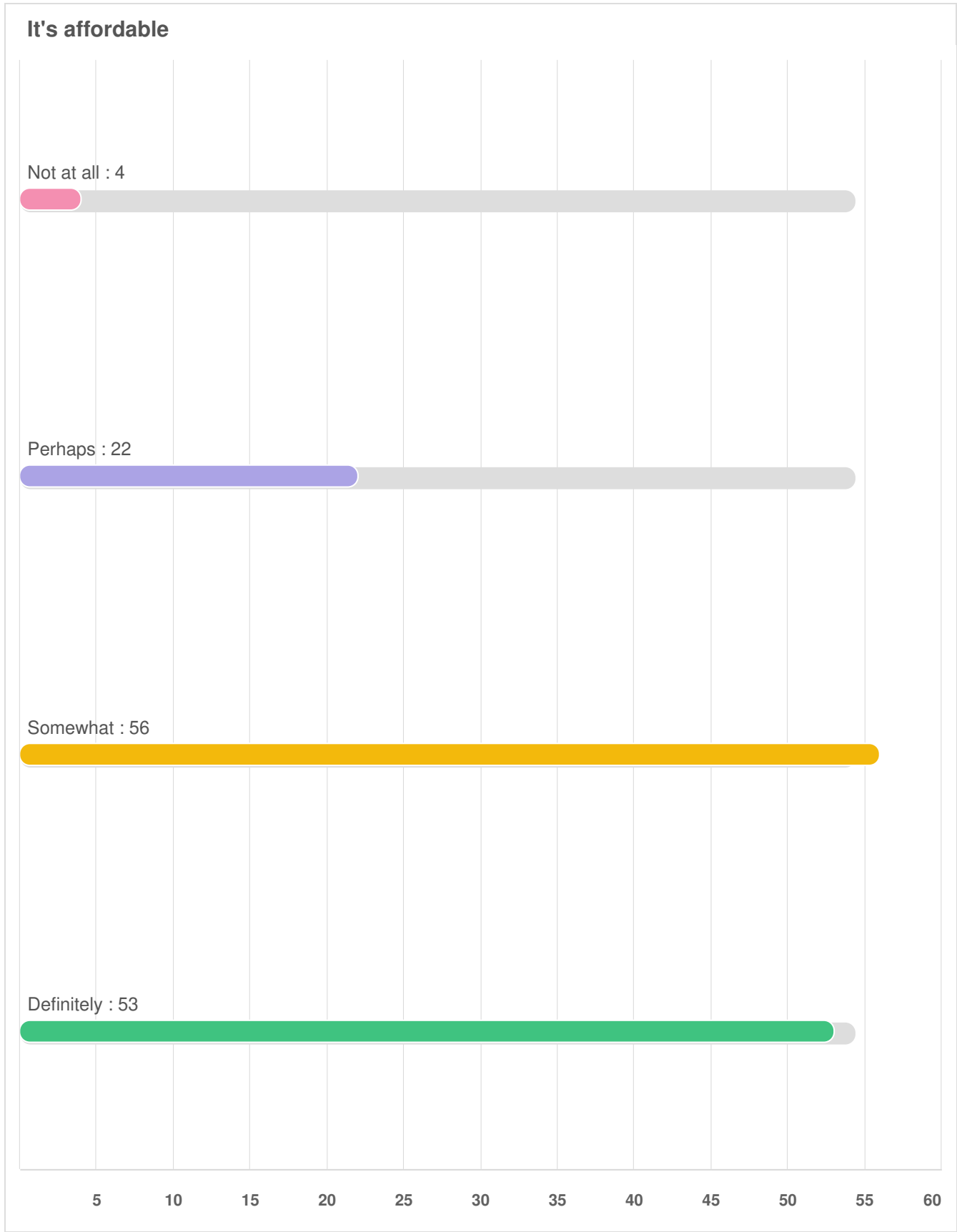


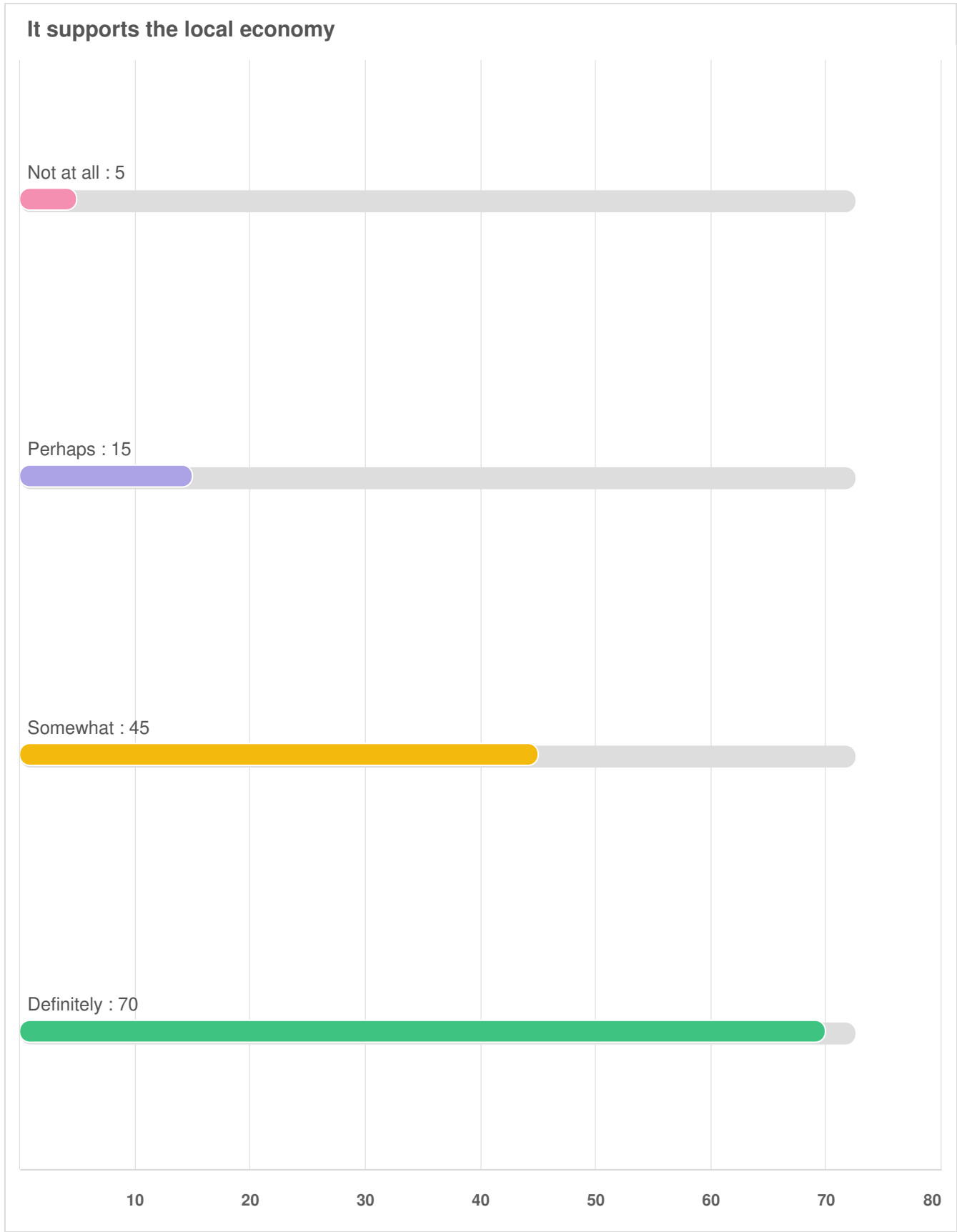


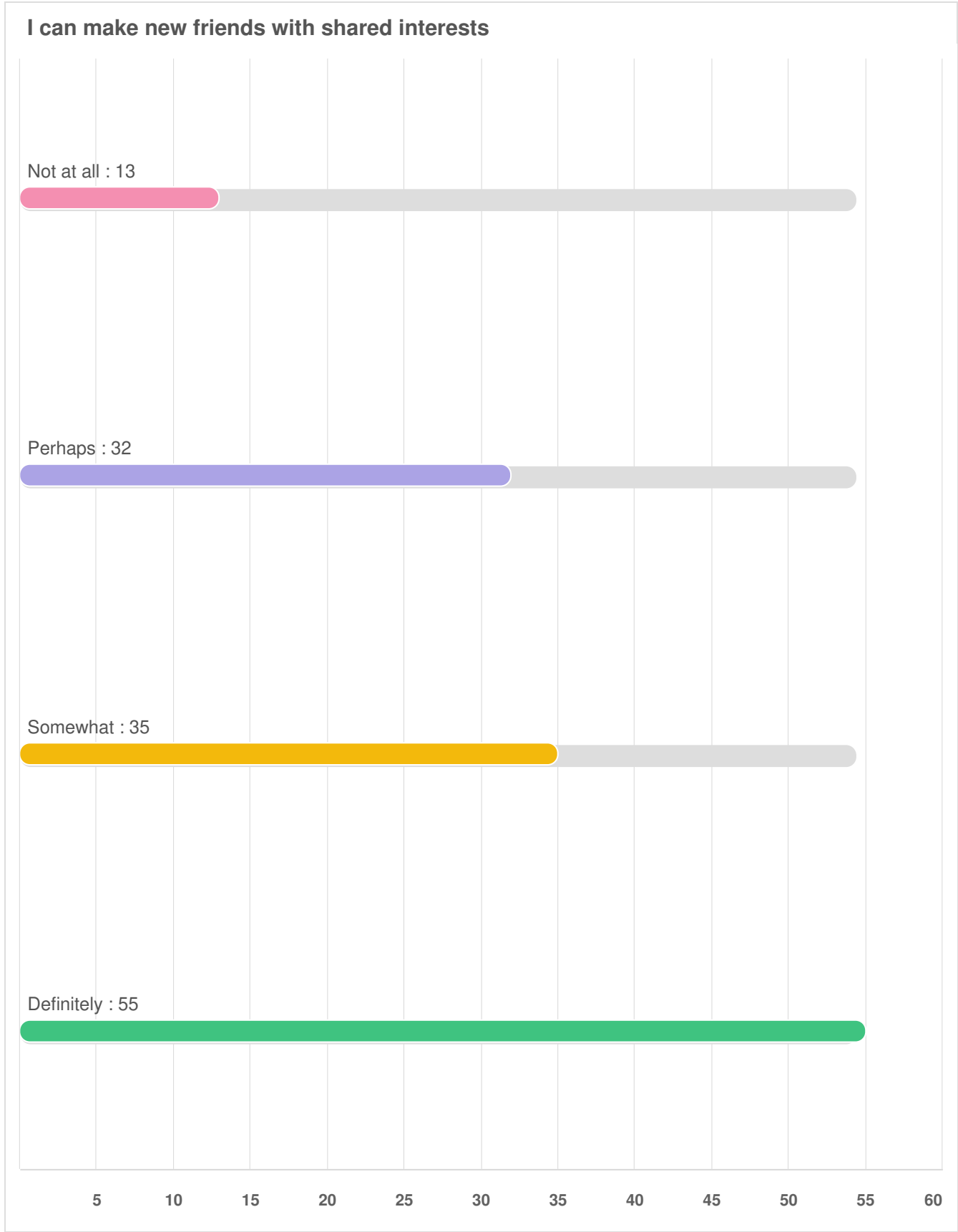












Q8 | What do you think are our cultural strengths - what makes Monmouthshire Monmouthshire? Help us define what is special about Monmouthshire and how this impacts cultural activity, people and places.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:07 AM

The people - very important to keep making events that will keep people gathering together

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:46 AM

History, sometimes food. Music

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:52 AM

Amazing music heritage with Rockfield and Monnow Valley Studios
Historically significant

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:55 AM

Landscape, history, heritage.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:00 PM

There's a vibrant participatory music scene, encouraging to all ability levels - with good performance spaces (mainly pubs)

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:28 PM

the link between the countryside and art

Anonymous

10/31/2025 01:09 PM

history

Anonymous

10/31/2025 02:38 PM

Things that bring community engagement

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:02 PM

Like-minded people who care not just about culture but about one another. Kindness and eschewing aggression in contact with others. A particular concern for Wales and Welshness (in both Welsh and English languages).

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:58 PM

Historic buildings - connects us to our heritage Youth performances (such as Monmouth Comp, Mayhem theatre) - brings the community together and celebrates the talents of our young people Community events (such as Monmouth Carnival, Lantern Parade, Remembrance Parade etc) - brings the community together and events such as the Lantern Parade enables people to explore their creative side.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:45 PM

Monmouthshire feels split, north and south so don't really consider it to be one entity.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:52 PM

Monmouthshire is a vibrant and diverse area. In Monmouth itself we have cinemas theatres, and a host of cultural and artistic events, especially encouraged by U3A among others. It is sad to see the decline in literacy and in particular the downgrading of libraries. Libraries staffed by professionals provide the backbone to literacy which in turn allows one to access theatre and other cultural events. Above all they were free and inclusive. Fortunately we have enough people in the area to proceed intellectual and cultural stimulation on a number of fronts,

Anonymous

11/01/2025 08:14 AM

It has (had) border influences with a crossover Welsh/English influence which makes it's heritage and culture a little different (though difficult to define). Strengths include youngish incomers combining with older valleys culture. A lot of very talented young people here!

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:01 AM

Lots of artistic people, arts shops, food festival, film society, independent bookshop, community activities. Some of these activities promote a sense of place, connection to nature, Welsh heritage, but also some are more forward looking and celebrate diversity and connection to the world beyond Wales.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:09 AM

Museum Galleries community spaces Theatre

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:42 AM

Variety and local venues

Anonymous

11/01/2025 10:49 AM

Museums, history, local art & craft groups

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:10 PM

Castles, agriculture, its towns.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:24 PM

Monmouthshire's special character comes from the way its natural beauty, heritage, and creative communities all intertwine. The area's stunning green spaces — from rolling hills and community gardens to riverside walks and ancient castles — provide both inspiration and a

sense of wellbeing for residents and visitors alike.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:58 PM

Art workshops classes exhibitions. Writing opportunities..Music from choirs to participate in and listen to and orchestral. Enjoyment of landscape and walking.. Local WI and history groups for interesting talks, research, and friendship. Live theatre in a beautiful theatre building. Above all, peace and no huge crowds.

[REDACTED]

11/01/2025 12:59 PM

The strategy doesn't define 'culture', so i can't answer this

[REDACTED]

11/01/2025 01:29 PM

Diversity of talent within the population is impressive. Lots of good venues both closed and open

Anonymous

11/01/2025 01:44 PM

Our history and geography: castles, canals, mountains, religious sites and ruins, historic pubs and ghost stories. Our bands (Abergavenny town band to local pop/rock) and lively music scene.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 03:25 PM

Abergavenny has a varied programme of cultural events which take place at the Borough, Theatre, the Chapel, St Mary's and other local churches . These include concerts, plays talks on a variety of topics and now National Theatre Screenings.

[REDACTED]

11/01/2025 07:45 PM

It has a long history that is written in its beautiful landscape and towns. It straddles the cultural border between England and Wales, having a foot in both, and retaining its Marcher heritage. It incorporates a number of growing and increasingly affluent towns, which can support cultural events and thrive with them.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 07:51 PM

Church bell ringing Musical activities in churches such as choirs, organ and piano music

Anonymous

11/01/2025 11:54 PM

The people of Monmouthshire are at the centre of Welsh cultural activity and should not have a false national identity imposed upon them.

Anonymous

11/02/2025 03:31 PM

Local groups and historic locations.

Anonymous

11/02/2025 05:08 PM

The landscape, locally based producers and creatives, potential for recreational walking of all types

Anonymous

11/03/2025 07:33 AM

No comment

Anonymous

11/03/2025 10:06 AM

Variety of classes available

Anonymous

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

People are inspired by the landscape and history of Monmouthshire, and this creates a strong network of artists, musicians and performers.

Anonymous

11/03/2025 06:45 PM

As a tourist town Abergavenny welcomes visitors and tourists As a twinned town Abergavenny engages with Beaupreau in France and Ostringen in Germany with cultural exchanges Abergavenny is becoming a multi cultural town

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:10 PM

No. Monmouthshire is a beautiful, rural county but doesn't seem to have much going for it culturally, except in what is safe and familiar. It is quite insular and 'conservative'. You would have to look very hard to find anything contemporary, edgy, provocative or 'cutting edge'. This lack is reinforced by the extraordinary absence of cultural or racial diversity. In the county, this bizarre and particular cultural flavour reinforces its obvious cultural insularity.

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:26 PM

It is difficult to answer this question by taking Monmouthshire as a whole because apart from the obvious (rural landscapes, castles), the different parts of the county are so different from each other.

Anonymous

11/07/2025 03:03 PM

History

Anonymous

11/07/2025 04:22 PM

The people first - and the landscape second. We share characteristics with many places and it would be wrong to only think of the 'county level'. Our village (closest is Raglan but our orientation is towards Usk) is different from others close by and the same as others far flung. Richness and diversity is lost when homogenising or generalising. Your descriptors of where cultural activity happens is an example of that. What about places like 'home', the pub, the school, the street, the market ...??

Anonymous

11/08/2025 06:02 PM

Vibrant communities in small towns lend themselves to wide participation, instead of passively attending major events. It's fun, and a chance to meet up with friends, in addition to the actual 'culture' ingredient.

Anonymous

11/10/2025 05:00 PM

Monmouthshire is set in an historical and uniquely special landscape which enables our folk law, legends, history and culture to thrive.

Anonymous

11/12/2025 09:16 AM

Beautiful scenery and heritage as a filming location for major screen projects. History of literary inspiration and connection, eg Tolkien, Wordsworth, Arthur Machen. Links to major historical events and figures, eg Lord Nelson. Distinctive Georgian architecture in key towns. Music heritage, eg Rockfield Studios. Monmouthshire has been at the heart of Welsh and UK culture for generations, a border and a bridge.

Anonymous

11/14/2025 01:43 PM

Monmouth has gone from an industrial / farming area to a dormitory / retirement / cultural area in my lifetime . Monmouthshire has always responded well to change . Our Museums and castles , abbeys and historic buildings are famous. We have craft / sport activities for all ages.

Anonymous

11/15/2025 09:12 AM

Landscape, communities, creativity

Anonymous

11/15/2025 01:19 PM

Lots and lots of successful of local groups offering huge range of activities and covering very varied interests. Access to film and theatre and bigger cultural hubs.

Anonymous

11/17/2025 07:22 AM

Rich history and access to venues that enable families and friends to attend together

Anonymous

11/17/2025 08:09 PM

Scenery, towns, cultural vibrancy.


11/18/2025 12:47 AM

I dont know I never find out about things

Anonymous

11/18/2025 03:36 PM

Rich history in Museums & Castles. Rivers & scenery.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 08:25 PM

Landscape, history - contrasts: industrial v rural, Romans to 21st century

[REDACTED]

11/19/2025 01:53 PM

Traditional Architecture Design Codes- Please see my PDF Umbrella Representation emailed previously.

Anonymous

11/19/2025 09:33 PM

The sense of community and the beautiful countryside.

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:20 PM

Diversity

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:39 PM

Several theatres, a lot of history, local societies and groups like drama and choirs. This attracts people to the area and gives current residents activities to participate in.

Anonymous

11/22/2025 11:19 AM

Lively cultural environment but also surrounded by beautiful countryside with good transport links

Anonymous

11/23/2025 04:06 AM

It's an agricultural area right next to the South Wales coalfield that led industrial Britain. It has escaped the decline of the valleys where I was born. It's beautiful and rich in history

Anonymous

11/23/2025 09:07 PM

Open - both the landscape and the people

Anonymous

11/24/2025 06:21 PM

Monmouthshire has a long history of supporting culture, whether it be music gigs, am dram, dance or comedy, whether it be on an amateur to professional basis. This should be supported going forward as it's importance cannot be underestimated.

Anonymous

11/26/2025 08:28 AM

It needs improving!

Anonymous

11/27/2025 11:40 AM

History Cultural Social

Anonymous

The landscape - our appreciation of it shapes the way we interact,

11/27/2025 02:42 PM

appreciate the world around us, and create Informal community connections - in a rural area, that's culturally underfunded, serendipity and chance play a big part in how our cultural activity is shaped Musical heritage - particularly around the studios and the huge cultural ripple effect, and the perception of the area by modern music fans

Anonymous

11/27/2025 06:28 PM

Landscape, people, language

Anonymous

11/28/2025 01:21 PM

Variety of choice of local opportunities, from theatre to comedy, music, crafts, history etc all with access within walking/bus/cycling distance. Improved evening buses would help to access offers further afield

Anonymous

11/29/2025 05:25 PM

Monmouthshire has beautiful scenery and I appreciate the walks organised by Mark Langley, soon to be transferred to Chepstow Walkers, an innovative idea to organise walks by the County Council. MCC supports local initiatives: eg the Friends' groups for the green spaces in Abergavenny MCC supported the Eisteddfod in 2 MCC supports local groups with a pride in the Community eg Keep Abergavenny Tidy good links with Abergavenny Town Council and Wales in Bloom

Anonymous

12/01/2025 05:38 AM

Our boarder identity makes us and our history interesting. Links to feelings of belonging and loyalty across man made boarder. Rural life / our rivers / thriving sustainable farming / history of the boarders / food and craft / beautiful countryside

Anonymous

12/02/2025 07:01 PM

Good local theatres

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:01 PM

What used to be special was the amount of children singing and playing instruments at school. That was before all the funding was cut to schools and music services. Chepstow School USED to be a Gwent Music Music Centre pre covid, with many different orchestras and ensembles there. Now, there are NONE. It is no longer a Music centre. The school has completely lost all of this wonderful emerging culture. It's gone. On your watch!

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:20 PM

Open, friendly nature

Anonymous

12/05/2025 02:25 PM

Rich history, great food, beautiful landscapes. Lots of good outdoor activity and a really good balance of rural life and good travel links.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 03:22 PM

The communities of Monmouthshire and adjoining co-communities are special with our own histories and friendships. This is authentic culture of peoples living and working together across the imaginary boundaries between counties and countries. This is a genuine local culture, language and identity and not an assumed or imposed value of life from elsewhere. Monmouthshire is at the heart of Wales and all Welsh culture and the national identity should use Monmouthshire heritage and values as the model for all. Kindness and inclusivity are the hallmarks of our communities. We can do without the hostility offered by so many living outside our county. Unfortunately we are not at the heart of the considerations of our elected representatives in either of our Parliaments. We struggle to show our values without a voice.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 04:20 PM

Monmouthshire has culture, theatres, shops, cafes, restaurants (have you tried Creates in Church Street, Monmouth!!!) parks, community centres and so much more. There's always something happening.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 07:01 PM

The landscape, when I think of Monmouthshire I think of the landscape, rivers, castles, viewpoints

Anonymous

12/06/2025 08:37 AM

What makes Monmouthshire special is the country village feel, the rural areas and nature. All of which you are doing your best to destroy. We don't want to be Bristol. We don't want to be Newport. We want to be villages and nature. We don't want you to build houses everywhere and turn this county into the slums. Not everyone can and should live in Monmouthshire. Stop destroying this area. Stop taking land to build awful housing estate. Spend money in the town centres. Renovate buildings and convert existing empty buildings in the centres to house people. Not every one can and should have a house. Apartments are perfectly fine to live in. Especially if you can't afford your own home. Look at how other countries are doing this. You are slowly destroying nature and the special feel about Monmouthshire and you're going against what people from the area want. Please stop.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 09:38 AM

The history, the built environment and the landscape. People interested enough to organise events. A good smattering of museums.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 10:01 AM

I think you will find culture wherever you find people. Monmouthshire is no different in this but many of its people are living in fairly remote places so coming together to share in some activity that is not work but celebrates joy and beauty in life is incredibly important for wellbeing. Welsh people have for generations revered and celebrated the Arts and there is a need for this as a fabric to knit community together and make people stronger. The narrowing of the Elegant Monnow St has given town the "Cwmbran" effect and is the most destructive thing MCC has done culturally. Additionally the reduction in the roundabout size at st Thomas street horrendous leaving the cross without a pedestal that is of aesthetically pleasing proportions. This is also destructive of the culture that you talk about wanting to preserve? It has left a landmark statement reduced to an eye sore which will be damaged by heavy goods vehicles as they negotiate it. A huge example of failure is that dragonfly in Monmouth. There are local Monmouth Art groups and yet a woman from Newport is paid to design this? The ask from locals was to bring in old china to be incorporated!! Ive nothing against the work but Im afraid it was not created by a local artist or group of local artists its an example of a city dweller brought out to decorate the rural town as she feels fitting.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 06:24 PM

Apart from the beautiful landscape, the varied cultural interests of residents

Anonymous

12/07/2025 02:33 PM

Cultural heritage is one of the most special aspects. Its more than just castles and buildings but the people and stories that took place in and around them

Anonymous

12/07/2025 08:30 PM

Dance Blast is a massive cultural highlight for Monmouthshire. What they do there is incredible, and not something you would get in other towns of this size. So many people within the community benefit by participating in classes - all ages, abilities. Professional choreographers and performers share their skills and offer so much to the participants. It really is a very special organisation and one that needs further support and investment so they can expand what they do and offer.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 12:25 PM

Local community groups

Anonymous

12/08/2025 02:54 PM

A bridge between England and Wales.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 03:29 PM

As a border community our history is rich and diverse - and this is all around us. We are an area with lots of artists and makers many of whom are inspired by the location.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 06:19 PM

as a boarder between countries and cultures there is space here to blend new ideas, and conjure new possibilities

Anonymous

12/09/2025 11:28 AM

Monmouthshire's farming heritage - sadly now under threat by Labour taxation plans.

Anonymous

12/10/2025 09:49 AM

Monmouth in particular has a rich musical history. Yes, Rockfield Studios has played a huge part in this... but did you know about Monnow Valley Studio - my studio also in Rockfield village? Formerly part of Rockfield Studios but independent for the last 35 years and still hosting some of the biggest rock stars in the world. We also lead the way in promoting cultural tourism in Wales - as a residential studio, our guests come to us because they want to stay in the same rooms as Sir Tom Jones, Ozzy Osbourne, Liam Gallagher, David Bowie etc. They want to recreate sleeve covers from iconic bands in our live room and live like a rock star, albeit for a weekend. We host intimate events with musicians and their fans as well as supporting the next generation of artists with recording and rehearsal space. In doing all this, we pump tens, if not hundreds of thousands of pounds into the local economy. Our guests spend money in the town, contract in catering, book tables in restaurants, frequent pubs, use taxis, hire live musicians, book hotels and b n bs for additional accommodation, plus enable us to employ local support staff.

Anonymous

12/10/2025 11:58 AM

A very diverse creative community in Monmouthshire. Some towns in Monmouthshire put on regular festivals, shows, special events and it enriches the local community and their experience of where they live.

Anonymous

12/13/2025 11:07 PM

The current strategy only lists a few festivals, it doesn't really demonstrate the breadth and depth of culture in Monmouthshire. There are lots of groups and multifunctional spaces of different kinds, with lots of local community members making culture a reality for everyone. Its the depth of community involvement in culture that makes Monmouthshire special and unlike other places.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 09:16 AM

History - lots of places to visit and enjoy. Helps with wellbeing

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:45 AM

It close to me history

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:45 AM

Wye Valley Very near F.O.P Monmouth is a very attractive town


12/15/2025 11:26 AM

Being Welsh helps Many Volunteering Opportunities

Anonymous

12/15/2025 11:36 AM

Difficult to say as it's a big county, very divided into North (Aber and Monmouth) and South (Caldicot and Chepstow)

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

The community ans shared connections, a strong sense of purpose

Anonymous

12/16/2025 11:31 AM

Very caring

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

Gets people together enjoying the company of others and makes people feel part of the community

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

I think Monmouthshire's Welsh heritage is crutial to it's identity. It has great industrial and agricultural heritage. Nant-y-glo, once in Monmouthshire, had one of the largest iron works in the world. Walking and outdoor activities are also key.

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

Beautiful buildings/history

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

Difficult to define

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

History of the town and rural crafts. Welsh culture and customs.

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

Beautiful buildings, clean, inviting, friendly people

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:51 AM

It's a beautiful place to live in!

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:57 AM

The countryside is beautiful. The mountains, streams and rivers provide endless inspiration for artists and creative people. Also there is great community spirit and a great sense of history.

Anonymous

12/19/2025 01:45 PM

Unspoiled Heritage and scenery - the Wye Valley, mountains, Mons & Brecon canal. Lovely old towns, old churches and castle, coastline, history and heritage, the range of different places and habitats to explore.

[REDACTED]

12/19/2025 01:07 PM

Trefi marchnad hanesyddol, cynefin naturiol gwefreiddiol

Optional question (101 response(s), 34 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q9 What are the three most exciting things happening in your area, or that you are involved in that you regard as cultural at the moment?

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:07 AM

Food festival - theatre plays around the community - Thursday food festivals

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:46 AM

To get a cinema in Abergavenny - a proper one.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:52 AM

Savoy theatre Rockfield studios Creative writing classes

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:55 AM

Abergavenny food festival My daughter working for a local sculptor
The local pub runs events - trellech

Anonymous

10/31/2025 10:23 AM

Occasional events in the village hall

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:00 PM

Open mic events at The Queen's Head Micropub, Chepstow Acoustic
Showcase evenings at Chepstow Art Space Forthcoming Gwyl Hwyl
Casgwent - Welsh Fun Festival next summer

Anonymous

Wye valley River festival, Monmouth lantern parade, Monmouth

10/31/2025 12:28 PM

museum

Anonymous

10/31/2025 01:09 PM

Shakespeare in the castle

Anonymous

10/31/2025 02:38 PM

Raglan Day Raglan Festival Both enjoyable days

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:02 PM

Abergavenny Borough Theatre, Art society, and just the buzz of Abergavenny on market days.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:45 PM

None

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:52 PM

U3A provides a rich menu of experiences, the Blake Theatre provides an equally diverse range of options, as does the Savoy. I attend Monmouth History Society meeting on a monthly basis.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 08:14 AM

Potential for a circus/aerial dance hub of regional importance in Abergavenny in a building that combines with community cinema (funding/planning early stages). Project to gain gender equality of art books in libraries Embryonic project 'Art for Words' for artists to support other artists.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:01 AM

Food Festival Green Man festival Live events at Chapel and Melville Theatre

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:09 AM

Art group Theatre

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:42 AM

Bookish events,talks and film/book club Melville Centre Borough Theatre

Anonymous

11/01/2025 10:49 AM

Apart from film night & pub I cannot think of anything else in village.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:10 PM

Bonfire celebrations. Visit a castle when it's on a free day. Visit Abergavenny and Monmouth.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:24 PM

The festivals- such as Food festival Facilities- such as the castle grounds The rich range of shops and makers - market/ street market

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:58 PM

Art,music and interest events at the Chapel Arts Centre in Abergavenny. Walking groups at different levels. Dance events at the Melville.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 01:44 PM

The Abergavenny food festival although I strongly believe there should be a much larger emphasis on local producers and suppliers. I am looking forward to visiting the canal lantern walk advertised beginning at Llanfoist. The AM festival is a brilliant local community event.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 03:25 PM

Arst Society lectures National Theatre Screenings Local History Society

Anonymous

11/01/2025 07:51 PM

Bell ringing - I am part of a team which ring in my local church and we almost define the identity of the village. We are part of the Llandaff & Monmouth DACBR, an organisation for church bell and handbell method ringers in South Wale Welsh Traditional Music - I am a member of a tune group (part of a nationwide network supported bt CLERA). We meet in pubs and also perform in open gardens and churches. Morris Dancing - I am a member of Isca Morris who perform at many events in Monmouthshire including the Mari Llwyd in Chepstow (this event is mentioned in the consultation but does not mention morris dancing - it shoud)

Anonymous

11/01/2025 11:54 PM

Karaoke

Anonymous

11/02/2025 03:31 PM

Illustrated Gwent Wildlife talks, amateur dramatics, history talks.

Anonymous

Local festivals/shows, strong civic links to heritage and local history

11/02/2025 05:08 PM

Anonymous

I am unable to be involved

11/03/2025 07:33 AM

Anonymous

New management of the Melville Theatre - with the right funding, this could be a first-class arts centre. Discussions re: an arts festival in Abergavenny - the people are willing, the money is a problem! Abergavenny Food Festival and Night Market

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

Anonymous

Chairman of Abergavenny and Beaupreau Twinning Association - looking forward to major celebration of 40 years twinning with Beaupreau in 2028, and football festival in Abergavenny in 2026. Abergavenny Petanque club Abergavenny local history society

11/03/2025 06:45 PM

Anonymous

?

11/06/2025 06:10 PM

Anonymous

1.Local History activities (including talks, visits, walks, displays)through Local History Societies. 2.Activities in local library (poetry sessions, quiz nights, author events etc). 3. Quiz nights.

11/06/2025 06:26 PM

Anonymous

There is very little - I can't think of anything in Caldicot

11/06/2025 09:01 PM

Anonymous

May Fayre Frost Fayre Remembrance

11/07/2025 03:03 PM

Anonymous

WI - campaigning against violence against women and girls - protest banners - events. My own practice shared well beyond the county boundaries (I was showing in Australia earlier in 2025) Courses run by local artists - sharing talent

11/07/2025 04:22 PM

Anonymous

Multiple recorder groups to join and perform with Frequent classical concerts Film club every fortnight through the winter

11/08/2025 06:02 PM

Anonymous

development of the Usk Band

11/10/2025 03:51 PM

Anonymous

Linking Wales Coast Path to King Charles route in England. Developing programme of access improvements with CADW to

11/10/2025 05:00 PM

enable better access and care of castles and SAM's. Clydach Ironworks Gateway Project Enabling volunteers to maintain their paths and promote legends/hstory and features in their communities as a result.

Anonymous

11/12/2025 09:16 AM

Monmouth local music and drama group for children, Sparrows run by Rhian Hathaway, bringing young people together for a high standard of music and drama. Shire Hall Monmouth museum collections. Monmouth Bee Festival.

Anonymous

11/14/2025 01:43 PM

Repositioning the Nelson Collection in to the Shire Hall . Creative crafts happening in the Rolls Hall Library (hub) The River / Medieval / Christmas Festivals .

Anonymous

11/14/2025 07:16 PM

The addition of NT live theatre shows at the Borough Theatre. Melville arts centre and Danceblast Having a local cinema in abergavenny

Anonymous

11/15/2025 09:12 AM

Regenerating a market in another county Comedy nights Music venues

Anonymous

11/15/2025 01:19 PM

Pottery studio which I use twice a week in very rural location. Theatrical events in Abergavenny Garden Club, History Group etc in local village hall.

Anonymous

11/17/2025 07:22 AM

Caldicot Castle - events and activities

[REDACTED]

11/18/2025 12:47 AM

Im lost to find out about anything going on

Anonymous

11/18/2025 03:36 PM

Not much

Anonymous

11/18/2025 08:25 PM

Local history societies give great talks - connecting present day to the past

[REDACTED]

11/19/2025 01:53 PM

Heritage construction/ reconstruction of long-lost buildings

Anonymous

11/19/2025 09:33 PM

The Savoy Theatre in Monmouth has some great things happening.
Lots of festivals.

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:20 PM

Music, art, craft

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:39 PM

Theatre Dance classes Food Festival

Anonymous

11/22/2025 11:19 AM

Borough Theatre, activities at community centre, u3a

Anonymous

11/23/2025 04:06 AM

Jazz for young people Dance blast The Gathering All bring culture to
the marginalised

Anonymous

11/23/2025 09:07 PM

Food festival, all the amateur groups and performances in the area,
Aberlaughs

Anonymous

11/24/2025 06:21 PM

A thriving amateur dramatics scene for both adults and children. The
continuation of attracting professional artists, whether it be bands,
comedians or theatrical companies.

Anonymous

11/26/2025 08:28 AM

Book events are great here. We need much more activity in theatre!
We need to create more family trails - I have ideas I have tried to
share

Anonymous

11/27/2025 11:40 AM

I help at my local school and go on trips with pupils to learn about our
area I am a local councillor and we put on various activities within our
area I am a member of our local WI which promotes social activities

Anonymous

11/27/2025 02:42 PM

The Lantern Parade Monmouth Community Choir RIP Monmouth
Festival, which was wonderful

Anonymous

11/27/2025 06:28 PM

Slow music jam in The Boat Penalt , winter light parade coming up,
working as part of Wydlwood Arts (-Forest of Dean - but thinking
about place based arts in the context of the Forest and connecting
with the places around us such as Monmouthshire and cross border
contexts). As an artist I also go to Bristol to connect with artist

communities there.

Anonymous

11/28/2025 01:21 PM

The fab Monmouth lantern parade, the wonderful range of offers at our amazing local theatres and the stunning AONB bi-annual river festival

Anonymous

11/29/2025 05:25 PM

NT Live is being introduced to to the Borough Theatre, bringing London productions to the provinces.

Anonymous

12/01/2025 05:38 AM

Volunteering for National trust

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:01 PM

Gwent Music, Operasonic, Chepstow Art Space and The Corn Exchange. Also The Chepstow Community Music centre in Wyedean.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:20 PM

Good Crafts scene Live music Great Food

Anonymous

12/05/2025 02:25 PM

Usk Show, Usk Christmas Market, Usk Duck Race, Weekend Rumble. I love live music and a day that includes music, theatre, dance, etc would be a great way to bring everyone together. This could be combined with a larger event such as the Usk Show to highlight the rich history of Monmouthshire.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 03:22 PM

Karaoke. Association football. Skittles.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 04:20 PM

1) Theatre I've been a volunteer at Monmouth's Savoy Theatre for the past 14 years and love spending time there with the team. There's always a great programme of events with stage and film both extremely well represented and with something for everyone. 2) Community I also volunteer at Caerwent Village Hall helping out at Car Boot Sales, Christmas Shopping Night and other events. My husband has compered the Village Show for a number of years and we also run occasional quiz nights at the hall with my husband as quiz setter/quiz master and me as score keeper. 3) Volunteering Less "cultural" perhaps but I also volunteer at TogetherWORKS, Caldicot twice a week (Welsh conversation on Mondays and Knit & Natter on Wednesdays). All the above are important and help keep communities alive.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 07:01 PM

Theatre and comedy shows Museums and exhibitions Monmouth
lantern parade

Anonymous

12/06/2025 08:37 AM

Nothing at the moment

Anonymous

12/06/2025 09:38 AM

Performance of 'The Messiah' St Cadoc's in Caerleon, and a Carol
Concert in St Woolos Cathedral and the Magor Frost Fayre.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 10:01 AM

Annual Lantern Parade- brings young and old together with crafting
,music and lights to celebrate Christmas in a non religious way.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 06:24 PM

Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra Monmouth Choral Society

Anonymous

12/07/2025 02:33 PM

Plas Gunter Mansion - you should find out more about this £4m
heritage and cultural project in development in the heart of
Abergavenny - a community led heritage trust and funded with
Heritage Fund, Welsh Govt and MCC funds. The themes it explores
are closely tied with tolerances and reconciliation and sanctuary - I'm
Chair of the Trust ! <https://www.plasguntermansion.org.uk/>

Anonymous

12/07/2025 08:30 PM

Dance Blast NT Live at the Borough Bookish talks

Anonymous

12/08/2025 12:25 PM

Theatre ,melville. Abergavenny Quiz, lines taproom ,Usk. Gwent
wildlife talks, the grange, Usk.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 02:54 PM

Local archaeology / guided walks in local village (e.g. Caerwent)
Singing (choirs).

Anonymous

12/08/2025 03:29 PM

TV/film filming - using our lovely landscape to bring stories to life. Art
events - such as Art at Penallt Stories and writing about the area -
such as Owen Sheers - inspiring things like to the Abergavenny
Writing Festival

Anonymous

12/08/2025 04:11 PM

Teaching botanical painting at usk hub. Taking part there in sewing
classes and wreath making. Teaching for kidzart charity in llandogo.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 06:19 PM

the river protection ritual activism

Anonymous

12/09/2025 11:28 AM

The Usk Agricultural show The charitable activities of the Llanybi Pumpkin Club The extended bus timetable that allows us greater freedom to travel (even if it still doesn't support an affordable night out)

Anonymous

12/10/2025 09:49 AM

I'm also a textile artist and have opened a quilting studio at Humble By Nature. In addition, I will be opening a retail and workshop space there in the spring. We will be hosting events ranging from beginner classes all the way to workshops by internationally renowned quilt artists as well as launching a membership guild affiliated to the Modern Quilt Guild in the USA.

Anonymous

12/10/2025 11:58 AM

Carol playing with the local brass band Arts festival at Caldicot castle Devauden festival

Anonymous

12/13/2025 11:07 PM

Bore coffi at Ty Croeso and it's related welsh speaking activities including a welsh festival in Chepstow. Live music across a range of venues, indoors and outdoors. Craft spaces like Chepstow Art Space where different crafts can be learnt regularly.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:45 AM

Shire Hall Church Musical shows

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:45 AM

Girls Guides. Brownies (Scouts and Guides Magor) Knitting and nater (Baptist Chapel Magor)

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:17 AM

Exerciser to keep fit meeting people Keeping Brain active

 12/15/2025 11:26 AM

Volunteering

Anonymous

12/15/2025 11:36 AM

Writing group, Art Gallery Visit, Various groups at TogetehrWorks and events at the library

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

Yoga, Craft, Art

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

The chepstow festival of arts, the weekly abergavenny market, the abergavenny food festival.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

None, Not aware of anything exciting happening, lack of accessible info unless it is word of mouth

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

Art lessons

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

I don't know as I work in Bristol and am not fully aware.

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

none

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

two great theatres/cinemas in town

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

General communication with visitors from elsewhere

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

Live shows at Blake Theatre or Savoy and U3A events

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

local panto

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:51 AM

Planning for Christmas

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:57 AM

Abergavenny Film Club Singing in the choir (based in Crickhowell but members from Monmouthshire too) Live events at the Borough Theatre, including live streaming of plays, opera etc from the National Theatre, ROH etc

Anonymous

12/19/2025 01:45 PM

This year I have started going back to theatre and musical event - visited Savoy Theatre for the first time. Newport Transporter bridge restoration - attended a talk, looking forward to visitors centre opening. Always interested in talks on local heritage e.g. Living Levels, discovered country park at Rogiet.



Argaeledd adnoddau, nifer y digwyddiadau

12/19/2025 01:07 PM

Optional question (103 response(s), 32 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q10 | So we've asked about strengths, but what do you think could be better?

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:07 AM

There is loads of theatre - but based on views and others people thoughts - we need more scripted contemporary plays for teens

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:46 AM

State of Melville Theatre. Better Leisure centre in Abergavenny. An Arts Centre in Monmouthshire. Proper Art gallery

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:52 AM

Would love to see more music events and the old market hall being turned into a cultural centre with performance space. Rockfield should be more celebrated and local talent eg overmono invited to promote the area/perform. Understand that Monmouth festival was always great too

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:55 AM

Access for younger people into arts careers - where are the jobs? How do they find out? How can they get support to run their own business?

Anonymous

10/31/2025 10:23 AM

Improve road systems to ensure safe travel. Chepstow is described as a "Gateway to Wales" but there is little to make it welcoming to tourists. It has a castle and a river but these 2 potential attractions are not maximised. Road systems in Chepstow are in dire need of improvement. If the old bridge is to remain permanently closed then a new road system has to be created to replace it.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:00 PM

A number of cultural events used to be held at the castle in Chepstow (plays over the summer), and these have virtually disappeared, mainly, as I understand it, due to enormous cost increases to use the performance space in the castle. We do have Castell Roc at that venue, which is a great success and very welcome, but a very different beast from the gentler (and less expensive!) Shakespeare and children's performances of previous years.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:28 PM

More opportunities to be creative at affordable prices and for working people - so in the evenings or weekends.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 01:09 PM

the food festival needs a rethink

Anonymous

10/31/2025 02:38 PM

Community engagement with MCC More notice of events Some were in Raglan for community use. Renovate the existing Old School for community use and community events

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:02 PM

Build community, not just houses. When housing is added, additions to infrastructure, amenities and services must be added. Just adding houses is like doubling your diet but not your clothes.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:58 PM

Anything to engage children and teenagers is always a positive thing. More suitable activities during the holidays especially for teenagers would be good. Events that are affordable for families. Particularly outdoor theatre events. It can be too expensive to justify attending when buying four tickets for some events.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 04:50 PM

Welsh Language provision. classes for everyone in evenings

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:45 PM

Monmouthshire council seems to forget about anything south of Usk

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:52 PM

Getting to events can be tricky as you get older, especially if you can't drive. No good having a rich but inaccessible venue.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 08:14 AM

Funding!! Always a challenge, especially with a cost of living crisis . I'd like to see a 'Battle of the Bands for under 25s and more inter-generational cultural activities. I think we are fortunate in that our council is generally more open to supporting culture in general than some other places (and of course we are generally a more affluent county). But those in more deprived areas - and in rural areas - do get left behind. Transport is a vital part of the picture! We desperately need more Exhibition space in the county, and staff to organise and promote Exhibitions - more support for artists to get paid is crucial too!

Anonymous

The Borough theatre seems to run nothing but tribute acts - I am sure

11/01/2025 09:01 AM

they bring in money, but it's not very varied. The cinema has a very mainstream offering and doesn't fill up, and yet there is clearly a demand for more interesting films as the film society continues and other venues show films.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:09 AM

Childrens activities

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:42 AM

Communication between volunteer groups to share ideas and build a network

Anonymous

11/01/2025 10:49 AM

Unless you live in 1of the 4 big towns you are not informed or ignored. No news letters, leaflets or local magazines are sent to villages. Almost as if Council and towns don't want to bother with smaller places. Have a central website that tell you what groups & societies are available.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:10 PM

Build a bridge across the Raglan Castle to rejoin the village with its Castle. Making a safe walking route.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:24 PM

Support for local artists and makers: Sustained funding, shared workspaces, and more visibility for local talent would help nurture the creative economy and keep skills alive. Youth engagement: Expanding creative programmes for young people could encourage new generations to get involved and stay connected to their communities. Green and cultural integration: While Monmouthshire's landscape is a huge asset, more could be done to connect nature and culture — using green spaces for outdoor art, performances, and community projects.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:58 PM

More varied theatre at the Borough Abergavenny including plays by great dramatists. Transport links into rural valleys.


11/01/2025 01:29 PM

Co-ordination of information about events and the provision of venues - fewer and fewer as the years go by

Anonymous

11/01/2025 01:44 PM

A better form of communication about upcoming events. A hub for information, an online one-stop-shop we can use to plan visits. Integrating storytelling, drama, dance and music to our historic sites and including local schools in creating exhibitions and or plays/concerts.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 03:25 PM

I would like to see screenings of Opera and Ballet.

[REDACTED]

11/01/2025 07:45 PM

We need more support at the county level for town and village enterprises. We need more joined-up communication between the Monmouthshire towns and villages - increased collaboration between the various groups in those towns. We need to do more to integrate the schools into our cultural activities.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 07:51 PM

Attract more young people

Anonymous

11/01/2025 11:54 PM

It could be better if we did not have to ignore our neighbouring communities across the imaginary border imposed by government. We are unique and not driven by ideals and culture remote from us.

Anonymous

11/02/2025 03:31 PM

Younger entertainment i.e. popular/rock music.

Anonymous

11/02/2025 05:08 PM

Focus on reversing the decline within town and village centres, creating centres for arts, walking and independent businesses.

Anonymous

11/03/2025 07:33 AM

More widespread

Anonymous

11/03/2025 10:06 AM

More evening as I work in week and weekends

Anonymous

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

There is a lack of funding and opportunity for independent theatre. The larger theatres are reliant on tribute bands and amateur musicals to remain financially viable. This means that 'straight' plays and other forms of drama are neglected. The cost of hiring a 200+ theatre is prohibitive if you know that you can only fill 50% capacity. However, 50% is still 100+ people who want to see a different type of entertainment. Ideally, there would be a studio space where new writing and smaller-scale productions could be performed. The Melville Theatre could provide this but needs investment to improve its lighting, sound and seating. Another major problem is the lack of affordable rehearsal space.

Anonymous

11/03/2025 06:45 PM

Provide funding for twinning activities and events, facilitating cultural exchanges

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:10 PM

Create new venues, even if they are temporary - vacant shops, disused warehouse spaces, out-of-season parkland etc. Find someone with the vision and enthusiasm to help drive a completely new, vibrant energy. Stop relying on the kitsch, the twee, the utterly boring restatements of the past. Embrace new work, everywhere. Take risks!!!

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:26 PM

1. Making it easier for local voluntary groups to publicise events around the county.

Anonymous

11/07/2025 03:03 PM

Publicity

Anonymous

11/07/2025 04:22 PM

the absence of a 'proper gallery space' in Monmouth - artist studios to rent - planning for live work spaces a serious attempt to promote creative industries through a broader and more challenging 'curriculum' - competitions and masterclasses, hosting major exhibitions everything feels a bit 'safe' and homogenous

Anonymous

11/08/2025 06:02 PM

Better support for Gwent Music - to nurture the next generation. 15 years ago Gwent Music was one of the outstanding music services in the UK, and all of our children benefited hugely from it (one is now a professional musician). It is still doing its very best, but is in a constant battle for resources.

Anonymous

11/10/2025 03:51 PM

Access for people with disability

Anonymous

11/10/2025 05:00 PM

More resources to enable action and promotion of same stories. Library of what promotion materials are already available and potential programmes of works, such as those developed for Offa's Dyke.

Anonymous

11/12/2025 09:16 AM

It's very disappointing that the cultural strategy was written using ChatGPT, when Monmouthshire is home to many highly engaged and literate human beings. It suggests that the council actually doesn't want to engage in culture. Also, there could be a better central website with a more useful and thorough database of upcoming

events. Monmouthshire could also be better at communicating its unique cultural heritage to foster a sense of pride in the town.

Anonymous

11/14/2025 01:43 PM

All areas in Monmouth are completely separate . As in there is no connection. This is a holiday area and is advertised in the media worldwide .Because everyone expects people to view there phones most events go unnoticed and there is a poor turnout. You need a Monmouthshire noticeboard for each are that we can all contribute to , not just the Council. You make every thing complicated .It is hard to fill in messages / give ideas / phone a person .

Anonymous

11/14/2025 07:16 PM

Keep the Baker st cinema going A youth theatre

Anonymous

11/15/2025 09:12 AM

More diversity at aber theatres, comedy spots, original music, variety of music, affordable art classes, evening events fir people working

Anonymous

11/15/2025 01:19 PM

Supporting arts organisations such as Mid Wales Opera that are struggling financially but are of the highest standard.

Anonymous

11/17/2025 07:22 AM

Greater range of activities at Caldicot Castle, making it a 'destination' location where there are improved cafe facilities and more of a space to sit, learn, etc.

Anonymous

11/17/2025 08:09 PM

More range of acts at the Borough theatre. Very poor at the moment, with just third rate acts. No variety.


11/18/2025 12:47 AM

Abergavenny could do with a venue for bands to play and diverse live music. Local boys Alabama 3 played Chepstow castle it would be great to see them in Abergavenny. I would also like to learn French if this is considered cultural.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 03:36 PM

More high quality art exhibitions & temporary history exhibitions. Some empty shops in high streets could have displays in windows.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 08:25 PM

You don't mention the importance of the Gwent levels! Prehistory, Roman, medieval and modern inhabitants and the unique levels habitat

[REDACTED]

Ban on demolition of Old Builds constructed prior to 1950s.

11/19/2025 01:53 PM

Anonymous

11/19/2025 09:33 PM

More support for music. This support should start in school to enable the musical heritage to continue.

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:20 PM

Many small communities in Monmouthshire means limited offering

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:39 PM

Better facilities in local theatres Wider range of activities available like opera Better parking options like family parking spaces in car parks and more opportunities for free parking

Anonymous

11/22/2025 11:19 AM

Ensure future of theatre and cinemas through grants

Anonymous

11/23/2025 04:06 AM

More access for all so it's not a middle class activity

Anonymous

11/23/2025 09:07 PM

The quality of the Borough theatre facilities and the accessibility of it for local groups. The cost and uncooperative approach of the theatre make it almost unusable for amateur groups

Anonymous

11/24/2025 06:21 PM

Infrastructure and facilities. The Borough theatre, Abergavenny, for example. Probably the jewel in Monmouthshire,s cultural crown. Despite the best efforts of the current management team, the facilities for those hiring it are becoming worse. Leaky rooves, decrepit dressing rooms, defective lifts and alarm systems.. Front of house is shiny and new but back stage a completely different story. This along with hugely increased fees for renting it and additional fees for all the extras which used to be included or FOC are making it very nearly impossible for local societies to carry on using it. A long way away from when the Beatles performed there.

Anonymous

11/26/2025 08:28 AM

Funding and support for new writers and new work Theatres such as The Bourough Theatre should be more welcoming and support new work.

Anonymous

11/27/2025 11:40 AM

Promotion needs to b e more proactive

Anonymous

11/27/2025 02:42 PM

* Network, resources, training for creatives (and/or signposting of); including professional skills to grow the sector and advocate for it (business, marketing/comms, fundraising, evaluation, advocacy) * A professional development pipeline for creatives wanting to use their skills in education, wellbeing, social impact (ie community/socially engaged arts) * Activities that link culture with education, wellbeing, social impact - professional community arts & arts education shaped by communities * Platforms for emerging performing artists - particularly music

Anonymous

11/27/2025 06:28 PM

I live in Redbrook and it has always been difficult to get arts funding and support to make art in the place that I live and the cross border communities that j am part of. I would like to see empty spaces being taken over by artist groups and more artist led activity supported in the area.

Anonymous

11/28/2025 01:21 PM

Better public transport offers, advertised and improved during large events to help prevent the negative effects of potential increase in traffic on our narrow roads and in our compact towns. Traffic enforcement so those trying to attend events are not juggling poorly parked cars whilst trying to enjoy our wonderful local towns. Encourage and assist more events in town centres to draw the public into our high streets. When redesigning high street improvements, ensuring the spaces are versatile and able to accommodate town centre events well (e.g enabling pop up stalls and pop up bollards that would easily temporarily create living pedestrianised streets)

Anonymous

11/29/2025 05:25 PM

Perhaps better linkage with some of the voluntary groups eg the Women's Network which reaches hundreds of women in the local area and is good at publicising events

Anonymous

12/01/2025 05:38 AM

If not on social media it is hard to find out what is going on. For great culture we tend to head out of local area - bring it to our high streets - all those empty shops could be filled with inspiring things. Help towns thrive by reducing rents for shops and in turn keep people local - then cultural venues in towns will also thrive.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:01 PM

Music education in schools. Covid and years of funding cuts has decimated Music provision in schools. It's a disgrace. And so short sighted too - all the health and wellbeing benefits that children could have had, especially after covid.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:20 PM

Better visibility if what's on Easier to get round - transport can be a barrier

Anonymous

12/05/2025 02:25 PM

Lots of the main events are organised by community groups, not the local authority. There is room for the LA to encourage more collaboration from across Monmouthshire on an annual events, maybe involving the schools, community centres, etc

Anonymous

12/05/2025 03:22 PM

A bypass around Chepstow enabling through traffic to pass will greatly enhance the area as a destination. A destination for local people to assemble and enjoy all that Chepstow can offer. A premier racecourse which could also be a venue for many more diverse cultural activities. Chepstow Castle is an unaffordable attraction for the vast majority of local people. Much more use could be made of our castle as an attraction. Not necessarily just for concerts and shows but for the general interest of the community. The castle should be freely accessible and not just for school trips and CADW members.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 04:20 PM

More free parking options in Monmouth itself. When volunteering at the Savoy I tend to try to find on-street parking although the free parking in car parks in Monmouth in December is most welcome as I'm usually on duty for a good number of December dates!

Anonymous

12/05/2025 07:01 PM

No major art gallery Seen as Indian towns and not a county

Anonymous

12/06/2025 08:37 AM

Please see number 8. Also invest in libraries, offer more books, make the village centre a nice place to be, deal with anti social behaviours from council houses.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 09:38 AM

Venues are scattered across the County, it is frequently a challenge to get to these places by public transport - especially at the end of a performance - or to find sufficient car parking space. Some support in providing transport to remote areas would help.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 10:01 AM

There is funding available for the Arts from the Welsh Government which is "shared" proportioned to the city and rural areas across the country but it does not reach the actual artists living in monmouthshire. It's given to artists in Cardiff who have inflicted an annual celebration of the river Wye upon us. Rather than allowing local people to organise their own celebrations using locals..artists

actors etc come out from the city to "entertain" in this weird River Festival its not a local tradition and I don't think many locals see any of the funding. Its an almost artificial and superficial celebration led by the city artists using grants that are supposed to be for rural people. I believe local children should be funded with musical instruments in school and excellent music teachers but sadly this is not the case. in addition local bands Monmouth Brass could be funded its a crying shame that Monmouth Carnival is led by children from Bristol playing and celebrating with African culture style Drums. It's great to hear and welcome diversity but in doing so are we letting our own children in Monmouthshire down by not providing them with an outlet to express our culture ? Where is country dancing in the schools? Fifty years ago I was taught dances and we preformed them in the streets of Monmouthshire as a child on St Davids day everyone enjoyed the gift of learning to express themselves in dance to music . Ensure that grants and funding reaches the local people and local talent is actually supported.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 06:24 PM

Provision of musical education for children

Anonymous

12/07/2025 02:33 PM

Wew have worked well with other agencies and the Council but I can see how collaboration across culture and heritage can be strengthened. Our Trust has been hugely successful and we have lots of experience to share

Anonymous

12/07/2025 08:30 PM

Provide a place where young people/bands can perform music.
Support Dance Blast in finding a new venue to expand its circus arm.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 12:25 PM

More

Anonymous

12/08/2025 02:54 PM

Sad to see an important historical venue closing - the Tabernacle on the A48 which was the first non-conformist church in Wales. It may not be viable as a house of worship now, but it is a beautiful small venue that could be given new lease of life for events / exhibitions / community functions.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 03:29 PM

Have more professional art connections - for instance, Llantarnam Grange is seen as an Art Centre for SE Wales - but it is not included in the draft doc and is not invited into the area. Filming takes place - but we don't optimise the profile it gives. In town interpretation - bring the individual stories of the area to life in the streets through

interpretation, artworks, ambassadors, etc Our culture is continually changing as new people join our population - yes, there are the pride events, but how do we include the culture of new members of our community Our industrial stories are often overlooked. Physical and intellectual access is not always good or clear

Anonymous

12/08/2025 04:11 PM

More advertising on paper,as an oldie, I don't scan my phone all day, I look at newspapers and posters in windows. If you don't know what to look for, you don't know what's happening. Use the Abergavenny chronicle or Monmouthshire beacon.....

Anonymous

12/08/2025 06:19 PM

fund the arts and artists. have a council funded post that assists artists in accessing what funding there is in a professional way, and helps alert and guide them to possibilities when they appear.

Anonymous

12/09/2025 11:28 AM

Usk is looking very sad at the moment and business is under pressure to just survive let alone support cultural activities. Usk needs to be better presented. Taxation policies (local with Council tax and business rates and national with employment taxation and agricultural IHT) are going mad and everyone will be tightening their belts. I offer that farming will be in a much worse place in ten year's time. Other than for those directly involved with matters associated with crafts, i.e. those that are struggling to make a living, I doubt there are many locally where cultural issues are high on their day-to-day agenda.

Anonymous

12/10/2025 09:49 AM

Spaces fit for purpose. Affordable art studios and workshop spaces for artists. A funded music festival

Anonymous

12/10/2025 11:58 AM

Better advertising from banners, social media, radio and local newspapers. More youth involvement from schools, kids clubs, societies etc Engage with local clubs/groups that are fill with talented musicians, singers, artists etc

Anonymous

12/13/2025 11:07 PM

Better mapping and sharing of what is available right across Monmouthshire. Its hard to know where to find information other than town council websites and Facebook.


12/15/2025 11:26 AM

More service users

Anonymous

More evening events

12/15/2025 11:36 AM

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

Information on events and caldicot castle (and in the village) on notice boards NOT on webpages, lot's of folks don't do computers

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

Tech motivation

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

Embracing our Welsh heritage and identity. We must remember that we are decended from the Trojans

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

More celebrations at seasonal times of the year

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

More for families

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

historical tours

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:51 AM

More buses.

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:57 AM

I would like the library to be open for longer - only 4.5 days - closed for lunch for an hour, early closing on Friday.

Anonymous

12/19/2025 01:45 PM

More work on raising awareness of caring for our countryside and heritage? More volunteering opportunities (I will be retiring soon!) *
More tourist centres like Chepstow.

Optional question (98 response(s), 37 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q11 | How does culture impact you or affect your life?

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:07 AM

I am an actor - director

Anonymous

It can relieve stress and improve people's lives.

10/31/2025 09:46 AM

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:52 AM

Proud to be Welsh and our heritage of fighting for people's rights and protecting the underdog

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:55 AM

Helping my daughter get a career - she has autism - so it occupies alot of my time

Anonymous

10/31/2025 10:23 AM

If it is accessible it improves a feeling of belonging

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:00 PM

It is a great joy to me and drives much of my social interaction

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:28 PM

It makes me feel good - it makes me think deeper and it can just be escapism. It makes me hopeful for the future

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:02 PM

Just in everyday life. Being able to talk with people who have the same outlook on life. Events which I like and where I can feel relaxed and at home.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:58 PM

It connects me to the past and present (forming my identity) and helps to create a united community with shared values which makes Monmouthshire a great place to live.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:52 PM

I am involved in art both running practical art groups and an art society which encourages members to visit galleries stately homes and gardens in addition to providing lectures. This keeps me and participants busy. Cultural activities allow one to interact with those with similar interests and sparks ideas and enjoyment.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 08:14 AM

It results in improved community connection and therefore personal wellbeing. We need space to discuss/express and explore ideas through the arts and I feel Abergavenny buzzes with these activities, though I personally don't have any creative hobbies. I love attending the concerts and performances here (and there are many) but I must budget carefully to attend only the priority ones for me.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:01 AM

I like to go to music gigs, stand up comedy, but usually end up going to Cardiff as there is not much locally.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:09 AM

Well being Health

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:42 AM

Keeps me active physically and mentally. Keeps me connected with our local community and it's residents.contributes to the general well being.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 10:49 AM

Theatre visits, historical sites visits and enjoying nature. Sport.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:10 PM

I like visiting museums, Castles other towns in Wales.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:24 PM

Sense of wellbeing - makes Abergavenny an attractive place to visit and supports the economy.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:58 PM

Very important for my happiness and social contact.

[REDACTED]

11/01/2025 01:29 PM

Very directly as performers, musical directors and choral festival organisers

Anonymous

11/01/2025 01:44 PM

It offers a bit of peace from the relentless day to day and whether you are exploring a ruin, listening to music or trying new food at the night market, it gives you a sense of belonging and a place in the world.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 03:25 PM

Culture is part of my whole life. I enjoy developing an understanding of our local history as part of Welsh history as a whole. , Art history is a particular interest as well as concerts in the borough theatre and those performed by Gwent Bach. I belong to Isca Probus and The History Society. A recent development has been the film nights and talks organised by Bookish

[REDACTED]

11/01/2025 07:45 PM

I work for a Monmouth institution - the Haberdashers' School, and live in the county's countryside. I am a historian, and part of the Monmouth History and Field Society, and have a love for the history of the region. I am part of the committee organizing the annual medieval festival in Monmouth, and am also connected through family to the running of the annual Monmouth Show. I try and partake of the opportunities for cultural engagement and enrichment within the

county when I can, and when I am aware of them.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 07:51 PM

It enables me to meet more people and to understand the importance of new and traditional culture is in Monmouthshire

Anonymous

11/01/2025 11:54 PM

Makes me really sad that we are lumped in with people and communities with dissimilar history and heritage.

Anonymous

11/02/2025 03:31 PM

Makes me happy.

Anonymous

11/02/2025 05:08 PM

It's the difference between towns and centres in South Monmouthshire acting as true communities rather than just dormitories for urban economies to east and west.

Anonymous

11/03/2025 07:33 AM

No at all

Anonymous

11/03/2025 10:06 AM

Enhance my life and gives me a positive attitude and outlook.

Anonymous

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

I am the Artistic Director of Happy Dragons Theatre CIC. Our mission is to create performances for, with and about the people of Wales. On a daily basis I am liaising with performers, venues and other creative artists. Monmouthshire has a vibrant artistic community but everyone is struggling to fund their work.

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:10 PM

I'm a professional artist and educator specialising in installation and sculpture with a national and international cv.

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:26 PM

1. I am heavily involved in a range of activities. They give me a sense of purpose and well being.

Anonymous

11/07/2025 03:03 PM

?

Anonymous

11/07/2025 04:22 PM

all day every day - the question is a little daft. Culture is the sea we swim in

Anonymous

11/08/2025 06:02 PM

My lifeblood.

Anonymous

11/10/2025 05:00 PM

It roots us in our past, but enables us to have vision for the future.

Anonymous

11/12/2025 09:16 AM

Culture impacts all human beings and affects all our lives profoundly in every possible way.

Anonymous

11/14/2025 01:43 PM

Culture has always been good for me . I have had a lot happening with family for the last 20 years . Being able to walk in a park or pop to Tintern Station Cafe . Visit some of our free attractions is brilliant and has helped me stay sane . Overall good for mental health . I must mention the improvement in the cycle paths has helped . But as an OAP the condition of Monnow Street surface is very danerous .

Anonymous

11/14/2025 07:16 PM

Gives me insight into other people's lives I love being absorbed by learning something new Live music brings joy

Anonymous

11/15/2025 09:12 AM

Would like to be more involved but time is a factor, therefore has to be really worthwhile and affordable

Anonymous

11/15/2025 01:19 PM

Theatre has always been a big part of my life. Craft activities, local get-togethers, talks, arts education take up most of my time. Aesthetics are very important to me. I think we all require beauty in life.

Anonymous

11/17/2025 08:09 PM

Enhances it.


11/18/2025 12:47 AM

It enhances my life when I can find things to do . makes me feel invigorated and inspired. I live on my own so anything that gets me out of the house is great I often find out after the event whats been rather than is going on. A website listing events daily in Abergavenny or monmouthshire would be good.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 03:36 PM

It's amazing going to see art, sculpture, paintings in museums & art galleries. Also getting a sense of place & history in castles and historic houses.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 08:25 PM

Make me feel connected to Wales and its people

[REDACTED]

much

11/19/2025 01:53 PM

Anonymous

11/19/2025 09:33 PM

Extremely positive on my wellbeing.

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:20 PM

I'd like to be able to afford more events (music and dance especially) as it provided à sense of well-being and joy

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:39 PM

Pastimes, making friends, contributing to local economy, building community

Anonymous

11/22/2025 11:19 AM

Gets us off the sofa and away from the television and out into our community

Anonymous

11/23/2025 04:06 AM

It makes life more colourful

Anonymous

11/24/2025 06:21 PM

Hugely important. Gives a sense of civic togetherness, helps my mental health to have such a fulfilling hobby.

Anonymous

11/26/2025 08:28 AM

It helps my mental health to put on shows and events. The problem is that there is not much support and never a way to build these skills into a career. It's always done with struggle of little money.

Anonymous

11/27/2025 11:40 AM

it is my area of which I am proud

Anonymous

11/27/2025 02:42 PM

Music and the arts specifically, are central to my life - they have shaped me and continue to do so, and give my life meaning and purpose. This is a poem I wrote ten years ago and this is the best way I can sum it up: Arts and culture are worth it because ... With them, we are more. More human More empathic More inspired More inventive More resourceful More fulfilled More creative More visionary More future-proof More socially aware More globally aware More economically viable With them we are more of a society.

Anonymous

11/27/2025 06:28 PM

It's part of nearly everything I do and enjoy

Anonymous

11/28/2025 01:21 PM

Culture as I see it shapes my beliefs, my values, and my social connections. My Welsh identity forms a major role in how I see myself and how I express myself.

Anonymous

11/29/2025 05:25 PM

sense of belonging, sense of responsibility, sense of appreciating the culture of Wales and the Welsh language

Anonymous

12/01/2025 05:38 AM

It is a huge part of my life - both my work and my leisure time. I consume lots but filling in this has made me realise that I don't do much locally. I tend to go to London or Cardiff.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:01 PM

What is life without music or art? I am a designer and have worked for nearly 30 years as a designer. Do the arts are very important and sadly always undervalued.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:20 PM

It improves it

Anonymous

12/05/2025 02:25 PM

A sense of pride in my area, keeping my mind and body active and bringing joy! I also love to support local businesses whenever possible

Anonymous

12/05/2025 03:22 PM

Imported or imposed cultural activities do nothing for me except to remind me that local culture is considered irrelevant. Culture is what we are and how we live with each other.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 04:20 PM

It's very much a part of my life. I have a great love of theatre and cinema. I'm an avid reader and am happy to recommend book shops in Monmouth and Chepstow (not forgetting the charity shops!) I started volunteering at the Savoy Theatre, Monmouth when I retired from "the day job" and it has given me so much joy over the years.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 07:01 PM

It is how I relax, how I socialise, how I like to spend my free time

Anonymous

12/06/2025 08:37 AM

I choose to live in Monmouthshire because of how it used to be. Now you're turning it into something it doesn't want to be. Stop your housing development plans in portskewett and Broomes. Stop the traveller site. Just please stop. The traffic is already awful and you're making it worse.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 09:38 AM

Without singing or listening to music performances my life would be poorer and I would not feel valued.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 10:01 AM

What is life without music dance and art? Culture is central to my life

Anonymous

12/06/2025 06:24 PM

Music is very important to me and actively participating provides friendships, mental (and physical) activity and entertainment/education for residents of the county.

Anonymous

12/07/2025 02:33 PM

Ingrained

Anonymous

12/07/2025 08:30 PM

It is nourishing for the soul

Anonymous

12/08/2025 12:25 PM

Love it

Anonymous

12/08/2025 02:54 PM

I sing every week in choir (in Newport) and at other venues wherever I can. I like to learn about local (ancient) history.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 03:29 PM

As a professional artist and heritage interpreter, it is part of all aspects of my life

Anonymous

12/08/2025 04:11 PM

I like a good concert but there don't seem to be many. I read lots of historical books about artists and their lives. I will travel to London for botanical exhibitions.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 06:19 PM

it is life.. the rest is just survival!

Anonymous

12/09/2025 11:28 AM

Other than the events mentioned earlier, hardly at all in terms of attending Monmouthshire events. We are more likely to be found in

Swansea enjoying something at Swansea Arena or in Cardiff attending one of its venues. The one impact aligning with Monmouthshire is public transport. It has improved recently but it is still not possible to attend events outside of the area and return late in the night. Attending cultural events its therefore a very expensive activity that more often than not involves overnight hotel stays.

Anonymous

12/10/2025 09:49 AM

See above

Anonymous

12/10/2025 11:58 AM

Art is a big part of my life from my hobbies of playing in a brass band entertaining the local community at park events/festivals/shows etc But also art is a big part of my life in work, working as a mural artist, window artist and face painter for the last 12 years. My house is enriched with my children playing piano and other musical instruments, being creative with art. My husband is an oil painter artist trained in traditional arts. Our house is fill of art and creative activities.

Anonymous

12/13/2025 11:07 PM

Its what makes us human.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 09:16 AM

Interesting, reason to go out and learn about local area

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:45 AM

me do stuff

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:17 AM

Gives me an interest


12/15/2025 11:26 AM

Pop Culture - i.e Filming provide me with distractions, volunteering gets me out of the house and prevents isolation and depression.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 11:36 AM

Companionship

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

Confidence, strength, Positive thinking

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

The strong culture gives connection in shared interests and enjoyment

Anonymous 12/15/2025 01:45 PM	Mental well being, mixing with other people, learning new things
Anonymous 12/16/2025 11:34 AM	Enjoyable when attend activities are generally not local and need ttransport at night time buses are not good
Anonymous 12/16/2025 01:45 PM	Improve your knowledge and understanding of other countrys
Anonymous 12/16/2025 01:45 PM	Like it
Anonymous 12/16/2025 01:45 PM	I love visual arts and film/theatre etc. My favourite actor is Welsh ledgend Richard Burton.
Anonymous 12/18/2025 01:45 PM	Welsh culture important to me
Anonymous 12/18/2025 01:45 PM	i read a lot and have been on local stage
Anonymous 12/18/2025 01:45 PM	It is important to embrace all our differences as it is enlightening and hearing and sharing music, poetry etc... from other cultures.
Anonymous 12/18/2025 01:45 PM	It gives me pleasure and is good for well-being
Anonymous 12/18/2025 01:45 PM	I have a strong interest in history and enjoy learning about any local areas
Anonymous 12/19/2025 11:57 AM	It brightens up the long winter months, November to March (when the clocks go back to Winter time)
Anonymous 12/19/2025 01:45 PM	I enjoy trying out/ learning about new things/ experiences. An opportunity to organise a day out/ event with friends.

Optional question (98 response(s), 37 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q12 After reading the draft strategy, is there anything else you would like to see reflected in it?

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:07 AM

More input on the use of the theatre at cheaper cost for locals.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:52 AM

More concrete dynamic actions

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:55 AM

As per my thoughts I. Qn10. Also we need a central website with everything on - it's hard to find on the internet - if you don't know its name you can't find out about it.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:00 PM

Street festivals are a great way of brining people to an area, and bringing residents together. They have been very successful, but often struggle to happen at all due to the pressures they put on the volunteers who organise them. For instance, I understand from the organisers that the hugely popular Chepstow Festival of Arts will not be taking place next year (or possibly ever again) due to the few organisers finding it difficult to shoulder the burden of all the work involved. I would like the strategy to cover ways of encouraging and supporting volunteers in a practical way that could help even small groups organise significant events without having to make huge personal sacrifices - for instance, by providing office or technical support.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:28 PM

It felt a bit dry. But I am so glad you have included the idea to expand educational course offers. I would love to be able to learn Welsh in person in Monmouth and I love attending art/craft courses. Please have at least some these in the evenings and weekends. And I like the idea of a events calendar.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 02:38 PM

The draft document could have a note of memorandum or a glossy. Who are the partners refried to in the document it may have been good if there had been namedMCC and partners. It would be difficult to review the opportunities in the community and the current creative community when MCC are cutting funding and closing or not maintaining the current buildings

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:02 PM

As above, build community, not just houses. Also build at a rate where people can be integrated into the community. If you build too fast, you create opposition and us-and-them cultural clashes.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:52 PM

Culture needs to be accessible and during the past couple of decades we seem to have gone backwards in providing free culture for all. The. I toria. Philanthropists were aware that everyone needed access to art galleries, museums and libraries for free education. Now we have museums, great educational and cultural tools, which don't have curators, no public art galleries in Monmouthshire and libraries without qualified librarians. Old hat you might say, we are in the digital age. I take my grandchildren to museums and art galleries and they interact with what they see. When they come to visit they regard Wales as the land of castles, history waiting to be explored and the Shire Hall gets a big thumbs up too. If we are looking for art galleries though, it becomes a little trickier.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 08:14 AM

I'm delighted to see the Action Plan including the Forum and a Cultural Alliance. Pleased also to see GAVO as a participant! (I work for GAVO, in community development and support many third sector organisations). I fully support Active Travel, but we also need to be realistic that dark evenings for older people with mobility issues means some form of community transport/bus/car transport is required. Transport is a barrier to involvement in the arts for rural communities - I'd love to see the transport element covered in every bid and project plan, as it was with Abergavenny Pride. The Draft Strategy looks exciting and I like the emphasis on inclusion, but this could be even greater so that young people as well as those traditionally excluded from cultural activities can be supported to thrive.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:01 AM

I'd like to see more emphasis on young people - opportunities for young people to participate in cultural events, learn skills, train for careers in the arts etc. There is not much for young people in Abergavenny.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:42 AM

Events that are intergenerational, like the Food Festival, Writing festival etc are good for the community. Summer/Winter fairs support local businesses which help the community thrive

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:10 PM

Depends what you are going to spend my council tax on and if the Council can afford it without diminishing its main services such as education, social care, highways, rubbish collection.

[REDACTED]
11/01/2025 12:59 PM

A definition of what you mean by the term culture.

Anonymous
11/01/2025 01:44 PM

No

Anonymous
11/01/2025 03:25 PM

I feel that Monmouthshire does quite a good job of promoting cultural events .

[REDACTED]
11/01/2025 07:45 PM

I would have liked to see more about maximising the opportunities for combining education and cultural enrichment, both in formal education (schools and colleges) but also in community education and organisations, such as history societies, U3A, and the like.

Anonymous
11/01/2025 07:51 PM

Welsh Traditional Music and Morris Dancing. Please please acknowledge the extensive network of bell ringers in the county and how they cooperate and collaborate with each other. If you want to know more about these then please contact any of the following Welsh Traditional Music - CLERA Morris Dancing - Isca Morris Bellringing www.llanmon.org.uk Also Please please please do not ignore the marvellous cultural impact of the Gwent Federation of Women's Institutes

Anonymous
11/01/2025 11:54 PM

The identity of Chepstow as an unique community within Monmouthshire and our greater area.

Anonymous
11/02/2025 03:31 PM

Festivals are great in the summer but indoor evrnt in cold wet months.

Anonymous
11/02/2025 05:08 PM

Greater recognition of threats and opportunities from large population and cultural centres both in Cardiff/Newport and Bristol conurbations.

Anonymous
11/03/2025 07:33 AM

To become more wide reaching

Anonymous
11/03/2025 02:59 PM

The strategy is good and very welcome. However, there needs to be a clear message that funding will be available for each initiative and how it will be allocated. Please liaise with stakeholders when determining how any grant-giving process will be conducted. There

may be a tendency to underestimate the number of theatre creators in Monmouthshire. Noticeably, question 6 of this survey didn't list 'director', or 'writer'. If you are creating a Monmouthshire Culture Strategy, consider also developing a festival that celebrates the arts in the area. There is currently a writing festival in Abergavenny, and people are willing to set up an Arts Festival (to include theatre). A Monmouthshire Arts Festival would encourage tourism and boost the local economy. Consider working alongside wildlife and eco charities to create artistic collaborations taking place in the natural environment of Monmouthshire.

Anonymous

11/03/2025 06:45 PM

More emphasis on twinning and cultural exchanges

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:10 PM

see 10 above

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:26 PM

The cultural offer can be put into two different categories. On the one had there are the "big"/professional attractions (e.g. castles) that attract visitors into the county. The business case is important here. On the other had there are the "small"/amateur attractions where the key aims are community cohesion, promotion of sense of place and development of skills etc. This is implied in the strategy but needs to be more clearly distinguished and support tailored in different ways.

Anonymous

11/07/2025 03:03 PM

?

Anonymous

11/07/2025 04:22 PM

the draft strategy lacks ambition and imagination - it is does not show the levels of investment or lack thereof - the priorities for the next 3 years etc. It does not segment either audiences or artists (in the broad sense of the word). for example art gives no examples of the amazing individual artists in our midst. whilst I understand the need for a glossy approach I would have preferred a more creative and engaging strategy - at a minimum the artists included should have been credited there should be ideas for residencies, bursaries, tool and resource banks, workshops and courses

Anonymous

11/08/2025 06:02 PM

A bigger emphasis on children and young people.

Anonymous

11/10/2025 05:00 PM

Countryside Access Improvement Plan 2020-2030 contains some actions to include and there are projects we are already working on .

Need to minimise impact on use of sensitive and protected sites, including scheduled ancient monuments Be aware of staff resourcing and ability to do more - partnership work with others essential for delivery investigate opportunities to engage with and enable young people to help forum/library/training/updated information for ambassadors

Anonymous

11/12/2025 09:16 AM

A focus on celebrating and investing in human cultural activity as opposed to lazy use of ChatGPT, because being human is the entire point of culture.

Anonymous

11/14/2025 01:43 PM

Its seems to tell you everthing you need to know . But you have to be connected to know about it .I was sent information about this servey from the Local History Group . If I wasnt a member I wouldnt know about it . Even though I have lived in the same area of Monmouth for over 70 years.

Anonymous

11/15/2025 01:19 PM

It all looks very worthy but there is little mention of how it's going to be funded

Anonymous

11/17/2025 08:09 PM

The strategy was just a collection of management-speak verbiage. Cut it in half and just produce a sequence of measurable commitments.


11/18/2025 12:47 AM

I know there is Abergavenny focus, but I would like to see more things to do in it and more social events like fashion shows. A board games night. more things where people can interact and get to know each other. It would be good to have a specific events based paper. Since the Hill closed I have found it difficult to find evening classes that would be good if there was an adult learning centre. I would like to see more plays and theatre at affordable prices. A website listing events would be good in fact invaluable to me.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 03:36 PM

More focus on visual arts.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 08:25 PM

Greater focus on Welsh language and unique history

 Please see my PDF Umbrella Representation which has many overlapping themes.

11/19/2025 01:53 PM

Anonymous

11/19/2025 09:33 PM

More funding for music.

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:39 PM

Better parking opportunities during large events like the food festival, more emphasis on improving the events and culture already in the area rather than opening more events

Anonymous

11/23/2025 04:06 AM

More accessibility for the marginalised

Anonymous

11/24/2025 06:21 PM

I would like to see more mention of your venues and how you will be supporting them and securing their future.

Anonymous

11/26/2025 08:28 AM

Allow creatives in Wales to write and put things on that are not necessarily set in Wales. It stops creatives being free to showcase a wide choice of storytelling.

Anonymous

11/27/2025 11:40 AM

As a start it is very good

Anonymous

11/27/2025 02:42 PM

Well done to all involved, this is a great piece of work and captures Monmouthshire, as much as anyone ever could! Here are the notes I wrote (fast!) as I was reading it, in case they are of any help: P8 diagram - some are societal/individual benefits / outcomes (wellbeing, health, improved economy) some are what these result in/contribute to - tourism, cultural activities, creative capacity. Could the distinction be made perhaps in colour or design. So that Creative capacity - > cultural activities leads to health, wellbeing, improved economy improved tourism? P11 - active travel routes - link to culture needs to be clearer? The 'What's happening' sections are currently: Festivals & shows | Art | Community P14 - art could be misinterpreted. Perhaps call it Visual and performing arts? P14 - choirs? I may have missed it, but there are many community/voluntary arts groups, particularly choirs - could these be included? eg Monmouth Community Choir, Monmouth Choral Society, Kingfisher Choir. Perhaps on page 14. There's some repetition between the main copy eg what's happening in our communities, and the 'what's happening' boxouts. Could the word count be reduced by rationalising these? eg Agricultural shows para on p15 could be removed, there will be other examples too Overall it feels difficult to 'grasp' the breadth of what's happening as it's all described in prose. Would it be helpful to have a page which lists the type of activities

and groups. A comprehensive list of the categories of activities. Then it would also be easier to see what's missing. Eg professional participatory arts run by professional community/socially engaged artists and shaped by the community, has always been a gap in Monmouthshire with a few notable exceptions. P22/22 - table - very pleased to see this so clearly laid out, feels very hopeful. It seems more like an internal document, but I guess this is? If you do a shorter/public facing version, could it be written in a way that demonstrates what it will mean for people? Action plan generally - how will individuals, communities, continue to shape all aspects? Probably not a question for this stage, but it would be great for MCC to be leading the way in co-production, co-creation, co-commissioning Generally, perhaps I missed it, I wanted to see the strategy enabling/catalysing/having as a goal, stronger links between wider policy/sector areas - health, ec dev, social care, civic life/citizenship/community cohesion. These are mentioned throughout ,but I wonder if it should be outlined as a specific strategic goal? To embed culture as contributing to wider policy outcomes, to being essential for individual and community thriving? May help for advocacy to mention the Wellbeing of future generations and specifically reflect their wording of the 7 goals? GENERALLY:I love the style and the way culture is described, but in the arts/culture we often fall into the trap of writing for ourselves, in a way we're used to describing arts/culture, which can alienate people. To engage the wider public, could a version be created that is shorter, less wordy, scannable, more conversational, direct and easier to digest? Written for the general reader, including questions/prompts to them, in order to engage them? So they see themselves and their friends and family in this? Also, some of this appears to have been written with ChatGPT (as a writer I can recognise the style!) which is fine, but I think over time other people will increasingly recognise the style. To future proof it, it would be good to perhaps edit to strip out some of those aspects.

Anonymous

11/28/2025 01:21 PM

a stronger Welsh identity for the future of Monmouthshire

Anonymous

12/01/2025 05:38 AM

More work with local schools or colleges for apprenticeship in the sector. More about volunteering opportunities for all ages Link sport with culture more - they seem very separate communities but should be linked more eg Santa fun run. Include something about supporting Monmouth specifically to recover from flooding This is mostly a report about what is happening now not about a clear vision for the future. A community consultation is great but republish this afterwards to show the impact and a clear vision.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:01 PM

You need to invest in music education for children if you don't want to lose music in Monmouthshire. Chepstow School is a good example of a school whose headteachers have not valued music education.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:20 PM

Welsh language

Anonymous

12/05/2025 02:25 PM

No, I'm glad you have a plan

Anonymous

12/05/2025 03:22 PM

Monmouthshire generated authentic culture of the local people and by the local people.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 04:20 PM

The draft is pretty comprehensive and I applaud the work put into it.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 07:01 PM

Maybe try not to be everything to everyone but define our real strengths is. More support for the creative people living in the county.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 09:38 AM

Interesting that concerts, both Choral and instrumental are only briefly mentioned, often as part of larger festivals. Sadly I could find no mention of the bi-annual Usk Choral Festival There are some large groups such as the Male Voice choirs, the various amateur orchestras and smaller choirs that perform locally, encourage participation and community involvement.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 10:01 AM

Monmouth library cannot deliver craft and art classes anywhere near as effectively as Usk and Abergavenny because the room allocated for this is too small. Yet there is shire hall or bridges both owned by the council...please look into providing adequate classes in Monmouth as there is disparity. Please support festivals that are actually local rather than artificially created to use up funding allocated for rural areas by those in the city.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 06:24 PM

Support for extra curricular musical activity for children

Anonymous

12/07/2025 02:33 PM

I would love to see you mention Plas Gunter Mansion as its probably one of the largest cultural heritage projects in the County - but I know you can't mention everything

Anonymous

12/08/2025 12:25 PM

More staff in library/ hub/postoffice. Usk.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 02:54 PM

Support for local landmarks (the Tabernacle on A48 being a key example).

Anonymous

12/08/2025 03:29 PM

It is all very low key - we do need to have some things that are show stoppers. The Aber Food Festival is a well known event - however, is it dated - how can it be refreshed and made as relevant to locals as it is to visitors - and how can that 1 weekend inspire and create commercial and community activity/profile throughout the year. This approach can be applied to each community - take the lead theme and build - make the Monmouthshire presentation the best, most individual in the UK - rather than undersell, which is how I read the draft plan

Anonymous

12/08/2025 04:11 PM

More of a route to link up with other artists, a lot of us work in isolation and dont know where to go or who to meet.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 06:19 PM

it seems like a good start. Training the local press to report on cultural events in a more nuanced way would be helpful, and help create a more cultural feel to their articles.

Anonymous

12/09/2025 11:28 AM

I didn't see anything aligning with how activities will be financed. Without firm financial commitments - whether they be from local funds or otherwise - all we have is a lot of words. Let's face it, the Council cannot even keep the streets clean and tidy at the moment. The road network is still in a sorry state - notwithstanding local repairs in Usk - and we do not have a public transport system that can serve the whole community or transport visitors to-and-from local attractions in a timely manner. The focus on "active travel" is not something I can get excited about as a 67 year-old and we cannot even walk from Llangybi into Usk without putting our lives at risk.

Anonymous

12/10/2025 09:49 AM

Stronger cultural tourism. And I do think it's important that the council make spaces easily available

Anonymous

12/10/2025 11:58 AM

Please involve local creatives from professional and amateur. Lots of talent in the area! Consultations that are accessible from venue choice, day, night and give plenty of notice.

Anonymous

12/12/2025 03:01 PM

It would be better if the draft strategy were combined with the tourism strategy and would question the need for a separate cultural strategy as this is the first one. There are only 2 other places in Wales which seem to have one and the Newport one does seem to have a list of outcomes. It would help if it concentrated more on the historical side of our culture with the museums and heritage and historical places and castles as each market town has a castle. It would be better not to include a page on faith as it fails to reflect the traditional and cultural values in Monmouthshire which are still Christian as the Census 2021 shows that is the stated religion of about half of the population of Monmouthshire and fails to include the important events of Christmas and Easter including the turning on of the Christmas lights in the market towns. There are also important historical sites of interest to both local people and visitors within our market towns and villages which are part of what makes Monmouthshire special. The Conwyn cultural strategy 2021-2026 has a section on places, heritage sites, museums and galleries. Worth looking at priority 1 in the Newport cultural strategy 2025-2035 and the 4 outcomes listed on page 22. It is important that Monmouthshire maintains its older heritage buildings like Shire Hall, The Bridges and the former Abergavenny Library. The cultural strategy could include places, heritage sites, museums and galleries and places of historical interest. Some example below: Places of Historic Interest in both towns and villages In Mathern you can look up the history of the St Tewdrics well and the church. Also in Earlswood you can find the oldest Methodist chapel visited by John Wesley on horseback known as the founder of Methodism. Earlswood Chapel It is claimed that this is the oldest Methodist chapel still in use in Wales. Founded in 1791 by Ann Lewis (Rosser) who was so inspired by the preaching of John Wesley that she set up prayer meetings in her little thatched cottage in Earlswood and founded a branch of the Methodist Missionary Society. The cottage soon became too small and money was raised to build the chapel, which was founded in 1791, though it may not have been built until 1799. St Tewdric's Well, Mathern By tradition at this spring King Tewdric's wounds were washed after the battle near Tintern c470 AD against the pagan Saxons. He died a short way off and by his wishes a church (now the village church) was built over his grave. The well, within the Mathern Conservation Area, was restored by Monmouth District Council in 1977. The above details are based on information given on two plaques on the well's enclosure fence. The Shire Hall in Agincourt Square, Monmouth, Wales, is a very important historic building. It was built in 1724 and used to be the main court building for Monmouthshire. In 1839 and 1840, a famous trial took place here. It was the trial of John Frost and other Chartist leaders. They were tried for serious crimes related to their fight for people's rights. The building was also a busy market place. Today, Monmouthshire County Council owns the Shire Hall. Visitors can use audio guides to explore Courtroom 1. It now serves as a Tourist

Information Centre and offices for Monmouth Town Council. Parts of the building are open for everyone to visit. Abergavenny Former Carnegie Library History Built 1905 and designed by B J Francis of Abergavenny. Paid for by the Carnegie Foundation at a cost of £4000 although Andrew Carnegie refused the invitation to open it. It was opened by the Marquis of Abergavenny and the Lord Mayor of London on 8th September 1906. Exterior Coursed squared rock-faced sandstone with Bath stone ashlar quoins and dressings, natural slate roofs. Two storeyed central section flanked by single storey halls at right angles to each other. Gabled elevation in stone facing the corner between Victoria Street and Baker Street, this is the gable end of the left hand hall. Centre section has a large bay window of 4-lights divided by stone mullions and topped by battlements, with small window behind. This is flanked by lancets with traceried heads; six transomed windows to left return; plain roof with central ventilator. The gable has four finials and a central statue of a woman holding a book at the apex. To the right is a two storey section with a Gothic door which is the main entrance, hoodmould with carved stops, the head of Andrew Carnegie (left) and the Marquis of Abergavenny (right), above this is a 3-light stone mullioned window with sash set back to right. To the right again a hall with four windows with transoms, angled ends and a hipped roof with central ventilator. Rear elevation not inspected. The Shire Hall in Agincourt Square, Monmouth, Wales, is a very important historic building. It was built in 1724 and used to be the main court building for Monmouthshire. In 1839 and 1840, a famous trial took place here. It was the trial of John Frost and other Chartist leaders. They were tried for serious crimes related to their fight for people's rights. The building was also a busy market place. Today, Monmouthshire County Council owns the Shire Hall. Visitors can use audio guides to explore Courtroom 1. It now serves as a Tourist Information Centre and offices for Monmouth Town Council. Parts of the building are open for everyone to visit. Castle history for each of the towns

Anonymous

12/13/2025 11:07 PM

More information about venues, activity and local community events. The strategy feels very focused on a few festivals where as there is alot more on offer every day.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:45 AM

No

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

What is the draft Strategy?

Anonymous

I haven't read it! I think that there is a need to emphasis the key role

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

Monmouthshire has played and still plays within the development of modern Wales.

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

Monmouth needs to bring in more cultural events like other market towns

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

N/A

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

N/A

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:57 AM

Not applicable

Anonymous

12/19/2025 01:45 PM

n/a

Optional question (74 response(s), 61 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q13 | Finally, do you have thoughts on how can we develop new ways of working collaboratively between the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:07 AM

In terms of theatre - making an Monmouthshire youth theatre festival.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:46 AM

Forming an Arts committee and get volunteers involved.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 09:55 AM

Central website Monthly young artists forum to hear from them,

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:00 PM

The proposed Creative Alliance needs to be real and accessible. Too often in the past, resources like this have been unknown and invisible to groups that might make use of them - so that a small number "in the know" get the benefits, but others are simply unaware. If the alliance can advise new and existing groups, so that they are aware of opportunities for funding, support, publicity, collaboration, etc., that would be a great and welcome step forward.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 12:28 PM

clear communication, easy to find information about how to volunteer, what's available,

Anonymous

10/31/2025 02:38 PM

Its difficult to answer this.....

Anonymous

10/31/2025 03:02 PM

What happened to night classes? These can help the local community and economy by building knowledge and skills. All you need is the space, volunteers and good marketing. I am probably not atypical in being happy to teach on a voluntary basis.

Anonymous

10/31/2025 08:52 PM

There seems to be a very fragmentary approach, lots of people contributing to the vibrant cultural life but no one place to find out what's happening. It's great that Monmouthshire has appeared in films but we are bigger than that. There are so many talented M experienced and knowledgeable people in the Shire who could help to create a strong cultural identity. Use them

Anonymous

11/01/2025 08:14 AM

Credit must be given to MCC for being more open to this than many councils! I wonder if GAVO's 'Community Conversations' could be a model for specifically arts/culture-based monthly forums?

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:09 AM

Financial help

Anonymous

11/01/2025 09:42 AM

The recent thriving community event in Abergavenny was great but a list of local volunteer groups who you contacted individually to advertise the event in advance would help. Create a list of interested parties ready to contact for any events.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 10:49 AM

As suggested a central website with details of clubs, groups and societies in county. Also opportunities for volunteering.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:10 PM

Highways so people can get to towns, events, historic monuments.

Anonymous

11/01/2025 12:24 PM

Monmouthshire could link groups more easily through a shared cultural network — an online hub or quarterly forum connecting artists, venues, schools, and local businesses. Public and private partnerships could be encouraged, with local shops and cafés hosting

or sponsoring creative events. Shared community spaces and “cultural corners” would bring together crafts, wellbeing, and education. Simple communication tools — like a joint mailing list or “What’s On” guide — would help raise visibility, while local cultural connectors could keep projects and people linked across the county.

[REDACTED]
11/01/2025 01:29 PM

Greater degree of information sharing as well as funding, as well as information about where other sources of funding can be accessed

Anonymous
11/01/2025 01:44 PM

No

Anonymous
11/01/2025 03:25 PM

Perhaps a citizens panel to promote links between the different sectors.

[REDACTED]
11/01/2025 07:45 PM

Talk directly to the local groups already doing so much in their own towns, and provide a conduit and forum for getting those groups to talk to each other so that the whole can become greater than the sum of their parts.

Anonymous
11/01/2025 07:51 PM

Encourage community councils to seek out and list cultural activities in the community and to support them financially using Section 137 Funding

Anonymous
11/01/2025 11:54 PM

Contacting local people to discover our thoughts and ideas of our culture and ways of life.

Anonymous
11/02/2025 03:31 PM

Incorporate sponsorship more.

Anonymous
11/02/2025 05:08 PM

Follow the good examples, collaborations and best practice currently delivering results in Circular Economy teams and Outdoors Access teams.

Anonymous
11/03/2025 07:33 AM

Sit down and talk in person with each other.

Anonymous
11/03/2025 02:59 PM

A one-stop web page. Using the Arts & Business Cymru template as a way of sourcing private funding and sponsorship.

Anonymous

11/06/2025 06:10 PM

see 10 above. It isn't hard to do this, but don't set your sights too high, and become totally immune to adverse publicity. Take chances - act like real artists have to do every day of their lives.

Anonymous

11/07/2025 03:03 PM

?

Anonymous

11/07/2025 04:22 PM

Yes - firstly understand the sectors better - we confident in the relationship between creativity and wealth creation, support the artists, organisations with joined up thinking. Claim credit for outcomes health, well being, diversity and inclusion, employment and employability - do not add layers of talking shops - try things evaluate, replicate be agile and innovative not safe with so many guard rails that partnership is meaningless.

Anonymous

11/10/2025 05:00 PM

Engage with Monmouthshire's Local Access Forum. Advertise opportunities or wants! Engage with officers already out on the ground who can spread messages and get others involved. Newsletter to parents at schools

Anonymous

11/12/2025 09:16 AM

Communication and funding. More of both of these.

Anonymous

11/14/2025 01:43 PM

There area well known safe places in each area . Perhaps an electronic notice board in places like the Shire Hall behind the railings . The same thing in Abergavenny Market etc . Let us see whats on.

Anonymous

11/15/2025 09:12 AM

Weekend events , hub

Anonymous

11/15/2025 01:19 PM

Keep talking. Keep meeting.

Anonymous

11/17/2025 08:09 PM

Get somebody managing the Borough who is knowledgeable about the industry. Tribute bands are not culture!


11/18/2025 12:47 AM

I will have to think about that. One thing that stops me going out is lack of taxis to get home of a night perhaps there could be a list of night service taxis, or a small mini bus when events are on. transport in Abergavenny is pretty dreadful.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 03:36 PM

Utilising empty high street shop windows with high quality artwork and history displays. Work in conjunction with Cadaw, local and national museums & art galleries and the shop owners. A fantastic display will encourage visitors and prospective shop renters/buyers rather than tatty, dirty windows with trailing electrical cables. Get the publicity out to a wider audience.

Anonymous

11/18/2025 08:25 PM

Monmouthshire should have representation : Eisteddfod

[REDACTED]

As above

11/19/2025 01:53 PM

Anonymous

11/21/2025 03:39 PM

Public consultation is vital, but most importantly listening to the feedback from the community at large. Volunteers give up their time and are 'boots on the ground', but the community itself can have wider views that also need to be obtained.

Anonymous

11/23/2025 04:06 AM

Involve all ares of society in its creation

Anonymous

11/24/2025 06:21 PM

Regular meetings/ workshops between the decision makers of MCC and representatives of the local user groups.

Anonymous

11/26/2025 08:28 AM

Yes, 100%. Arrange to allow creatives to meet and hear what they wish to achieve. Help them. Support new talent.

Anonymous

11/27/2025 11:40 AM

This strategy is a good start on which to build

Anonymous

11/27/2025 02:42 PM

Work with people like Cwmpas to facilitate a series of public conversations between interested parties to dissolve silos, create connections etc. <https://cwmpas.coop/start-something-good/how-it-works/> OR DIY using the World Cafe method <https://theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>

Anonymous

11/27/2025 06:28 PM

Reach out and work more in partnership.

[REDACTED]

Anonymous

11/28/2025 01:21 PM

Improving communication pathways, particularly when it comes to communication with the general public and with groups of volunteers (the backbone of many cultural events that make Monmouth such a special place to live)

Anonymous

12/01/2025 05:38 AM

Support the private sector with reasonable rent and they will return the favour. Actually partner with private sector to deliver rather than looking for sponsorship. Working in partnership can be magic in the strength of the outcome for all.

Anonymous

12/02/2025 08:20 PM

Shared promotion- find all activities, events etc in one place

Anonymous

12/05/2025 02:25 PM

A community website or portal where events can be added and people can coordinate. For example, if I want to set up an event in my area, the LA could help with some advice on the permissions I need as well as open up links to other groups and even get volunteers.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 03:22 PM

Acceptance that there is not a boundary between the people on the borders. Public, private and voluntary sectors should not be confined by lines on a map or by postcodes. Be kind and inclusive. Life should not have boundaries.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 04:20 PM

Keep asking people for their views. Most people "have an opinion" so... ask for it. Keep supporting local venues.

Anonymous

12/05/2025 07:01 PM

A Monmouthshire wide open studios weekend or festival .
Monmouthshire charity fund that links businesses and donate with artists and events that need funding

Anonymous

12/06/2025 08:37 AM

We'll start listen to what people from this have to say about your excessive building. If you can't afford to live in Monmouthshire you need to move to an area you can afford. Simple as that. I can't afford to live in London or Beaconsfield or the Cotswolds so I live here. I don't go to Beaconsfield and demand them to get me a discounted house.

Anonymous

12/06/2025 10:01 AM

Actually engage with the people in the community. Rather than imposing your views on them. For example how many people of Monmouth agreed to the pinch point ? How many people of

Monmouth wanted the wooden troughs dropped from a lorry along Monnow st? How many wanted the museum move? Why is that building empty when I could be a vibrant indoor market? Monmouth cultural heritage is a thriving Market town but the "Butter Market" is closed completely by MCC. Start listening to what the people want

Anonymous

12/06/2025 06:24 PM

Maybe a forum/platform for all the musical groups to communicate/liaise.

Anonymous

12/07/2025 02:33 PM

Firtsly its about taleking to each other more often and a forum bringing groups together across the county - that doesnt feel like its a local government meeting - is a good place to begin

Anonymous

12/08/2025 12:25 PM

More funding community hub.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 02:54 PM

Making more extensive use of volunteers - but I don't have any clever ideas about how!

Anonymous

12/08/2025 03:29 PM

Bring new people and perspectives into the discussions - local people and those with knowledge/skills - and take indepth looks at what is happening in other parts of the UK/World - we are often limited by our experience and need to be challenged. Have a budget for testing ideas - to work with the many different organisations involved in culture - allowing the unusual to be tested and monitored. Be adventurous.

Anonymous

12/08/2025 06:19 PM

Speak of the arts as if you know they have great value to society and our area. Sing successes loud, and give them recognition, then the sectors will start valuing them too.

Anonymous

12/10/2025 09:49 AM

Yes I do. Please feel free to contact me [REDACTED]

Anonymous

12/10/2025 11:58 AM

Make use of the settings from the castles, halls, museums on our doorstep! Engage with the schools, children and local organisations. Reach out to local businesses. Please plan and give notice of events. Most artists, businesses are working 3-6months in advance on projects.

Anonymous

12/13/2025 11:07 PM

Reviewing who the key stakeholders are across Monmouthshire and understanding how they can mutually support each other. For example, ensuring arts and health are joined up..and helping businesses understand where they can support and find mutual benefit working with cultural venues and community organisations.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 09:16 AM

Advertising more and inform people whats happening. Very often we don't know.

Anonymous

12/15/2025 10:45 AM

No

[REDACTED]

12/15/2025 11:26 AM

Getting GP's involved in referring people to groups run by volunteers that could help them

Anonymous

12/15/2025 11:36 AM

Communicate - Open day/evenings

Anonymous

12/15/2025 01:45 PM

A wider and broader approach in how services are delivered, defining shared goals and outcomes

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

More understanding with in the community

Anonymous

12/16/2025 01:45 PM

Not at the moment.

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

co-operating with each other and not competing

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

Links with: U3A, Schools, Sports clubs

Anonymous

12/18/2025 01:45 PM

Nothing added

Anonymous

12/19/2025 11:57 AM

Definitely need more for young people. More financial help for community centres, both run by volunteers and council run. Also youth clubs and day centres for disabled adults and those suffering from mental illness e.g Mardy Resource Centre (growing spaces) and the old Tudor Day Centre

Anonymous

12/19/2025 01:45 PM

Really important to work with schools and different ethnic groups etc.
to encourage people to support projects. More publicity!

Optional question (74 response(s), 61 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

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Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Tracey Thomas Phone no: 01633 644295 E-mail: traceythomas@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal Seeking approval of Monmouthshire's Draft Cultural Strategy 2026-2036 – the strategic plan that champions cultural activity and creates sustainable and inclusive cultural growth in Monmouthshire.
Name of Service area Place and Community Wellbeing	Date 21/01/2026

Page 183

6. **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	The Plan promotes an inclusive cultural offer across Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts of this strategy on protected characteristics. The strategy aims to improve inclusiveness and accessibility of cultural activity for the benefit of residents and visitors.	The cultural strategy is a coherent plan that sets out purpose, priorities, and actions for nurturing and sustaining the arts, heritage, and creative industries within our county

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?
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Disability	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	The strategy aims to improve inclusiveness and accessibility of cultural activity for the benefit of residents. It will work with stakeholders/event organisers/venues and infrastructure to ensure they are accessible and inclusive – physically, in terms of the product offer and in the way they're promoted.	The strategy aims to improve and increase cultural activity across Monmouthshire.
Gender reassignment	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts.	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.
Marriage or civil partnership	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts.	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.
Pregnancy or maternity	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.
Race	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts.	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.
Religion or Belief	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts.	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.
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?

Sex	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts.	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.
Sexual Orientation	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.	There are no negative impacts.	The strategy aims to improve accessibility to cultural activities for benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socioeconomic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	The strategy is based on fair treatment and equitable status of all groups and individuals in the community, aiming to grow the cultural offer for everyone in Monmouthshire, whether as a visitor or resident.	There are no identified negative impacts.	The strategy aims to support growth in cultural industries for the benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire.

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	The strategy celebrates and promotes Welsh language and sense of place as important elements of the cultural offer.	There are no negative impacts.	Welsh language holds a cultural and historical significance for Monmouthshire, serving as a vital expression of local identity and heritage and is underpinned throughout the strategy.
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	N/A	No posts are being created at this time.	N/A
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	The strategy will not impact on the equal status given to the Welsh language in service delivery. Welsh language and culture will be celebrated as critical aspects of the county's cultural strategy to strengthens community cohesion, supports educational opportunities, and attracts visitors who are keen to experience authentic Welsh culture.	None.	N/A


4. 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?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The strategy aims to support the wealth of creative talent we have within the county. It will support this ecosystem through established partnership, by offering training, networking, low cost/affordable spaces, and opportunities to showcase work.	The strategy identifies the best prospects for sustainable growth of Monmouthshire's creative industries. There are no identified negative impacts.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and land, river and coastal ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	The strategy promotes safe and responsible cultural activity across the county.	We will work with partners, stakeholders and creatives to promote safe and responsible cultural activity.
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Access to cultural activity, the arts and heritage enhance mental health, reduces social isolation, and improves overall well-being. Our cultural strategy will commit to making culture accessible to all, by creating more inclusive events, and removing barriers to participation.	The strategy aims to encourage use of our outdoor facilities and spaces to provide opportunities for everyone in Monmouthshire.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	The strategy will support vibrant communities - culture is a source of pride and resilience, helping individuals and communities to flourish, the cultural strategy will nurture the next generation creating sustainable and connected places.	The cultural strategy would bring together the county's unique assets - its history, landscapes, traditions, and people under a shared vision for the future.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	The strategy will encourage responsible cultural activity to ensure that our heritage, spaces and places are looked after for future generations to enjoy	The impact of increased cultural activity will be monitored and any negative trends will be addressed based on relevant data and understandings.

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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?
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	Creating a cultural strategy for Monmouthshire will assist in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the county, ensuring that future generations can appreciate and learn from it.	The strategy promotes a confident cultural identity, healthy and active lifestyles and a cohesive heritage offer celebrating sense of place and Welsh culture.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The strategy supports sustainable growth of Monmouthshire's cultural offer for the benefit of everyone in the county irrespective of background or circumstances.	The strategy aims to sustainably grow Monmouthshire's cultural offer and promote access to a wide variety of enriching experiences for everyone in Monmouthshire regardless of circumstances.

5. 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?
 Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future	This is a 10-year strategy with an initial two-year action plan. The creation of a Cultural Partnership Forum will be supported from experts in the field along with officers who collectively will design the full action plan to ensure the Monmouthshire is the most inspiring, connected and creative place in Wales to visit and live.	The strategy is a blueprint and stepping stone for further actions. It aims to support and inspire those working in the creative industries and those who enjoy participating or visiting cultural activity.

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>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>The strategy has been developed through local and national research and in collaboration with a wide range of local creatives, stakeholders and businesses. It's been designed to be co-owned by everyone in Monmouthshire and to inspire collaboration and co-creation.</p>	<p>The strategy and action plans delivery will be overseen by a newly created Cultural Forum, made up of public, private and third sector partners.</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The strategy to date, has been informed by extensive engagement with stakeholders (including MCC services, creatives, businesses, partners) and its delivery will be overseen by the newly formed Cultural Forum, made up of public, private and third sector partners.</p>	<p>Resource allowing, regular engagement and annual surveys will be undertaken to assess satisfaction with the way the cultural offer is being developed and managed for our residents and visitors.</p>
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>A range of wellbeing measures will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Cultural Forum. Any potential issues will be regularly communicated to partnership to enable them to address them promptly</p>	<p>Resource allowing, regular engagement and annual surveys will be undertaken to assess satisfaction with the way the cultural offer is being developed and managed for our residents and visitors., and to identify any wider issues not identified by the cultural forum.</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the Monmouthshire Corporate and Community Plan both outline the need to move towards a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales and a resilient Wales. We will deliver this through:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire • Inking with Placemaking; Economy, Skills and Enterprise and Destination Management teams to ensure cross working • Enhancing the cultural offer across the county that deliver opportunities to reduce loneliness and social isolation 	<p>None identified at this time</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging physical activity through our places and spaces of the county • Commit to making culture accessible to all, by creating more inclusive events, and removing barriers to participation 	
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6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: 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?
Safeguarding	There are no impacts on safeguarding.	There are no impacts on safeguarding.	There are no impacts on safeguarding.
Corporate Parenting	There are no impacts on corporate parenting.	There are no impacts on corporate parenting.	There are no impacts on corporate parenting.

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

The Plan has been informed by the following data :

- Consultation workshops held with local creatives, stakeholders including National Trust, CADW, Cardiff University, Creative Cardiff, town and community councils, MCC councillors, MCC officers, cultural businesses, and event organisers.
- Public consultation is running from 31st October – 14th December 2025
- Monmouthshire Community and Corporate Plan 2022 - 2028
- Monmouthshire town Placemaking Plans

8. 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?

As a county, Monmouthshire is at an exciting point as it cherishes its past and is eager to shape its future. As included in the Community and Corporate Plan under a Fairer Place to Live – we will develop an inclusive cultural strategy working with our partners and communities across the county. We are now able to share a draft Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire that honours the unique character of this county, drawing strength from its landscapes, heritage and people. The draft cultural strategy is a coherent plan that sets out purpose, priorities, and actions for nurturing and sustaining the arts, heritage, and creative industries within our county. It provides a framework for decision-making, helps secure funding, fosters partnerships, and measures progress. For Monmouthshire, a cultural strategy would bring together the county's unique assets - its history, landscapes, traditions, and people under a shared vision for the future.

The Council will need to work across departments and to use all levers available to support culture activity, in tandem with businesses, creatives, stakeholders and the residents of Monmouthshire to grow cultural activity for the benefit of everyone in the county. There is recognition that this isn't a strategy and plan that the Council could deliver on its own, and that we also need buy in from partners and their support to deliver on priorities.

9. 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
Analyse and collate all responses to the public consultation for the draft cultural strategy	December 2025 – January 2026	Tracey Thomas/Rachael Rogers

10. 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
2	SLT and Business Cabinet	13 th and 20 th January 2026	To revise action plan to include clear outcomes and impact
3	Place Scrutiny	29/01/2026	
4	Cabinet	11/02/26	



SUBJECT: BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE (ENVIRONMENT WALES ACT 2016, SECTION 6) REPORT

MEETING: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 29th JANUARY 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To scrutinise the review of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Report (Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6) known as the 'Section 6 Report' which sets out the council's delivery against statutory duties and responsibilities as detailed in the adopted Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 which forms part of the Nature Recovery pillar of the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.2 That Place Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Report 2024 to 2025 and endorses publication for the council to comply with the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty by Individual Cabinet Member Decision.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 As a local authority we now have a duty (via the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) to maintain and enhance biodiversity in all our functions, with the responsibility for delivery sitting across all council services. In 2021 the Senedd declared a 'Nature Emergency' promoted by the State of Nature Report (2019) highlighting the extinction of 17 % of species across Wales. In Gwent the State of Nature Report (2021) showed a 34% decline of assessed species. More recently the updated 2023 the State of Nature report makes the stark statement that Wales is now one of the most nature depleted countries on Earth and along with the rest of the world is facing a biodiversity crisis, with one in six species in Wales at risk of extinction
- 3.2 The Section 6 Report presented summarises the work undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council during the calendar years of 2024 and 2025 against the eight Section 6 Forward Plan objectives (See Table 1) which were established during the preparation of the adopted Plan in 2024. As part of its statutory obligations, the Council is required to report every three years on actions taken to deliver its biodiversity duties; a report for 2020-2023 (due in 2022) was submitted to Welsh Government in 2023 and subsequently published to the MonLife website.

Table 1

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan key objectives:

1. Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
2. Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature
3. Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience
4. Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience
5. Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
6. Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery
7. Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action
8. Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

- 3.3 The 2024-5 reporting includes a cover report detailing the strong corporate commitment via the Community and Corporate Plan, Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy, Motion for Rivers & Ocean, Local Nature Recovery Action Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy, with acknowledgment of our established governance and delivery mechanisms.
- 3.4 The report identifies how action undertaken by the Local Authority has contributed to the Section 6 objectives that were refreshed and adopted in 2024. The detailed action plan summarises progress towards Milestones and Measures and reviews each of our commitments with an up-to-date description of progress.
- 3.5 We are pleased to be able to complete a report demonstrating significant work across the local authority area towards the Biodiversity Duty. Highlights have been covered by a series of case studies including:
- Replacement Local Development Plan
 - The Healthy Rivers Project
 - Monmouthshire Nature Recovery Action Plan
 - Mill Common Project
 - Gwent Green Grid: Biotapestry
- 3.6 In accordance with the Welsh Government Guidance on reporting, we have also considered any key issues that the authority continues to face in delivering the Biodiversity Duty including incompatible and contradictory legislation e.g. event licensing, challenges to our Nature Isn't Neat approach to grassland management e.g. public perception, and approaching resource issues e.g. where statutory duties are being directly and indirectly funded by external competitive grants.

3.7 A review of existing actions, measures and milestones is included with recommendation for actions to take us to the next reporting round in 2028. Minimal updates are recommended including two new milestones

- Ecologist (Highways and Operations) new post,
- Management Strategy implementation for Neddern Brook

3.8 New measures are identified for the Area (Ha) of Nature isn't Neat managed land, Number of Sites Managed in accordance with a Green Infrastructure management plan, Number of new Green Infrastructure Management Plans for MCC sites, Number of county farms taking part in activity as exemplars for nature friendly, sustainable, and regenerative agriculture.

4. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT, (includes equality, future generations, social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting).

4.1 The Section 6 Report demonstrates significant positive contributions to the Wellbeing Goals. A Healthier Wales is supported through health and wellbeing opportunities through projects and partnerships, well connected multifunctional green spaces and community growing initiatives. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on supporting nature-based solutions for land management, raised awareness through training and teaching of the nature crisis and working in partnership to deliver landscape scale projects to support resilient ecological networks. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. Finally contributing to a Globally Responsible Wales through sustainable use of natural resources to support Monmouthshire's local green economy and develop skills and learning. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals.

4.2 There are no significant positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement were used throughout the development of the Section 6 Forward Plan against which the Section 6 Report has been prepared.

4.3 An Integrated Impact Assessment is attached.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 An options appraisal is provided in the table below.

Options	Benefits	Risks	Comments/Mitigation

Do Nothing	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to comply with statutory S6 Legal Duty to maintain and enhance Biodiversity. -Potential Regulatory scrutiny or intervention - Weakened defence against legal challenge - Poor alignment with Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) - Reduced eligibility for grant funding (e.g. Local - Places for Nature which supports statutory delivery) - Inconsistent decision making - Reputational risks &lack of credibility - Failure to demonstrate progress in climate adaption and resilience. 	Not recommended
Approve Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -MCC meets is required Statutory Legal S6 Duty - Good governance - Strengthens transparency and public trust. - Aligns with NRAP and Green Infrastructure Strategy - Strengthens funding and grant opportunities to help deliver Statutory functions. - Supports compliance with corporate aims and objectives and plans such as Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requirements to deliver on actions 	Recommended

	and Corporate Plan and Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan.		
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6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Updates on progress will be reported upon in line with statutory requirements as set out in the Section 6 duty. Reporting also aligns with the Climate and Nature Emergency corporate reporting.

7. REASONS:

7.1 To ensure that the Council delivers upon its statutory Biodiversity Section 6 duty, supporting the Gwent Well Being Plan and South East Wales Area Statement and addressing its commitments to climate and nature emergencies through the council's Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and the Communities and Corporate Plan.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Actions will be funded in different ways, some are zero cost or will require core funded officer time alone, others will involve Project and Partnership funding delivered through current grant programmes. It is anticipated that where additional funds are needed these will be subject to subsequent decision-making processes.

9. CONSULTEES:

9.1 All relevant areas of the Local Authority are responsible for the implementation of the Section 6 duty. The following areas were consulted and contributed to the reporting on the actions:

- Highways including Active travel, Highways Projects, Flooding
- Countryside, Destination and Environment including Countryside Access,

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Environment Wales Act 2016, Section 6) Report

11. AUTHOR: Kate Stinchcombe – Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Manager

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Appendix 1 Action Plan Report

Milestones and Measures achieved during the reporting period 2024 / 2025

Milestone		2024 Progress	2025 Progress	Status	
Milestone: RLDP adopted with relevant policies and planning guidance in place		Policies developed. Public Consultation Underway until 16 th December 2024.	Severn Estuary Recreation Strategy developed. Submission to Welsh Government.	Underway on track	
Milestone: Asset Management Strategy adopted with relevant policies in place		Adopted January 2024 inclusive of consideration for asset management as good role models for climate and nature practices.		Complete	
Milestone: Nature Recovery Action Plan Adopted		Public Consultation for Part 1 Strategy complete.	Adopted June 2025	Complete	
Milestone: Green Infrastructure Action Plan Adopted		Public Consultation complete.	Adopted June 2025	Complete	
Milestone: Nature Networks mapping portal goes live		Final development of mapping portal underway.	Website launched in 5 th February 2025 with supporting introduction training workshop undertaken on 11 th Feb.	Complete	
Milestone: Access to Food Growing process in place		Task and Finish Group established. Template to be produced.	Template produced and process established.	Complete	
Milestone: Pilot Tree Warden Scheme launched		Funding for pilot secured via TWIG	Project commenced with training for MCC Staff and first session in Magor with Undy community.	Underway on track	
Measure	2024 Actual	2024 Progress	2025 Progress	2025 Target	2025 Actual
Number of MCC officers completed Nature Recovery training via Thinqi	N/A	eLearn Module under development. To be available from April 2025.	Launched July 2025. Promoted via staff e-newsletter The Compass and twice via the Thinqi training newsletter. Needs further promotion with Planning, Highways and operational services in 2026	50	14
Number of MCC officers receiving bespoke operational training	20	Planning training 2024 on Planning Policy Wales 12.	Aderyn (biological records) training given to eight Development Management Officers.	0	8
Number of young people / teachers / support staff engaged	771	Gwent Green Grid Shared Prosperity Fund & Nature Networks Pollinator workshops	Gwent Green Grid Shared Prosperity Fund & Nature Networks Biotapestry Work	700	752
Number of MCC sites with National Forest Accreditation	1	Friends of Castle Meadows achieved accreditation Mill Common to be included on completion of TWIG works	Application underway for Mill Common, Undy. TWIG funding secured for Goytre Hall Wood which will be the second site.	2	Underway
Service Level Agreement with SEWBRcC	1	Continued by Development Management for 2024/5	Continued by Development Management for 2025/6 plus SLA for Biodiversity work	1	2

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

Number of Natural Flood Management schemes supported by MCC	3	MCC Flooding team supported 3 schemes in Dingestow, Llantilio Crossenny and Mitchel Troy.	No funding this financial year. Preparing for 2026/7	0	Planned for 2026/7
Number of Town & Community Councils engaged	12	Green Infrastructure Projects, Local Nature Partnership	Green Infrastructure Projects, Local Nature Partnership and Nature Isn't Neat initiatives	10	10

Objective 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
1.1 Ensure RLDP allocations where delivery of Net Benefit for biodiversity will be possible. Ensure RLDP Development Management policies are robust and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance for Nature Recovery is developed.	Planning Policy Green Infrastructure	2024/25 Ongoing	Part, Core	Replacement Local Development Plan	RLDP adopted with relevant policies and planning guidance in place	<p>Site allocation & Development Management policies developed with Green Infrastructure Team.</p> <p>Topics for SPG have been developed through policy drafting including Dark Skies, Nature Recovery and Severn Estuary Recreation Mitigation Strategy. The latter has been developed with expert consultants through a workshop.</p> <p>Deposit Plan submitted to Welsh Government for consideration by PEDW. Process paused during further information gathering relating to SAC rivers.</p> <p>See case study for more information.</p>	
1.2 Continue to identify services & operations that have potential to deliver a net benefit for biodiversity and incorporate action into business plans including Highways & Flooding and Landlord Services.	Highways Landlord Services Green Infrastructure	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core, Local Places for Nature Revenue	-	<p>Audits undertaken and further actions identified</p> <p>New: Ecologist (Highways & Operations) in post.</p>	<p>Reactive support to highways projects continues with limited resource to proactively plan work programmes with net benefit for biodiversity.</p> <p>No resource available to explore property services work and provide the required support.</p> <p>Ecologist (Highways & Operations) role approved and will be advertised in early 2026.</p>	
1.3 Ensure that the review and implementation of the Council's Asset Management Strategy considers Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience through consultation.	Landlord Services	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core, Local Places for Nature Revenue	Asset Management Strategy	Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience considered during asset management strategy implementation	<p>Landlord services acknowledge ecological value as a consideration in adopted Asset Management Strategy 2023-27.</p> <p>Alternative use of a former development site in Abergavenny (adjacent to Morrisons) was secured and enhancements funded through Local Places for Nature.</p>	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

						Continuing dialogue on plans and projects e.g. Food growing initiatives and County Farms.	
1.4 Improve the consideration of biodiversity through Highways Operations and Suds Approving Body (SAB) process through use of checklists and consultation.	Highways Flooding Risk Management	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	-	All schemes minimising conflicts and delivering biodiversity net benefit.	SAB team attending GI DM meetings to ensure ecology has early consideration. No formal process in place yet. Ecologist (Highways & Operations) role approved and will be advertised in early 2026.	
1.5 Rollout the use of the new procurement guidelines to limit effects on climate and nature	Procurement All Procuring Services	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	Carbon Emissions plan	More procurement considers climate & nature	Ardal guidelines available for use. <i>Action to be updated to Continue to promote the Ardal procurement guidance.</i>	
1.6 Seek ongoing adherence to the PROW Biodiversity Action Plan	Countryside Access	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	Countryside Access Improvement Plan	All schemes minimising conflicts and delivering biodiversity net benefit.	Consultation undertaken and advice sought where restricted byways need re-opening or new paths being made e.g. protected species. Ongoing use of the PROW BAP - sent several out to landowners and user groups and all volunteer groups receive training on it and are aware of it. (20 Volunteer groups presently)	

Objective 2 Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress 2024 - 2025	Progress (red, amber, green)
2.1 Continue to deliver nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature through the Gwent Green Grid	Green Infrastructure	2024/25 Ongoing	Full, Nature Networks, SPF CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	Grant relevant Key Performance Indicators	Development of the Bio Tapestry project. GGGP attended Usk Show, Nature & Food event and Greener Abergavenny with Bio Tapestry activities. 79 sessions delivered across Gwent (27 of those in Monmouthshire) reaching 752 participants (261 of those in Monmouthshire). See case study for more information.	
2.2 Work with young people to enable them to take positive action on nature recovery and climate change	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing Leisure Services Heritage Attractions Sustainable Food Outdoor Education	2024/25 Ongoing	Full, Core, Nature Networks, SPF, Food Partnership CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026. Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	Community Climate Action Plan	Number of individuals engaged through nature-based activity New meals on primary school menu. Number of high schools engaged.	GGGP - 31 Climate and Nature Awareness Sessions delivered in schools to 771 children/teachers/support staff across Monmouthshire. Sustainable Food - Ongoing work with Size Of Wales, to promote deforestation champions, and support for the creation of deforestation free meal, for the primary school menu. Work within schools to promote cooking and growing skills, comprehensives to be included for 2025/2026. Began to look at plate waste in primary schools, to reduce and begin to minimise.	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

<p>2.3 Continue with work on the E Learning module and seek to make it compulsory corporate training.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Full, SPF/Local Places for Nature</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Completion of learning module. Number of officers completed training.</p>	<p>Co production of E-Learn module with Cynnal Cymru, Tantrwm, Comms and Corporate Training. Training available on Thinqi platform which is available to all staff and elected members however, training is not compulsory. Uptake has been slow despite advertisement in the all-staff e-newsletter and promotion through the corporate training e-newsletter. Number completed training between July and end December 2025: 14. Further promotion to planning and highways needed in 2026. Action to be updated to Continue to promote the Nature Recovery eLearning module.</p>	
<p>2.4 Work collaboratively to seek alternative funding models including Green Finance to ensure long term sustainable delivery of awareness raising and encouraging action.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>2024/25 Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Nature Networks CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Opportunities identified.</p>	<p>Partnership working e.g. with Usk Catchment Partnership and Marches Partnership seeking to identify opportunities. Gwent Green Grid Green Finance Commission to be awarded in early 2026. This is an opportunity for a consultant to provide Support the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP) in co-designing Green Finance Plan that delivers a legacy for nature, communities, and partner organisations across Gwent.</p>	
<p>2.5 Explore opportunities for Duke of Edinburgh Award voluntary work to aid nature recovery.</p>	<p>Outdoor Education Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Opportunities identified.</p>	<p>No update currently.</p>	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

2.6 Explore funding to update interpretation and materials at the One Planet Centre, strengthen links with partners and increase the use of the centre.	Grounds and Cleansing	End of April 2025	No	-	Static display updated Touch Screen content updated	Interactive Globe - 11 questions on interactive consoles updated to reflect current data.	
2.7 Support schools to utilise the opportunity provided by the new curriculum to ensure nature recovery & climate change education is embedded into young people's learning	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing Heritage Attractions Leisure Services Sustainable Food	2024/25 Ongoing	Part, Nature Networks, SPF Food Partnership MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	- Local Food Strategy.	Number of schools engaged. Work on school meals promoting pulses, and vegetables.	GGGP - in school delivery of workshops. Production and promotion of the GGGP Digital Resource. Pollinator Packs produced and distributed. Production of <i>Helping Nature to Help Us</i> Interactive Board Resource. Sustainable Food - Continued to work with primary schools supporting access to the curriculum through growing and cooking skills. Ensuring delivery of pollinators/soil health/soil regeneration. Working across departments for complete delivery.	
2.8 Encourage public understanding of food systems – including production, processing, cooking, nutrition, and waste – to encourage planet-friendly food choices and informed decision-making	Sustainable Food	2024/25 Ongoing	Part, Food Partnership, SPF Funding MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding	Local Food Strategy	Businesses signed up to green growth pledge. Amount of local vegetables on primary school plates. Tender contracts with climate, sustainability and nutrition.	Apple pilot project with Welsh Veg in Schools which will include a curriculum Apple Resource Kit. We have continued to promote regenerative farming, networking and communications with the residents of Monmouthshire and its borders. We have strengthened partnerships with farmers continuing to support their vision of collaborative working through consortia level provision. We have continued to work including mentoring schools supported by Size of Wales to help to improve knowledge and understanding of planet friendly food choices and helping to create positive change within embedded practices.	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

			grants being pursued).		<p>Events booked and engaged with partners.</p> <p>Community projects supported through grant funding.</p> <p>Marches Partnership work.</p>	<p>Bokashi project led by young people supported by the Monmouthshire Food Partnership with the intention of reducing cooked food waste and creating living compost.</p> <p>We sit on the Steering group for the Healthy Weight Healthy Wales ABUHB. This provides support to the community with projects and events which promote the above, working with NHS and other health care professionals to begin preventative health care education.</p> <p>We are working cross border with The Marches Project, working with partners on Food Resilience, access to food and climate.</p>	
<p>Page 20</p> <p>2.9 Deliver Nature & Climate awareness raising to groups</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p> <p>Heritage Attractions</p>	<p>2024/5</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Core, Local Places for Nature</p> <p>MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026</p> <p>Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).</p>	-	<p>Final M&E report for the NLHF GGGP project (March 2026) will include an analysis of this work.</p>	<p>GGGP Nature & Climate presentation to Community Climate Champions.</p> <p>Focus has been on Schools in 2024/5 financial year.</p> <p>The development of the BioTapestry has been our focus for nature & climate awareness. Community groups and public events have used art of various mediums as a mechanism for learning about nature & climate and understanding the special value of our local environments.</p> <p>See case study for more information.</p>	
<p>2.10 Assess the need and aspirations for schools in Monmouthshire to have an environmental charter and improve sharing of best practice on projects such as school grounds improvements to enhance ecosystem services.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p> <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Sustainable Food</p>	<p>2024/5</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Core, Local Places for Nature, Food Partnership</p> <p>MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March</p>	-	<p>Support required by schools in place</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure - Survey sent to all schools with 12 responses received. Loss of resource to take this forward as Biodiversity and Ecology Officer left. MCC and Keep Wales Tidy <i>Eco schools</i> network established to improve information sharing. Challenge to maintain this with current staffing resource levels.</p> <p>MCC Road Safety School Travel Plan - Officer working with schools to think about sustainable travel to school. MCC AT</p>	

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	Children and Young People		2026 and 2027 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).			using ATF and SRIC funding to improve sustainable transport connections to schools. Scheme development and construction include routes to Caldicot School/ Durand School, King Henry VIII School Abergavenny and Monmouth Overmonnow school.	
2.11 Continue with a programme of training for site managers, operatives & development management officers as need arises e.g. protected species, construction, and management of GI assets e.g. Rain Gardens.	Highways Grounds and Cleansing MonLife Attractions Green Infrastructure Heritage Attractions	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, SPF	-	Number of members/ officers/ operatives trained	20 officers from Development Management and Heritage teams trained on PPW 12 updates: Net Benefit for Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Trees during February 2024. Total of seven elected members taken on a Climate and Nature Steering Group best practice field trip to Abergavenny sites in 2024 and Magor with Undy in 2025. One Grounds officer attended a training session on Leaky Dams.	
2.12 Nature & Climate Comms campaign	Communications Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, Core, Nature Networks, Local Places for Nature MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	TBC alongside LNP comms plan.	Ongoing Nature & Climate Comms work including Local Places for Nature project delivery, Mill Common Restoration, Nature and Food Celebration, River Gavenny Project. Presentation on Nature Actions to UK Climate Action Scorecard group.	

Objective 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
3.1 Develop the management of green infrastructure to improve climate & ecosystem resilience	Grounds and Cleansing Countryside Access Heritage Attractions MonLife Attractions	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature, Brilliant Basics, Nature Networks, SPF MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	Area of NiN land maintained at 38Ha NEW: Sites Managed in accordance with a GI Management Plan	Ongoing management using Nature isn't Neat (NiN) principles across approx. 38Ha of Grounds managed estate with a further 9Ha on Countryside / attractions sites. Local Places for Nature funding utilised to procure appropriate machinery / kit for management of grassland areas. Correct machinery in place for use at Caldicot Castle and Country Park and Old Station Tintern. PROW Tracks and Trails – ensure all projects improving /maintaining highways take account of our duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity. PROW Projects – Including assessing ecology and biodiversity in road surveys and communicating to User Groups, Locals etc what needs to be protected and improved.	
3.2 Continue to deliver green infrastructure improvements and changes to management practices through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership	Green Infrastructure	2024/5 End March 2026	Full, Nature Networks, SPF MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS	-	Grant relevant Key Performance Indicators	River Gavenny Community Action Plan and Healthy Rivers Project. See Relevant Case Study. Green Infrastructure designs for 20 Green Corridors sites, delivery of GI enhancements at 'Morrisons' site, Abergavenny and grassland enhancement at Goytre Playing Field.	

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			March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).			Continued support and development of Nature Isn't Neat including specific projects at Gilwern Common.	
3.3 Maintain Nature Isn't Neat Management at 38Ha and increase sustainable disposal / utilisation of grass cutting arisings	Grounds and Cleansing Highways	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core, Local Places for Nature	-	Management Maintained at 38Ha	38Ha Maintained through a NiN approach.	
<div>Page 209</div> 3.4 Implement the River Gavenny project via the Local Nature Partnership	Green Infrastructure	2024/5 End March 2026	Part, Section 106, Nature Networks MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	Project Underway	Public Consultation workshop July 2024 with key partnership organisations. Community Engagement Plan developed by Groundwork Wales. Litter picking event with Groundwork Wales, Keep Wales Tidy, Abergavenny Town Council. During 2025 the GI Team worked with Ground Work Wales using Nature Networks funding to deliver a Healthy Rivers Project. See Case study.	

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3.5 Develop Green Infrastructure Management Plans for Mill Common, Breezy Bank and the new Countryside Park at Nant y Castell.	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Full, Section 106, TWIG	-	Plans completed	<p>TWIG Funding secured to be used to develop the GI Management Plan for Mill Common to UK Forestry Standards.</p> <p>S106 funds received for Nant y Castell Green Infrastructure Plan.</p>	
3.6 Continue with the development and implementation of the Nedder Brook Strategy and monitor effectiveness	<p>MonLife Attractions</p> <p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Flood Risk Management</p>	<p>2024/5</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Part, Local Places for Nature 2025-7	-	<p>Strategy in place.</p> <p>Management undertaken.</p>	<p>Strategy complete and scope of works discussed with NRW through FRAP pre-app process.</p> <p>Restoration works to include vegetation cutting to be undertaken in early 2026 with new machinery being funded through Local Places for Nature.</p>	
3.7 Seek TWIG funding for woodland management plans and secure woodland management	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p>	2024/5	Full, TWIG	-	Funding secured.	<p>£250,000 awarded by NHLF for implementation of capital project and awareness raising 2024-26 at Mill Common.</p> <p>See Case study.</p> <p>£117,000 awarded by NHLF for implementation of capital project and community engagement for 2025-2027 at Goytre Hall Wood.</p>	
3.8 Secure National Forest Accreditation for priority woodland sites	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Countryside Access</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p>	<p>2024/5</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Full, TWIG	-	Number of MCC sites with National Forest Accreditation	<p>Castle Meadows Copse accredited National Forest status following an application by the Friends of Castle Meadows.</p> <p>Development of the Forest Management Plan and National Forest application are underway for Mill Common as part of the associated TWIG funding.</p>	

Objective 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
4.1 Promote and, as opportunities arise, use our county farms as exemplars for nature friendly, sustainable, and regenerative agriculture	Sustainable Food Landlord Services Flood Risk Management	Ongoing	Part, Food Partnership SPF funding.	Food Strategy	Number of farmers/farms taking part.	Regen Ben project complete, with County farmers having finished their mentoring programme on regenerative farming. As well as other individually owned farms. The cluster farming project is still ongoing with a regenerative farming event planned for January 2026. Work within this area will potentially be shared through The Marches Project.	
4.2 Promote sustainable land management and agricultural practices, including nutrient/soil management and natural flood management	Flood Risk Management Sustainable Food	Ongoing	Part, Food Partnership SPF Funding	Food Strategy.	Number of Events and People attending	Regen Ben project promoted learning and education with agricultural practices, The farming cluster have been looking at cover crops for soil retention and to minimise water run-off. The Marches Real Food and Farming Convergence was held in October 2025. The event showcased best practice and new and innovative ideas such as regenerative farming. Peer support and future workstream development were key to the event's success which reached 190 people over the two-day event.	
4.3 Work with partners to understand potential for and implement natural flood management for climate adaption	Flood Risk Management	Ongoing	Part, NFM, SPF, Food Partnership	-	Number of schemes underway	A NFM Opportunity Assessment for Monmouthshire has been completed and several potential schemes identified. Three of those schemes have been delivered in 2023/24 funded through Welsh Government's NFM Accelerator Grant. Delivery of future schemes will be dependent on further WG grant funding. Through this work we continue to liaise with partners such as Wye & Usk Foundation, Welsh Water, Wye Valley National Landscape Team & Natural Resources Wales on NFM matters. Two further NFM schemes are currently being considered for 2026/27, including the installation of NFM features near	

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						Dingestow and landowner engagement/feasibility work in the River Monnow catchment in collaboration with the Wye & Usk Foundation.	
4.4 Work with Landlord Services to develop an access to growing template to include requirement of no pesticides / harmful chemicals.	Sustainable Food Landlord Services	2025	Full, Food Partnership	-	Process in Plane	Task and Finish group has been established; a process is now in place to ensure all relevant parts of the authority are involved at the correct stage in project development. Action Complete.	
4.5 Work with Town and Community Councils to deliver Section 6	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature	-	Number of Community Councils engaged	Close working on GI and Local Places for Nature projects design and consultation. Attendance of cc at LNP meetings and promotion of NRAP consultation on a CC website. Extensive work with Llanelly Hill CC on Gilwern Common grass cutting. Town and Community Council councils were invited to the Nature & Food Celebration event in October 2024.	
4.6 Continue to work with Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire Meadows Group and Natural Resources Wales to identify sites that meet the Local Wildlife Sites / Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation criteria.	Green Infrastructure	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	-	Number of Local Wildlife Sites / Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation	LWS Panel attended by MCC in March 2024. 18 sites approved for inclusion as Local Wildlife Sites. 2025 LWS panel attended by MCC in January 2025. 24 sites approved for inclusion as Site of Importance for nature Conservation / Local Wildlife Site in 2025. Total number of Site of Importance for nature Conservation / Local Wildlife Site = 833 total	
4.7 Protect and enhance green infrastructure through new and existing development	Planning Policy and Development Management Green Infrastructure	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, Core	-	TBC	Ongoing work in this area with additional guidance prepared for householder applicants in the preparation of Green Infrastructure Statements. Ongoing fortnightly team roundtable to discuss applications with relevant MCC GI stakeholders and ensure GI approach undertaken. Landscape officer post is vacant with resultant lack of resource.	
4.8 Promote community access to land for growing food	Sustainable Food	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, SPF, Food Partnership	-Food strategy, planned	Number of individuals/groups accessing land to grow on.	Attendance to a working group looking at securing land to grow on, working with Abergavenny town council.	

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	Planning Policy and Development Management			LDP document.		Attendance on a planning group looking forward at new developments and potential areas for new projects.	
4.9 Signpost businesses to support, advice and information to help them to contribute to Nature Recovery	Enterprise and Community Animation Destination Management Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Part, Core	Destination Management Plan	Number of businesses engaged.	<p>Monmouthshire's Destination Management Plan is the plan which guides tourism development, management and marketing of the county. The revised Plan for the period 2025-30 aims to drive sustainable tourism growth through a more regenerative approach which balances social, economic and environmental interests for the benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire. Environmental protection is a key objective within the Plan, with sustainable practices encouraged, including boosting visitor awareness of environmental issues, and inspiring positive behavioural changes such as increased use of public and active transport and responsible access to nature. While the development of the Plan has been led by MCC, it's been designed to provide a common direction for all public, private and third sector organisations with an interest in nurturing tourism in the county. The Plan promotes guided walks and quiet enjoyment of the seasonal nature spectacles in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>We encourage all those involved in the visitor economy in Monmouthshire to embed responsible, sustainable and environmentally friendly practices into their businesses (and organisations) and to evidence their commitment to sustainability through initiatives such as Green Tourism certification. As well as improving biodiversity, eliminating single-use items, supporting your local community, embracing the circular economy and implementing measures to reduce your carbon footprint, environmental accreditation will also give your business competitive advantage.</p>	

Objective 5 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
5.1 Continue to develop the Nature Recovery Action Plan and support and encourage delivery	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature	NRAP	NRAP published.	NRAP Part 1 adopted June 2025 and published during Wales Nature Week July 2025 following public consultation, MCC Scrutiny and Cabinet approval. Subsequent delay with the development Habitat and Species action plans but development expected 2026-7. See NRAP Case Study.	
<div>Page 214</div> 5.2 Continue to identify and promote new Green Infrastructure projects through the Green Infrastructure Strategy	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing Sustainable Food Flood Risk Management	Ongoing	Part, Nature Networks, SPF, Local Places for Nature MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 and 2027. Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	GI STRATEGY	No of green infrastructure projects delivered.	GI strategy refreshed with public consultation alongside the NRAP as above. GI projects currently being developed are guided by the GI Strategy via the Community Nature Spaces and Green Corridors project and River Gavenny Healthy Rivers project. See case studies.	

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5.3 Develop a Dark skies policy and explore a street lighting charter which consider reducing and limiting impacts on nature	Street Lighting Green Infrastructure Planning Policy and Development Management	Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature	RLDP	Policy and charter formulated.	Policy included in Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan. See RLDP Case Study.	
5.4 Delivery of Net Benefit for biodiversity through Active Travel and other sustainable travel infrastructure projects	Active Travel Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Full, Active Travel Fund	-	TBC	Through all Active Travel (AT) schemes where planning is required, net benefit of biodiversity is delivered through the planning system and a guarantee of a net benefit from any interventions. Where opportunities allow in other schemes, the integration of green space, including planting, rain gardens and planters is included for the benefit of all. MCC AT discusses planning applications and scheme plans with MCC GI colleagues. MCC Ecology Officers are consultees on AT scheme details such as specified planting for swales within AT schemes. Sustainable transport choices - modal shift, behaviour change and trip reduction can have significant impact on the reduction of carbon emissions and the biodiversity benefits this provides. The use of active travel can give people a more personal connection to their local green infrastructure and environment, encouraging protection of vital green spaces.	
5.5 Work with partners to support and promote actions to improve river water quality	Green Infrastructure Planning Policy and Development Management Flood Risk Management	Ongoing	Part, Core, SPF, Food Partnership	Rivers & Ocean	TBC	Gavenny Catchment Partnership refreshed using S106 and SPF. Working with Groundwork Wales to produce a community engagement plan. Workshop in July with stakeholders including NRW, WUF, KWT, Abergavenny Town Council, Civic Society, GWT. Litter pick coordinated in November 2024. During 2025 the project delivered engagement days including actions to consider water quality.	

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	Sustainable Food					See Healthy Rivers Case study	
5.6 Development of a voluntary Tree Warden scheme to encourage residents to monitor and maintain existing and new tree planting.	Grounds and Cleansing Green Infrastructure Countryside Access	TBC	TWIG Funding Application Underway	-	Pilot scheme in place.	Funding in place to deliver a pilot project in 2025/6 at Mill Common Magor with Undy. See Mill Common Case Study.	
5.7 Work in partnership to plant more trees, increase area of woodland, improve woodland management, and retain and protect existing woodland and trees	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	Ongoing	Part, Nature Networks, SPF, Section 106 MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	TBC	GGGP facilitated the TWIG applications in Newport and Monmouthshire through the GGG Regional Woodland Priority Plan. Continued TWIG Steering Group support by GGG Collaboration Lead and NiN project officer. As per Monmouthshire Housing Association contract, every tree felled is replaced with two trees. 38 trees to be planted this planting season.	
5.8 Explore and establish a target for an increase in the percentage of urban and rural tree cover	TBC	TBC	Part, Core	-	TBC	Loss of key officer in Grounds & Cleansing has impacted this area of work.	
5.9 Provide information to encourage new tree planting	Grounds and Cleansing	TBC	Part, Core, Nature Networks	-	TBC	To be progressed.	

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and protect existing trees in private gardens	Green Infrastructure						
5.10 Work with Stump Up for Trees and other similar local organisations to evaluate benefits of biochar for tree plant health and locking up carbon	Grounds and Cleansing	TBC	No	-	TBC	Stump Up for Trees have been supported by providing waste wood chip for mulching their tree nursery. Biochar not currently feasible due to lack of kiln resource	
5.11 Eliminate the use of peat-based compost from our supply chain	Procurement Grounds and Cleansing Green Infrastructure Highways Active Travel	Ongoing	No	Council Emissions	Peat use eliminated from supply chain	MCC do not purchase peat compost but there is uncertainty that all suppliers are using peat free sources e.g. in pollinator plant stock. Further work needed in this area to be stimulated by the new procurement guidelines.	
5.12 Increase urban tree canopy including new street trees and in car parks to increase carbon capture, water storage, ecosystem resilience, and provide a cooling effect	Green Infrastructure Planning Policy and Development Management Highways	Ongoing	Local Places for Nature, SPF, Nature Networks MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 and 2027	-	TBC	Total tree planting winter 24/25 – 4527 whips, 126 trees and 39 orchard/fruit trees. This includes non-MCC planting for Monmouthshire Housing Association.	
5.13 Work with partners to ensure Wales Coast Path improvements deliver net benefit for biodiversity	Countryside Access	2025	Potential Shared Outcomes funding		TBC	Funding application made for two schemes 1. Links and Loops -Consultant to undertake feasibility study of connecting Caldicot Links to WCP at Caldicot, WT site at Magor to WCP and Magor Pill to WCP.	

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	Green Infrastructure					2. Access Improvements for All from Rogiet CP to Black Rock – this is looking at improving access for disabled but will include biodiversity improvements as well. There will be public consultation so opportunity to advise LAF and public about the environment. The feasibility studies are to gather all evidence and information, so we are in the position to bid for further implementation funding in next financial year.
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Objective 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
<p>6.1 Continue to lead on the Gwent Green Grid through Nature Networks and SPF funding</p>	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	<p>Nature Networks, SPF</p> <p>CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).</p>	-	Continued leadership of GGGP	Nature Networks in place until March 2026. Additional funding bid submitted to continue the partnership and its work to deliver Resilient Ecological Networks through the Nature Networks funding programme. Grant Awards to be announced in March 2026.	
<p>6.2 Continue to take active roles in the Usk Catchment Partnership and Wye Catchment Partnership</p>	<p>Elected Members</p> <p>Chief Officer Communities and Place</p> <p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Head of Planning</p>	Ongoing	Full, Core	Rivers & Ocean Action Plan	Continued involvement with partnerships	<p>Continued involvement in Partnerships at all levels.</p> <p>Usk Catchment partnership – Agreement of priorities For Draft Integrated Catchment Plan, Appointment of Nature Guardian, Task and finish groups to establish shared outcomes for catchment.</p> <p>Usk Knowledge Hub – Review of State of the Usk</p> <p>Wye Nutrient Management Board/ Commission/ Senior Officers Group – Attendance by Elected Member, Chief Officer and Head of Planning.</p> <p>Wye Catchment partnership – Attendance at all possible meetings Systems mapping undertaken, NRW's Upper Wye project welcomed.</p>	

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6.3 Continue to support Living Levels Landscape Partnership	Elected Members Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Full, Core	-	Continued involvement with partnership	Development funding secured and preparation for submission for Living Levels 2 to the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Two new officers have been recruited with MCC Countryside providing support for the interview process. Welsh Government Coastal Capacity Funding has supported Living Levels delivery during 2024/25 FY to deliver the Beyond the Seawall citizen science project.	
6.4 Continue to work on the coast and the wider estuary through Coastal Capacity, ASERA Severn Estuary Partnership and Severn Estuary Coastal Group.	Elected Members Chief officer Communities and Place Green Infrastructure Sustainability Planning, Placemaking and Flooding	Ongoing	Part, Core and WG Challenge Fund	-	Continued involvement with partnerships	Continued Severn Estuary Partnership, Severn Estuary Group and ASERA membership. Coastal Capacity grant coordination for Delivery of the Vision for Mor Hafren Severn Estuary in partnership with SEP, GWT, RSPB Cymru, Beccy MacDonald Lofts. Seascape Assessment developed for Marine Character Area 29. Sustainable Food – involvement in group to identify priorities for food systems on the Gwent Levels.	
6.5 Continue to host and maintain the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership	Green Infrastructure	2024/25 Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2027 Partnerships to continue	Nature Recovery Action Plan	Continued hosting of Local Nature Partnership	Independently Chaired Local Nature Partnership Maintained with two meetings in 2024 and 2025, Nature & Food Celebration event, Spring and autumn Newsletters.	

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			(additional funding grants being pursued).				
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Objective 7 Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
7.1 Continue to monitor grassland diversity and pollinators (through POMS) to provide evidence to our Nature isn't Neat management	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	Ongoing	Full, Nature Networks, Core	-	TBC	<p>Surveying of Nature isn't Neat grasslands was established in 2023 and will continue rotation to monitor grassland diversity. An average of 17 grassland species were found across MCC grassland sites. Surveys will be undertaken in 2026.</p> <p>UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (POMS) monitoring will continue to be promoted through Nature isn't Neat. In July 2024 a POMS FIT count workshop was held with expert entomologist Richard Dawson and King Henry School pupils (25 pupils).</p>	
7.2 Continue to secure the Service Level Agreement with the South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre (SEWBRc)	Planning Policy and Development Management	Ongoing	Full, Core	-	Continuation of SLA.	<p>2024/5 SLA secured for planning.</p> <p>2025/6 secured for planning. A new SLA secured for work relating to the Local Nature Partnership was also secured.</p>	
7.3 Development of Nature Networks Mapping and continue to work with NRW to develop Resilient Ecological Networks	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	<p>Part, Nature Networks</p> <p>MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 AND 2027. Partnerships to continue</p>	-	Nature Networks and Resilient Ecological Networks complete.	<p>The Gwent Green Grid and Monmouthshire CC are collaborating with NRW to develop Resilient Ecological Networks across Gwent's six Landscape Profile areas.</p> <p>The Gwent Levels is the first part of Wales to have fully published RENs maps which were published in April 2025. This followed three workshops in 2024 with a wide array of stakeholders which explored ecological networks, ecosystem services, and nature recovery priorities. The spatial maps developed by GGGP and MCC are directly contributing to Welsh Government's Future Wales Planning Policy 9 Guidance.</p>	

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			(additional funding grants being pursued).			<p>Work has begun on the remaining Landscape Profile areas, including Central Monmouthshire, Wye Valley and Wentwood and Bannau Brycheiniog. The first workshops were held in late 2025 and will continue into 2026.</p> <p>This work is supported by the Nature Networks Gwent Green Grid's Resilient Ecological Network Mapper a new open access ecological network and opportunity mapper, developed with Environment Systems. The mapper is designed for a range of users including professionals and community groups. The mapper went live in February 2025 and was accompanied by an online training webinar. The mapper has already been successfully used across Gwent to develop projects and secure funding.</p>	
<p>7.4 Use of Nature Networks mapping in project design and to inform delivery of Net Benefit for Biodiversity through development using Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>Planning Policy and Development Management</p> <p>Green Infrastructure</p>	TBC	Part, Core	-	TBC	<p>The Nature Networks funded Gwent Green Grid mapper is now live and available to be used by ecologists and developers for project design and inform Net Benefit for Biodiversity.</p> <p>The development of Resilient Ecological Networks is part of a Wales wide strategy and provides further refinement of Nature Networks mapping through the development of core and nature recovery zones, where proposed nature recovery projects will have the greatest benefit, this can be used to guide development design and target resources effectively. The Gwent Levels RENs maps are being used by Welsh Government's Future Wales Planning Policy 9 Guidance which is due to be published in 2026.</p>	
<p>7.5 Seek funding to explore opportunities / methods for monitoring carbon and water storage on Council land and in Green Infrastructure assets</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p> <p>Landlord Services</p>	Ongoing	No	-	TBC	<p>Enquiries made into a soil bioacoustics project with Warwick University. Funding to be sought.</p> <p>Nature Networks 5 Application submitted to include Nature Based activity on Council owned land. Funding to be confirmed early 2026.</p>	

Objective 8 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
8.1 Review the plan in 2025 in line with the Section 6 reporting requirement	Green Infrastructure	2025	Full, Core	-	Plan Reviewed.	Actions identified to be updated. See Review section of Section 6 report.	
8.2 Assess the need to review the refreshed forward plan in 2026	Green Infrastructure	2026	Full, Core		Assessment undertaken.	This will be undertaken in line with the Climate and Nature Strategy Reporting. See Review section of Section 6 report.	

APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES

2.1 BIOTAPESTRY: CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT BRINGING BIODIVERSITY AWARENESS TO COMMUNITIES

The Biotapestry is an innovative engagement initiative delivered through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP). Its purpose is to inspire communities, schools, and interest groups by raising awareness of biodiversity, climate resilience, and green skills through interactive and creative experiences.

The project set out with a clear ambition: to increase understanding of climate and nature across the five counties of Gwent. Biotapestry has been brought to life through a series of engaging events and collaborations. As well as sessions in libraries across the county, it connected with local groups such as Maindiff Court Health & Wellbeing workshop, Wyesham WI, and Usk Embroiders. It also featured during Alfred Russel Wallace Day in Usk, weaving together heritage and biodiversity themes to spark interest and participation.

Funding for Biotapestry has come through the Shared Prosperity Fund and Heritage Lottery Nature Networks, ensuring its integration within GGGP's broader programme of work. One of the key lessons learned is that creative, visual tools like Biotapestry are highly effective for community engagement and raising awareness. Linking biodiversity projects with cultural and heritage events, has proven to enhance participation and impact. Above all, ongoing collaboration with local groups and schools remains essential for sustaining engagement and building momentum for climate and nature action.

OBJECTIVES MET:

Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature.

Biotapestry delivers interactive experiences for communities and schools, raises awareness of biodiversity and climate resilience, and supports health and wellbeing through creative engagement and workshops.

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

The initiative is part of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP), which operates at a regional scale and involves collaboration with multiple local groups, schools, and heritage events.



2.2 HEALTHY RIVERS PROJECT: RESTORING RIVER GAVENNY AND ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

The Healthy Rivers Project, part of the Nature Networks Programme under the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, is working to restore the River Gavenny in Monmouthshire while strengthening biodiversity and community involvement. This initiative blends practical conservation with education and citizen science, aiming to build resilience against climate and nature emergencies. Its purpose is clear: improve river ecosystems and water quality, engage local communities in nature-based activities.

Community engagements events included an otter talk organised in partnership with Abergavenny Civic Society talk attended by 40 people and a River Health Day. Volunteers removed 100 Himalayan balsam stalks, collected 4 kilograms of litter, tested water quality, insect safaris, kick sampling, microplastics and water testing, and litter picks. A family engagement day included river dipping, a nature trail, games and story telling.

The impact has been tangible. More than 120 people have taken part in river health activities, contributing to the removal of invasive species, better litter management, and ongoing water quality monitoring. There is an ongoing commitment from an active interest group to removing litter promptly. Educational efforts have deepened understanding of river ecology and climate resilience, while partnerships with Groundwork Wales and local interest groups have strengthened regional nature recovery work.

Funding for the project comes from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Nature Networks Programme, which allocated £1 million regionally to support 200 sessions across Gwent. Among the lessons learned is the power of combining citizen science with hands-on conservation to foster community ownership. Targeted engagement—such as talks and family days—has proven effective in boosting participation and awareness, and collaboration with local organizations remains essential for long-term success.

OBJECTIVES MET:

Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature

The project actively engages communities through talks, family days, river dipping, insect safaris, and citizen science activities like water testing and litter picks. These initiatives raise awareness, promote well-being, and encourage hands-on action for nature.

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

Volunteers removed invasive Himalayan balsam and managed litter, which directly supports biodiversity and strengthens river ecosystem resilience.

Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

The removal of invasive species and litter management addresses significant pressures on river habitats and native species.

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

The project is part of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership and collaborates with Groundwork Wales and local interest groups, contributing to regional nature recovery efforts.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Citizen science activities such as water quality testing, kick sampling, and microplastics monitoring provide valuable data to inform ongoing conservation actions.



2.3 MILL COMMON RESTORATION PROJECT: REVIVING HERITAGE, RESTORING NATURE, INSPIRING COMMUNITY.



Mill Common, located in Magor and Undy in Monmouthshire, is a historic woodland that serves as a vital green corridor for the local communities. Despite its ecological and social significance, the site had been facing serious challenges in recent years. The spread of ash dieback disease posed a threat to tree safety and biodiversity, while overcrowded veteran trees

limited sunlight penetration, affecting the health of ground flora. In addition, degraded paths and steps reduced accessibility, and the loss of historic viewpoints combined with heavy footfall put veteran trees at risk.

To address these issues, Monmouthshire County Council, supported by the Woodland Investment Grant through the National Heritage Lottery Fund on behalf of the Welsh Government, launched the Mill Common Restoration Project. The project set out with clear objectives: to restore ecological health through woodland management and replanting, improve accessibility for walkers and school routes, enhance community engagement, and protect veteran trees and ground flora through sensitive management techniques.

The restoration began with extensive tree management. Diseased ash trees were removed, and dense stands were thinned to allow more sunlight to reach the woodland floor. Plans were made to replant with a diverse mix of native broadleaf species, ensuring long-term resilience. Dead hedging was introduced around veteran trees to prevent soil compaction and create wildlife refuges. Alongside ecological work, infrastructure improvements were prioritized. Main pathways and steps were resurfaced to provide safer access, benches and signage were installed, and a community-designed sculpture trail was planned. Historic viewpoints overlooking the Gwent Levels and Severn Estuary were also restored.

Community engagement played a central role throughout the project. Public consultations were carried out through surveys and in-person sessions, and events such as guided walks, litter picks, and festive workshops helped foster local involvement. A Community Engagement Officer was recruited to lead these efforts and launch volunteering opportunities.



By winter 2024 through spring 2025, extensive felling had been completed, opening up the woodland to sunlight and encouraging regrowth and biodiversity—bees and butterflies were already being observed. In autumn 2025, additional tree works were carried out at Dancing Hill, and dead hedging was implemented. The community responded positively, with strong public support and concerns about dog access addressed by keeping the site dog-friendly. Social benefits were evident as participation in events grew, fostering local pride and stewardship.

Looking ahead, the project plans to begin replanting with native species in autumn and winter, complete pathway resurfacing, and expand volunteer programs. The woodland will be part of the National Forest for Wales scheme. Monitoring and adaptive management will ensure the woodland's long-term ecological resilience. Key lessons learned include the importance of transparent communication and consultation in building trust, the value of combining ecological restoration with cultural and recreational enhancements, and the need for sensitive management of veteran trees and ground flora to protect biodiversity.

OBJECTIVES MET

Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature

Community engagement was a core component, with public consultations, guided walks, litter picks, and festive workshops. These activities not only raised awareness but also promoted well-being and encouraged local stewardship of nature.

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

The project undertook proactive woodland management, including felling diseased trees, thinning overcrowded stands, and implementing dead hedging to protect veteran trees and create wildlife refuges. These measures enhance biodiversity and strengthen ecosystem resilience.

Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

By positioning Mill Common as a flagship site for the National Forest for Wales, the project sets an example for best practice in woodland restoration and sensitive management, influencing wider land management approaches in the region.

Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

The removal of ash trees affected by dieback directly addresses a major pressure on woodland ecosystems. Thinning and replanting with native species further mitigate habitat degradation and promote species recovery.

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

The project will serve as a flagship site within the National Forest for Wales initiative, contributing to a nationwide effort to create a connected network of woodlands that are managed for biodiversity and designed to provide accessible green spaces for communities.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Monitoring is embedded in the project's future plans, with adaptive management strategies to ensure long-term ecological resilience. Observations of biodiversity recovery (e.g., bees and butterflies) already inform ongoing actions.

2.4 MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL NRAP: DRIVING NATURE RECOVERY ACROSS MONMOUTHSHIRE

The Local NRAP is a strategic guide for reversing biodiversity decline and building ecosystem resilience in Monmouthshire. It replaces the 2005 Local Biodiversity Action Plan and aligns with national and regional plans such as the NRAP for Wales and Greater Gwent NRAP. The document explains why nature recovery is critical, outlines local biodiversity and ecosystem services, and addresses the nature emergency and its drivers (e.g., climate change, pollution, invasive species). It sets out a collaborative delivery framework through the Local Nature Partnership, identifies priority habitats and species, and includes a General Action Plan focused on policy integration, education, evidence gathering, and promoting ecosystem resilience. The plan is designed as a living document with annual reviews and signposts to partner action plans for specific habitats and species.

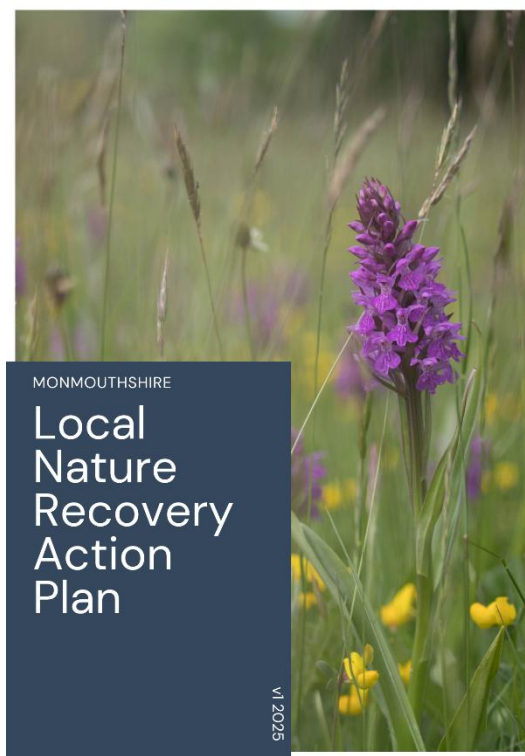
The NRAP was aligned with MCC's Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy alongside the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which together form four pillars: Council Emissions, Nature Recovery, Rivers and Ocean, and Communities and Climate. Both the NRAP and Green Infrastructure Strategy were approved by MCC Cabinet in July 2025 and officially launched during Wales Nature Week to raise awareness and encourage participation

Feedback from Local Nature Partnership members and public consultation was incorporated into the final strategy. Public engagement was also important with a public consultation launched at Usk Show September 2024 and promoted online and in libraries.

OBJECTIVES MET

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

The NRAP integrates biodiversity into MCC's Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy, ensuring nature recovery principles are embedded in council policies and planning frameworks. Actions include influencing partner plans and policies to adopt nature-positive approaches.



Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

Through partnerships and advocacy, the NRAP encourages nature-based solutions and sustainable land management approaches that strengthen ecosystem resilience.

Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

The plan identifies major drivers of biodiversity loss, including climate change, pollution, and invasive species. Future development of the Local NRAP will include action plans to support habitat restoration and species recovery

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

Delivery principles emphasize collaboration between Local Nature Partnership members and neighbouring partnerships to achieve landscape-scale impact.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding, and monitoring to inform action

The plan provides an evidence base to support nature recovery and aims to increase understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

2.5 PLANNING ADVICE: EMBEDDING BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Monmouthshire County Council's Green Infrastructure (GI) team plays a critical role in shaping sustainable development by providing planning advice that ensures biodiversity and GI principles are integrated into development proposals and the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This work supports MCC's statutory duties and strategic objectives under the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy.

The team aims to influence the RLDP so that nature recovery and GI principles are embedded into future planning policy, while also providing timely advice on development proposals to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty. These efforts contribute to MCC's broader objectives of creating a Green Place and a Connected Place.

The team handled a substantial volume of consultations and responses over the past two years. In 2024, 556 formal consultations were received, and 654 formal responses were issued. This trend continued in 2025, with 624 consultations and 641 responses processed. These figures highlight the ongoing demand for ecological and GI planning advice and reinforce the importance of maintaining adequate resources to meet statutory obligations and service targets.

In addition to planning applications, the biodiversity team provided advice to Active Travel schemes, Highways projects, Ordinary Water Consents and SAB applications. Significant time was also dedicated to providing advice on the Replacement Local Development Plan including:

- Compiling nature recovery based policies and contributing nature recovery elements to strategic policies
- Providing appropriate advice on responding to representations, redacting sensitive information, and liaising with consultants on the HRA
- Procuring and workshopping a Recreation Mitigation Strategy for the Severn Estuary SPA.

Resource constraints are a particular challenge, as limited officer time (1.5 FTE) affects the ability to meet 21-day response targets. Balancing RLDP policy development with statutory consultations and national planning requirements also presents competing priorities. Dedicated resources are essential to maintain statutory compliance and deliver strategic objectives.

OBJECTIVES MET:

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

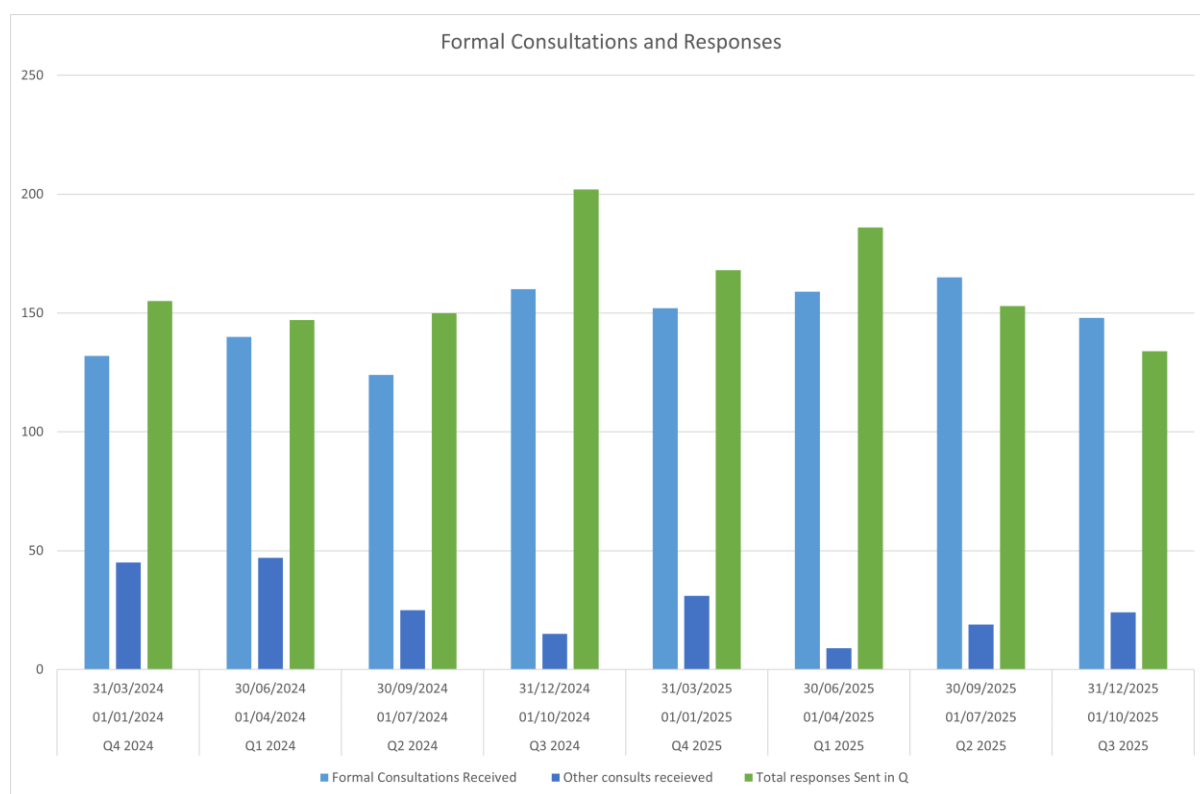
The service ensures biodiversity and Green Infrastructure principles are integrated into development proposals and the RLDP, influencing planning policy and statutory consultations.

Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

By shaping RLDP policies and providing advice on Active Travel, Highways, and water-related projects, the service indirectly influences land management practices to support ecosystem resilience.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Activities such as contributing to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), responding to representations, and developing the Recreation Mitigation Strategy demonstrate evidence-based planning and monitoring.





**Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Environment Wales
Act 2016, Section 6) Report**

Monmouthshire County Council

December 2025

Title	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Report 2026
Purpose	Statutory Requirement: Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016
Owner	Monmouthshire County Council
Approved by	(Single Cabinet Member Decision: Biodiversity Champion)
Date	31/12/2025
Version Number	1
Status	(Place Scrutiny)
Review Frequency	Every 3 years following 2025
Next review date	December 2028
Consultation	Officers and Elected Members

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INTRODUCTION

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must seek to promote the resilience of ecosystems. This means that Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) must take a pro-active approach to improve and not reduce biodiversity and ecosystem resilience when carrying out its functions.

The legislation also requires Public Bodies to prepare a 'Forward Plan' to outline how they shall meet the duty and report on that plan every three years from the first reporting round in 2019. A revised '**Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan**' was adopted by MCC in 2024.

This report has been produced in response to the legislative requirement for public authorities to report on progress made under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Guidance has been made available by Welsh Government¹, and this has been followed where appropriate throughout the report. A specific data gathering exercise was undertaken to engage with relevant council service areas for report preparation.

This report considers how the Biodiversity Duty applies to Monmouthshire County Council, how other plans, policies, and interrelated commitments have been met, and how we have performed against the objectives of Monmouthshire County Council's Forward Plan for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, with the use of case studies.

The legislation establishes a requirement to report on the plan in 2019, 2022 (submission included 2023 progress), 2025 and every three years thereafter.

Monmouthshire County Council is a democratic organisation made of 46 elected councillors which employs around 4,500 officers responsible for day-to-day management and operation of the public body. Monmouthshire County Council falls into Group 3 of the "Types of organisations and possible S6 actions relative to their functions" as specified in the Welsh Government Reporting Guidance. This means that the minimum actions that the organisation should be reporting on include actions related to buildings management, procurement, sustainability, awareness raising, training, or in partnership with other organisations; actions related to grounds management, cascading funding criteria, providing education and training; and, actions related to land management to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote the resilience of ecosystems.

Monmouthshire County Council is approximately 850 km² and has a population of approximately 94,142 (2018 census). It is a rural county with agriculture and forestry shaping the rich biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in the landscape. Monmouthshire's

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/section-6-biodiversity-and-resilience-ecosystems-duty-reporting-guidance>

Section 6 duty applies to the whole of the Unitary Authority area including the Monmouthshire part of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP) where Monmouthshire County Council has functions such as community infrastructure, waste, grounds maintenance and highways.

Further information on the Biodiversity & Ecosystems Resilience of Monmouthshire is included in Appendix 3.

A CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO DELIVER

Monmouthshire County Council first declared a **Climate Emergency** in 2019. This declaration focused on the decarbonisation of Monmouthshire County Council but also identified the importance of managing green spaces to reduce energy use, absorb carbon and be resilient. The plan was updated in 2021, the emphasis on nature recovery was strengthened and action addressing water quality was added to improve protection of our rivers and coasts.

In March 2022, the **Motion for Rivers and Ocean** passed by MCC elected members, took the *Motion for the Ocean* model developed by the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, and adapted it to recognise the importance of taking a catchment to coast approach to protecting water quality. MCC produced a report containing recommendations for how the council should act to realise clean, healthy, and productive rivers and oceans, alongside the commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

In October 2022, Welsh government published the Recommendations of the '**Biodiversity Deep Dive**'² as part of the two-part UN biodiversity summit COP15. The main aim of this work is to protect 30% of land and seas by 2030. Of relevance for Local Government is the action to Embed Nature Recovery in Policy and Strategy in Public Bodies in Wales.

In 2023 Monmouthshire County Council adopted the **2023-28 Community and Corporate Plan**³. This Plan sets the Council's ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire as summarised in Figure 1 below.

The **Green Place** objective positions the considerations of the Climate and Nature emergencies alongside other challenges and opportunities for the county. The Plan acknowledges the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this stunning place, we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. It also commits to work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of

² [Biodiversity deep dive: recommendations \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

³

https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s34696/Community%20and%20Corporate%20Plan%20-%20Version%203.0_Council.pdf

flooding, and promote the circular economy. The plan sets out three areas of for achievement:

- Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint.
- Nature recovery improved environmental and river health.
- Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce.

Our Community and Corporate Plan – at a glance

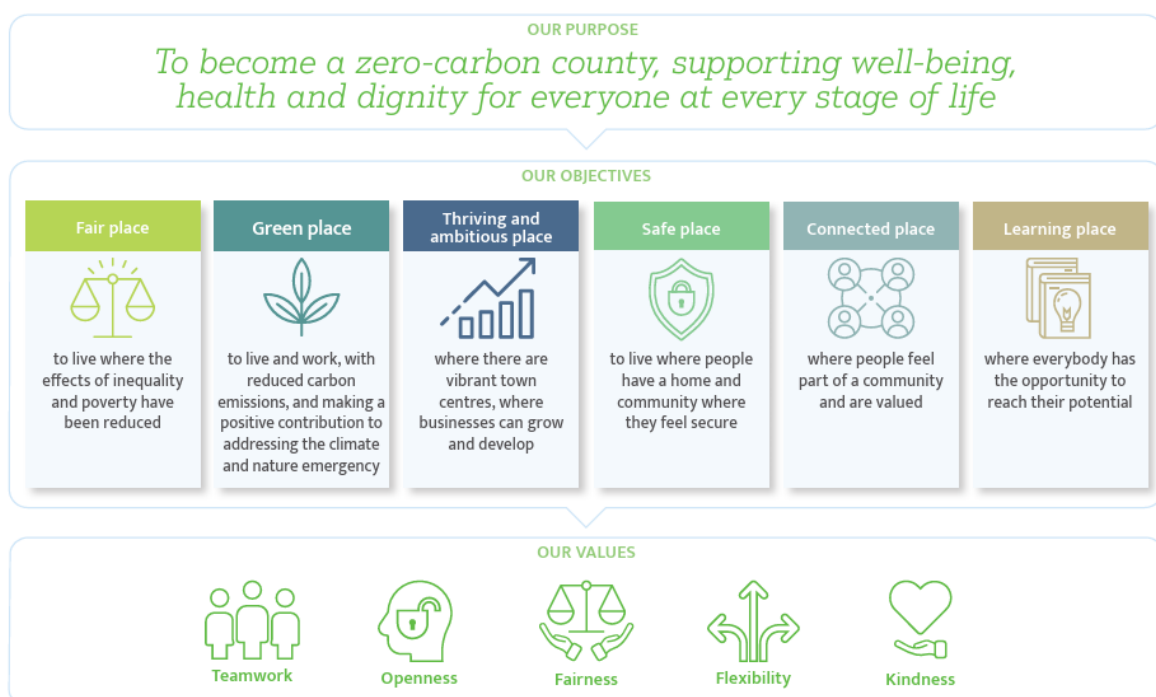


Figure 1 Community and Corporate Plan

The Community and Corporate Plan recognises that we are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county of Gwent. The local authority's own **Well-being Objectives** are set by Council and form the backbone of the Community and Corporate Plan.

These significant changes in Wales, Gwent and Monmouthshire have triggered a need for a change in the governance structure around Climate and Nature. In 2024 this led to the declaration of a **Climate and Nature Emergency** with a revised approach based on four key pillars, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Climate & Nature Strategy planning

The Nature Recovery pillar includes 3 key and interconnected plans for delivery:

- ✦ Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2024-2028),
- ✦ Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (2024), and
- ✦ Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2024).

The **Local Nature Recovery Action Plan for Monmouthshire**⁴ is a key element to effective delivery of Nature Recovery by providing practical actions that meet the objectives of strategic plans, as well as promoting collaborative working with communities and other stakeholders to achieve common goals. Prepared by MCC in partnership with the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP), the Monmouthshire Local NRAP will comprise four parts and will focus on habitats and species that are national priorities for conservation and are locally important. It takes the big ideas from the national and regional nature recovery plans and turns them into simple, local actions. These are things communities can do to help nature recover. A **Community Action plan**⁵ forms an important part of this and was prepared in response to the public consultation. Part 1 of the Strategy: **Our strategy for nature recovery in Monmouthshire** identifies actions and targets for promoting ecosystem resilience, raising awareness and other actions not related to any specific habitat or species. These will follow during the next reporting period.

The **Green Infrastructure Strategy**⁶ has been updated to reflect the statutory and guidance requirement of Planning Policy Wales edition 13. Setting out Monmouthshire's approach to the delivery of GI; it identifies a clear vision, aims, strategic objectives and associated principles to inform and contribute to a range of national, regional and local goals plans and

⁴ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Local-NRAP-Part-1-v1.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/monmouthshire-local-nature-partnership/monmouthshire-local-nrap-action-plan/community-action-plan/>

⁶ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/strategy-and-guidance/>

objectives. It forms a delivery mechanism for Nature Recovery, supports ways of addressing health and well-being outcomes, identifies solutions for tackling climate change, supports active travel, public rights of way and provides the framework for partnership working through a GI approach.

Governance and Delivery of the Section 6 duty is ultimately the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Monmouthshire County Council; however, it is acknowledged that compliance with the Section 6 duty is relevant to all parts of the Council including Elected Members and the Biodiversity Champion who sits on the Council's Cabinet. A major enabler of action is the Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery team who prepared the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, have taken a lead on reporting, review and updating the Forward Plan. However, as this report will show, the delivery of the biodiversity duty is far reaching with large scale delivery from services that may have in the past seemed to not fully be aware of the need to consider biodiversity in their decision making and operations. Some of the most significant delivery areas including Grounds & Cleansing, Development Management & Planning Policy and Highways including Flooding. Volunteers and partnership organisations are recognised as key enablers to biodiversity action including the Wye Valley National Landscape, key roles being directly employed by Monmouthshire County Council. Policy and governance teams support local community groups in grassroots project delivery e.g., community food growing and tree planting.

DELIVERY: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

During the 2020-23 report preparation, a review of each of the Forward Plan objectives was undertaken which resulted in an updated Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan. The Objectives broadly align with the [Welsh Government Nature Recovery Action Plan](#); however, they also identify matters that are relevant to Monmouthshire such as the importance of partnership working.

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Policy, Well-being Policy and Planning, Strategic Plans e.g. RLDP, Consents, Operational decisions,
Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Education, Health & Wellbeing activities in nature, providing interpretation and guidance, supporting local groups and citizens to act for nature.
Objective 3: Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Council estate for nature recovery.
Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting other landowners and stakeholders to make positive changes e.g. Regenerative Farming and Natural Flood Management.
Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing drivers through project and procedure e.g. Delivering net benefit through Development Management, Invasive non-native species control, impacts of lighting.
Objective 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration, co-design and co-production through Catchment Partnerships, landscape partnerships, project partnerships.
Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Networks, undertaking and encouraging others to undertake monitoring and biological recording.
Objective 8: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake statutory reporting and assess the need to update the plan.

The attached [Action Plan \(Appendix 1\)](#) details the progress towards Milestones and Measures and reviews each of our commitments with an up-to-date description of progress.

The table also identifies the current funding status of the action and where available the source(s) of that funding. The actions make up the 'living' element of the Section 6 plan. These will evolve as additional legislation, policy, funding come into place.

Key Achievements include adoption of the Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure Action Plans, launch of the Nature Networks mapping portal, and delivery of capital projects through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership. Training initiatives, school engagement, and community awareness campaigns were implemented, including the incredibly impressive Biotapestry. Woodland management and National Forest accreditation has been progressed with securing of TWIG funding.

KEY CHALLENGES

Delivery of the Section 6 duty is challenging, particularly for service areas that do not have experience of previously considering this kind of legislation. There are three significant **key challenges** to discuss in this review

- 1 Incompatible Legislation: Event Licensing.** This has been a significant area of work during the 2024/5 period. In England and Wales, the primary legislation for events involving alcohol, entertainment (e.g., live music, dance, film), and late-night refreshment is the Licensing Act 2003. The four core licensing objectives are strictly limited to: The prevention of crime and disorder, Public safety, The prevention of public nuisance and The protection of children from harm.

Applications are made to the local council (licensing authority), which consults with "responsible authorities" such as the Police, Fire Authority, and Environmental Health. If an event attracts "relevant representations" (objections) related to these objectives, a hearing must be held. However, biodiversity loss – even where it could lead to a wildlife crime - is not considered to be a relevant representation.

Conflicts with the Section 6 duty arise because the standard licensing objectives do not explicitly cover environmental protection or biodiversity, which fall under separate legislation like the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Licensing legislation makes a presumption in favour of permission whereas the Conservation Regulations, for example, take a precautionary approach.

Recent examples have included festival sites in Monmouthshire where critically endangered curlew pairs are known to breed at the very time of year the event will take place. There are no mechanisms to seek ecological information for the events and no way of securing any avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures. Critically, there is no way that a licence cannot be granted on this basis.

Other than relying on the voluntary corporation of site owners, solutions to this problem are not forthcoming and go beyond the powers of Monmouthshire County Council and Welsh Government. Changes to the Westminster established legislation, clear guidance

on implementation of the two pieces of legislation, or case law are necessary to resolve this issue.

- 2 **Public Perception: Nature Isn't Neat** This Nature Isn't Neat is an approach that encourages us all to alter the way we manage grassland on our verges, open spaces and parks to benefit nature. Grasslands in green spaces are allowed to grow in the spring and summer to create meadow areas and space for nature.

It continues to be our adopted and established approach to grassland management in Monmouthshire County. It has been widely supported by residents and referenced as best practice across Wales and beyond. However, during the last reporting period there has been some push back from residents to our approach with concerns raised around associated, yet often unrelated issues such as “pernicious weeds” in the street scene, and other challenges such as highways management. Concerns relating to lack of flowers, grasslands looking “scruffy”, dog waste, rodents and wild fires are also sometimes raised. These complaints are not significant in number but require resources to address and alleviate concerns.

Substantial publicly available information has been prepared in relation to the benefits of this type of management including pollinators, water and carbon storage on the MonLife website⁷. In response to concerns we are preparing a new Nature Isn't Neat campaign for 2026 including refresher training for Grounds operatives (mowers), an information sharing session with elected members, and a wider public campaign during the summer months.

- 3 **Future Resource Implications:** Many of the activities that help Monmouthshire County Council to meet its Environment (Wales) Act Section 6 duties are either directly or indirectly funded by external grants, often competitive in nature. ENRaW, Rural Development Programme, Nature Networks, Local Places for Nature, Coastal Capacity, Active Travel, Shared Prosperity Fund and The Woodland Investment Grant have all enabled significant delivery and capacity building at Monmouthshire over the last 5 years, and more generally in the sector to support partnership delivery. However, by its nature, much of this funding is linked to Welsh Government's Programme for Government with much of the current funding comes to an end in March 2026 and most significantly during March 2027.

The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill, currently progressing through the Senedd (Stage 3 as of December 2025), introduces legally binding biodiversity targets, strengthened environmental governance, and new statutory duties across the Welsh public sector. For local authorities, this translates into increased

⁷ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/nature-isnt-neat/>

responsibilities, reporting duties, scrutiny, and operational obligations which will require additional capacity, skills, funding, and long-term strategic planning.

Through the Gwent Green Grid Nature Networks fund legacy, a Green Finance plan is being developed to identify opportunities to generate income from ecosystem services and nature-based solutions across the region, however it is not clear at this time that the markets will be significant enough to deliver a meaningful level of financial and nature benefits.

REVIEW: MEASURES AND MILESTONES

As the Forward Plan was refreshed in 2024, detailed review and update will not be undertaken during this reporting period. Review will instead include updated set of Measures and Milestones against which the next round of reporting will be set.

Milestone 2024-5	Recommendation for 2026-28
RLDP adopted with relevant policies and planning guidance in place	Retain as work is ongoing through Examination, Adoption and beyond
Asset Management Strategy adopted with relevant policies in place	Complete, Remove
Nature Recovery Action Plan Adopted	Retain as work is ongoing in relation to Habitat and Species considerations
Green Infrastructure Action Plan Adopted	Complete, Remove
Nature Networks mapping portal goes live	Complete, Remove
Access to Food Growing process in place	Complete, Remove
Pilot Tree Warden Scheme launched	Retain as launch is not complete
	NEW: Ecologist (Highways and Operations) in post
	NEW: New: Management Strategy implementation for Neddern Brook

Measures 2024-5	Recommendation for 2026-28	Target
Number of MCC officers completed Nature Recovery training via Thingi	Retain and add Elected Members to the target audience.	50 total
Number of MCC officers receiving bespoke operational training	Retain	10 per year
Number of young people / teachers / support staff engaged	Retain	TBC following funding confirmation for 2026-2029
Number of MCC sites with National Forest Accreditation	Retain	4 total
Service Level Agreement with SEWBRc	Retain	2 per year

Number of Natural Flood Management schemes supported by MCC	Retain	TBC following funding confirmation for 2026/7
Number of Town & Community Councils engaged	Retain	5 per year
	New: Number of members/ officers/ operatives trained with bespoke operational training	25 per year
	New: Area of Nature isn't Neat land maintained at 38Ha	38Ha
	New: Number of Sites Managed in accordance with a GI management plan	5
	New: Number of new Green Infrastructure Management Plans for MCC sites	3
	New: Number of county farms taking part in activity as exemplars for nature friendly, sustainable, and regenerative agriculture	TBC following funding confirmation for 2026/7

CONCLUSION

Monmouthshire County Council has strengthened its approach to nature recovery by embedding biodiversity considerations across services, improving land management, and working closely with partners and communities. Key achievements include the adoption of major strategic plans, enhanced training, and delivery of practical nature-based projects.

Significant challenges remain including legislative gaps, public perception issues, and uncertainty around future funding but the Council is committed to continued progress. The next reporting period will focus on maintaining momentum, improving evidence and monitoring, and supporting ecosystem resilience across the county as part of our wider Climate and Nature Emergency response.

APPENDIX 3 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE, MONMOUTHSHIRE

Monmouthshire is a large and varied county, with the estuarine coast at the southern limits and the uplands of Bannau Brycheiniog to the north west. The landscape takes us from the wooded Wye Valley to our boundary with the eastern valleys of Gwent.

Monmouthshire has major biodiversity and ecosystem resources, many of which are internationally or nationally recognised. The Monmouthshire Unitary Authority area contains the following resources:

The Severn Estuary European Marine Site (EMS)	The Severn Estuary 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).
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	There are seven other SACs in Monmouthshire: Cwm Clydach woodlands*, River Wye, River Usk, Sugar Loaf woodlands*, Usk Bat Sites*, Wye Valley woodlands and the Wye Valley (and Forest of Dean) bat sites.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	There are 68 SSSIs in Monmouthshire, 16 of which are within BBNP area. Most are woodland or grassland sites with others designated for their wetland or geological interest.
National Nature Reserves	Cwm Clydach*, Coed y Cerrig*, Fiddler's Elbow and Lady Park Wood.
Local Nature Reserve	Cleddon Bog
Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)	There are approximately 833 non-statutory SINC sites predominantly in relation to grassland and ancient and semi-natural woodland areas within the Monmouthshire planning area and eight SINCs within the BBNP part of the County.
Priority habitat and protected species	Priority habitats and species are those recognised as being of principle importance for nature conservation in Wales listed on Section 42 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

*Sites within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

The South East Wales Area Statement published by Natural Resources Wales in 2019 identified five landscape profiles in Monmouthshire which are useful to illustrate the differences across the county: Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains, South Wales Valleys, Central Monmouthshire, Wye Valley and Wentwood, and the Gwent Levels (see map below).

The landscape profiles primarily share the same natural habitats but with clear differences which give them their distinctive character.



Landscape Profile Areas in Monmouthshire

Central Monmouthshire is noted for its undulating lowlands comprising pasture and arable farmland with isolated pockets of woodland. It is a valuable farming area with agriculturally improved pasture and arable fields. Hedgerows provide important links between small, isolated, ancient woodlands, often on hilltops and steep valley sides where farming is difficult. Parcels of unimproved grassland remain and considered in the context of massive historical decline are of significant ecological importance.

Wye Valley and Wentwood is predominantly a wooded and riverine landscape. The steep sides of the Wye Valley are clothed in extensive blocks of internationally important woodlands, designated as the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Wye Valley is home to internationally important bat species including Greater Horseshoe Bats and Lesser Horseshoe Bats with many of their roosts included in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Parts of the Wye Valley are known to be used by at least 15 species of bats including the rare Barbastelle Bat and Bechstein's Bat. The area is also important for species such as dormouse, nightjar, and woodland invertebrates.

In the south, the unique Gwent Levels form an extensive coastal habitat along the Severn Estuary comprising reclaimed agricultural land drained by a network of ditches known as reens. The reens support a particularly diverse community of insects and other invertebrates (for example water beetles) and are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Following a successful reintroduction program at Magor Marsh SSSI in 2012, water voles have spread across the Gwent Levels with the furthest record 16km from the original release site.

Outside of the Monmouthshire Planning and Nature Recovery Action Plan area but within the administrative area of the MCC Unitary Authority, are areas of the Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains and South Wales Valleys (Eastern Valleys) landscapes. The Bannau Brycheiniog landscape profile includes the Vale of Ewyas and surrounding upland in the Black Mountains, and the distinctive peaks of the Skirrid and Sugar Loaf framing the Usk Valley at Abergavenny. With exposed upland moorland with extensive views, this is a landscape noted for tranquillity, dark skies, and limited development. Conifer and broad-leafed woodland are present. Pastures are often enclosed by thick hedgerows, often with narrow lanes, scattered small settlements are in the valleys with prehistoric archaeology and Medieval sites including Llanthony Priory and historic parkland.

The Eastern Valleys includes the Bloreng mountain and eastern slopes of Mynydd Garn-wen, some areas are included in the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. Common land is a large and important component of the Eastern Valleys and there are extensive areas of beech woodland. Cave systems across the area are important to internationally important bat roosts protected by the Usk Valley Bat Sites SAC. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal on the National Park border is a perfect example of how this once industrial landscape can provide for wildlife today.

The two major rivers in Monmouthshire are the River Usk and River Wye. Both are designated as Special Areas of Conservation and together with their tributaries provide important wildlife corridors and migratory routes for key species such as otters, shad and white clawed crayfish. Another important freshwater habitat in Monmouthshire is the Llandegfedd Reservoir, designated as a SSSI for supporting overwintering wildfowl.

Despite having a wealth of protected and priority species, Monmouthshire's ecosystems are currently facing significant challenges. Grassland sites are at risk from poor management, air pollution and development pressures. The Wye Valley is our most ecologically rich area, but quality of the woodland is under threat from lack of management and the spread of ash dieback and invasive species. A considerable proportion of reens and ditches on the Gwent Levels are degraded and at risk from unsuitable development. Freshwater habitats are under threat from water abstraction, pollution, and siltation. Monmouthshire, like the rest of the world, is facing a Nature Emergency.

Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act says that the Welsh Ministers will publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitats in Wales, which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales. An updated list is expected in 2024 however, in its absence, the list compiled in response to section 42 of the NERC Act 2006 is referenced.

An audit of the Section 7 species and habitats that occur in Monmouthshire undertaken in 2022 are included in the Nature Recovery Action Plan that will be published for consultation alongside this document. These are our 'Priority' habitats & species for nature recovery in Monmouthshire. Additional habitats and or species may be identified as local priorities continue to be developed through the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan.

The Greater Gwent State of Nature was published in 2021 and used existing data to analyse the status and trends of species within the Greater Gwent area. The report analysed individual species and groups of species representing over 500 individual species, presented as 100 different stories of these species and species groups. Of all the species and species groups analysed, 34% of species showed a decline in their numbers or are predicted to continue to decline. Only 12% showed stable populations. Twenty-one percent showed a welcome increase in their numbers, but the remaining 21% did not have enough data to describe the population trends.

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Integrated Impact Assessment Template

(incorporating Equalities, Socio-economic Duty, Future Generations, Welsh Language Measures, Corporate Parenting)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Kate Stinchcombe Phone no: 01633644684 E-mail: katestinchcombe@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To scrutinise the review of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Report (Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6) known as the 'Section 6 Report' which sets out the council's delivery against statutory duties and responsibilities as detailed in the adopted Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 which forms part of the Nature Recovery pillar of the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy.
Name of Service area Countryside, Destination, Environment	Date: 29/01/2026

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.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	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 <i>Consider the impact on our community in relation to age, e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i>	The outcomes of Green Infrastructure creation and enhancement include benefits to people of all ages including the older and younger members of our community who are most vulnerable to the detrimental effects of climate change. Elements of the NRAP and GI strategy to be implemented by MCC are predominantly grant funded. Positive impacts on protected characteristics are typically requirements of this funding delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A
Disability <i>Consider the impact and what issues there are around each of the disability needs groups e.g. access to buildings/services, how we provide services and the way we do this; producing information in alternative formats, employment issues etc.</i>	The outcomes of Green Infrastructure creation and enhancement are disability inclusive.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A
Gender reassignment <i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for transgender people and groups. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are target for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	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?
Marriage or civil partnership <i>Same-sex couples registered as civil partners have the same rights as married couples and must be provided with the same benefits, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance. Consider the impact of your proposal on these rights.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity <i>A woman is protected from discrimination during her pregnancy, maternity leave and 26 weeks from the day she gives birth. Including the provision of services, goods and facilities and recreational or training facilities. Consider the impact of your proposal on these protections.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are target for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	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?
Race <i>What will the proposal do to promote race equality with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between different racial groups. Think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Possible issues include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy & Traveler, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A
Religion or Belief <i>Consider the impact e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days associated with religious observance, cultural issues and customs. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A
Sex <i>Consider what issues there are for men and women. Will this impact disproportionately on one group more than another e.g. equal pay, responsibilities for dependents, issues for carers, access to training, employment issues.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are target for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	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?
Sexual Orientation <i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbia, Gay and Bi-sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A

2. The Socio-economic Duty

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions.

Socio-economic disadvantage can be defined as living in less favorable social and economic circumstances than others in society. It also includes social justice, which is about reducing inequalities by working towards more equal distribution of wealth and opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential.

Consider how the proposal could affect the following vulnerable groups:

Armed Forces Community (including veterans)

Single parents

Vulnerable families

Single adult households

Carers

Students

People living in the most deprived areas

Pensioners

Homeless People

People misusing substances

People who have experienced the asylum system

People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic Duty</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering from socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage?

<p><i>Think of what evidence you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this proposal. Will it impact disproportionately on certain groups? Can the proposals be improved to reduce inequalities of outcome?</i></p>	<p>This decision will not have any adverse impact on those at socio-economic disadvantage. Social inclusion is an outcome of GI delivery. The GI approach promotes free access to green spaces and nature meaning health and wellbeing benefits are available to everyone regardless of their income. Underserved groups are target for involvement and engagement in Green Infrastructure delivery</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on socio-economic duty and social justice.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language

What are the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated? Explain how you believe the proposals could be improved so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards :	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making: <i>Consider what impact this policy decision will have on the Welsh Language. This includes opportunities for people to use the language, opportunities to promote the language and treating the language no less favourably than the English language. Include any data and evidence e.g. WESP, Census Data, Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Strategy.</i></p>	<p>All communications and project materials including signage and interpretation are prepared bilingually. Promotion of species and habitat names in Welsh through communications increases the vocabulary of English speakers, Welsh learners and Welsh speakers.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Operational: Recruitment & Training of workforce <i>Carefully consider whether vacant posts require Welsh language skills as a desirable or essential skill. This is especially pertinent with front line roles as more than 10 % of the population of Monmouthshire speak Welsh. Also, when assessing the need for Welsh language skills keep in mind the existing Welsh language skills within the workforce. In service areas where there is a current lack of Welsh language skills, posts should be advertised as Welsh language essential. Additionally, consider where further training may be needed to increase the number of staff who can speak Welsh and to enhance the skills of current Welsh speakers.</i></p>	<p>Welsh language skills are identified as desirable on relevant post adverts. Training is available and encouraged.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Service Delivery: Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p>	<p>All communications and project materials including signage and interpretation are prepared bilingually.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan</p>	<p>N/A</p>

When advertising our services you must promote the fact that people can deal with the council in Welsh by phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.	Promotion of species and habitat names in Welsh through communications increases the vocabulary of English speakers, Welsh learners and Welsh speakers.		
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4. 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!


<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales <i>An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises global limits and uses resources efficiently (including acting on climate change); a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides jobs.</i>	The report demonstrates how the work to implement the Section 6 plan directly contributes to the Prosperous Wales vision of a low carbon society and action on climate change. There is the potential for green skills to be developed.	None	None
A resilient Wales <i>Maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</i>	The report demonstrates how the work to implement the Section 6 plan directly contributes to more sustainable management of green spaces and includes measures which will build resilience of ecosystems and assist nature recovery.	None	None




<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A healthier Wales <i>People's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</i>	Green Infrastructure delivered will improve air quality and increasing walking and cycling will improve physical and mental health.	None	None
A Wales of cohesive communities <i>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</i>	Many of the actions implemented have involved working closely with local communities to produce local community benefits. Green Infrastructure including cycling and walking routes should increase connectivity between communities, particularly for those without a car.	None	None
A globally responsible Wales <i>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</i>	Activities to raise awareness of the climate and nature emergency in a local setting can contribute to community behaviour change and wider impacts on lifestyle and consumer choices i.e. think global act local.	None	None
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language <i>Promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and participation in the arts, and sports and recreation</i>	Welsh language has been used for all Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery communications in line with the Welsh Language measure. The final report will also be published in Welsh. The GI approach promotes connectedness to nature through nature-based solutions as part of the Welsh culture and heritage.	None	None


<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A more equal Wales <i>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. (This includes the protected characteristics listed in Section 1 above. You can add more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty)</i>	Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery delivery involves work with stakeholders, community groups, individuals of all ages and all backgrounds, to help us achieve our ambitions.	None	None

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

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<u>Sustainable Development Principles</u>	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><i>We are required to look beyond the usual short term timescales for financial planning and political cycles and instead plan with the longer term in mind (guidance says at least 10 years, but preferably 25)</i></p>	The nature of green infrastructure delivery reported e.g. walking and cycling routes, tree planting and nature-based solutions, have a legacy following initial delivery including supporting wellbeing, storing carbon and water, providing habitats for species. Whilst the plans have long term benefits, we are reliant on short term grant funding. However, alternative funding mechanisms e.g. green finance are being explored.	None

<p><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></p>	<p>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</p>	<p>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
<div data-bbox="98 339 286 576">  <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> </div>	<p>Many of the Section 6 actions have been delivered through collaboration, across the council, with community groups, and other regional stakeholders e.g. Natural Resources Wales.</p>	<p>None</p>
<div data-bbox="98 675 286 911">  <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?</i></p> </div>	<p>The report will be considered at Place Scrutiny on 29th January 2026. We will continue to involve stakeholders through ongoing delivery of the Section 6 plan for example Local Nature Partnership, town and community councils, community groups and individuals.</p>	<p>None</p>
<div data-bbox="98 1075 286 1294">  <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> </div>	<p>Prevention is at the core of Section 6 delivery. Identifying our Green Infrastructure, habitats and species and establishing ways to maintain and promote ecosystem resilience to prevent further loss and reverse decline.</p>	<p>None</p>

<p><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></p>	<p>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</p>	<p>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
<div data-bbox="107 438 286 622">  </div> <p data-bbox="136 635 259 659">Integration</p> <p data-bbox="309 411 604 558">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p data-bbox="309 595 604 694"><i>Focus here on how you will better integrate the Wellbeing Goals impacts on people, economy and environment described above and balance any competing impacts. Think about impacts the proposal may have on other organisations</i></p>	<p>There is great benefit from working in a collaborative, integrated and joined-up way to deliver the Biodiversity Duty through a multi-disciplinary approach. The Strategy sets out Monmouthshire County Council's approach to the planning, management and delivery of Green Infrastructure (GI) focussed on the following strategic objectives and priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Health & Wellbeing • Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience • Support Climate & Nature Resilience • Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness • Support Sustainable Economic Development. <p>In doing so, the GI Strategy will help contribute to the delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement Local Development Plan • MCC Community and Corporate Plan • MCC Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and Action Plans • MCC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan and Action Plan • MCC Nature Recovery Action Plan • Public Service Board Wellbeing Plans. 	<p>None</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers, Care Experienced People 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?
<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p><i>Safeguarding in this context applies to children (not yet reached 18th birthday) and adult at risk (identified as a person over the age of 18 and who (a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, (b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.) Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and adults at risk, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.</i></p>	There are no safeguarding implications.	There are no safeguarding implications	There are no safeguarding implications .

<p><u>Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers and Care Experienced People</u></p> <p><i>This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority either through voluntary arrangements with their parents or through a Court Order. The Council has a corporate duty to consider 'children who are looked after especially and to promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own). It also relates to care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old). The Council must consider how to help overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.</i></p>	There are no corporate safeguarding implications.	There are no corporate safeguarding implications.	There are no corporate safeguarding implications.
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7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

It will include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the recommendation you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect. Key strategies and documents that may help you include: Community and Corporate Plan, Asset Management Strategy, Digital and Data Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, People Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy: [Enabling Strategies](#) See Guidance for more examples.

Evidence for the urgency to take action to tackle climate change has come from numerous IPCC reports, such as:
<https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

Local information about nature and wellbeing has come from reports such as:

- Wellbeing Assessment, 3rd UK Climate Change Risk Assessment,
- Wales State of Nature Report, 2023,
- Greater Gwent State of Nature report 2021
- Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan 2022
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 6 Habitats and Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation in Wales
- Results of the 2024 public consultation for GI Strategy and Nature Recovery Action Plan
- Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Improvement Plan
- Monmouthshire Draft Landscape character Supplementary Planning Guidance 2017
- Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance 2015

8. 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?

This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee Report Template

The activity that the authority undertakes to comply with the Section 6 duty has significant positive contributions to make to the Wellbeing Goals. In particular a Healthier Wales through health and wellbeing opportunities through projects and partnerships, well connected multifunctional green spaces and community growing initiatives. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on supporting nature-based solutions for land management, raised awareness through training and education of the nature crisis and working in partnership to deliver landscape scale projects to support resilient ecological networks. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. Finally contributing to a Globally Responsible Wales through sustainable use of natural resources to support Monmouthshire's local green economy and develop skills and learning. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals. There are no significant positive or negative impacts on protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement have been used throughout the development of the Action Plans.

9. 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?
N/A		

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Integrated Impact Assessment 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 <i>e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc</i>	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
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1	<i>Business Cabinet</i>	20/01/2026	