

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Date Not Specified

## Notice of meeting Local Access Forum

**Tuesday, 9th September, 2025 at 2.00 pm,  
Shire Hall - Monmouth**

### AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence/Introductions	1 - 12
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	To confirm and sign the minutes of the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum meeting of 5th May 2025.	
4.	Actions arising from the previous meeting not on the agenda:	
5.	Active travel update (Rob Stanyer, Active Travel Project Officer)	
6.	Tracks and Trails project update  Link to minutes: <a href="https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/our-projects/lowerwyetracksandtrails/">https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/our-projects/lowerwyetracksandtrails/</a> (Subgroup update)	
7.	Natural Resources Wales update (Sarah Tindal, Senior Officer People and Places, South East Wales/ Bob Campbell Senior Officer Land Management, South East Wales)	13 - 14
8.	LAF Written contribution questions.	
9.	Countryside Access Service Update	15 - 22
10.	Date of Next Meeting and venue	

**Paul Matthews**

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## Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Anne Underwood  
Irene Brooke  
Anthea Fairey  
Shan Lewis  
Phil Mundell  
Phillip Allsopp  
Bethany Handley  
Barbara Heys  
Ian Mawdsley  
Terence Mead  
Sallie Roderick  
Jack Thurston  
Kelvin Varney  
Huw Watkins  
Rhys Wynne-Jones  
John Askew  
County Councillors: Tony Easson

## **Public Information**

### **Access to paper copies of agendas and reports**

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.

# 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.



## Terms of Reference

Monmouthshire Local Access Forum is the statutory Local Access Forum for Monmouthshire (excluding that part of the county that falls into the Brecon Beacons National Park), as required under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.

The function of the Forum is to advise the local authority, Natural Resources Wales and others, as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and to advise and assist with the implementation of the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## Membership

Members of the forum are appointed by the “Appointing Authority” (Monmouthshire County Council in accordance with the relevant regulations. The current membership of the forum is as follows:

Anne Underwood

Irene Brooke

Anthea Fairey

Shan Lewis

Phil Mundell

Phillip Allsopp

Bethany Handley

Barbara Heys

Ian Mawdsley

Terence Mead

Sallie Roderick

Jack Thurston

Kelvin Varney

Huw Watkins

Rhys Wynne-Jones

John Askew

County Councillors: Sara Burch (the “Appointing Authority” representative)

Observers;

Representatives from Monmouthshire County Council and Natural Resources Wales









## Kingswood Gate Active Travel Scheme



# What is Active Travel?

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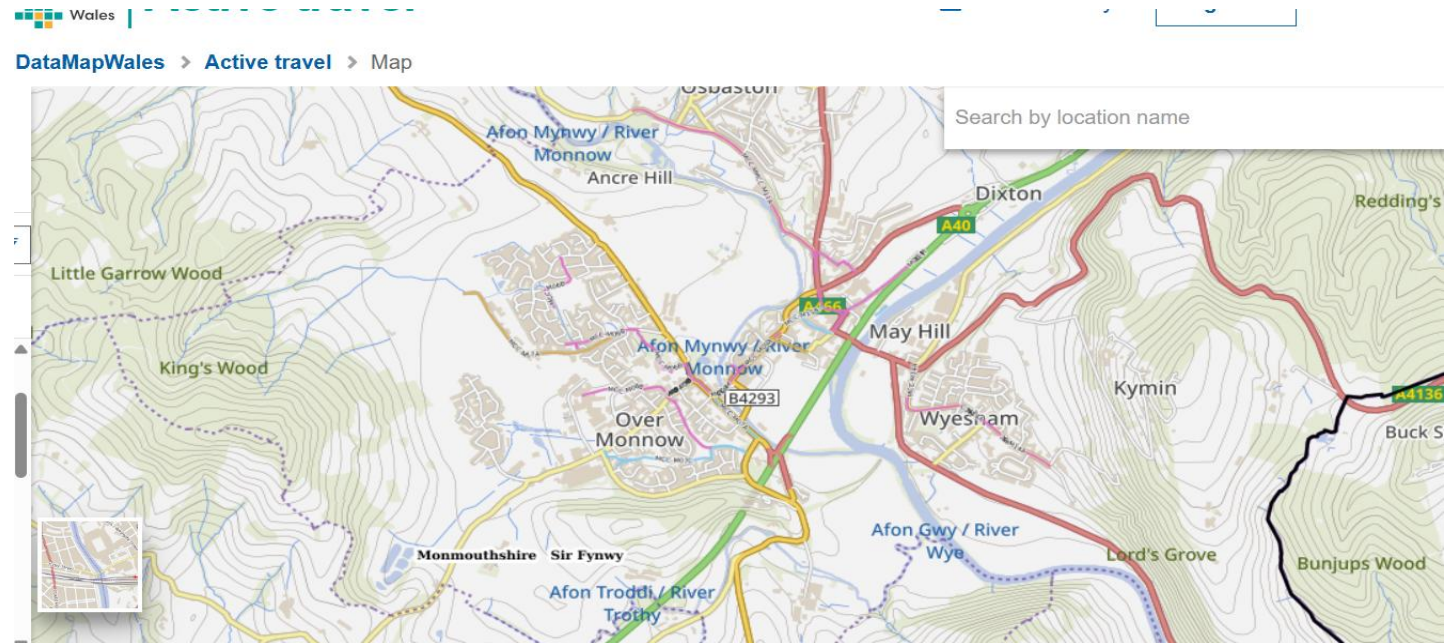
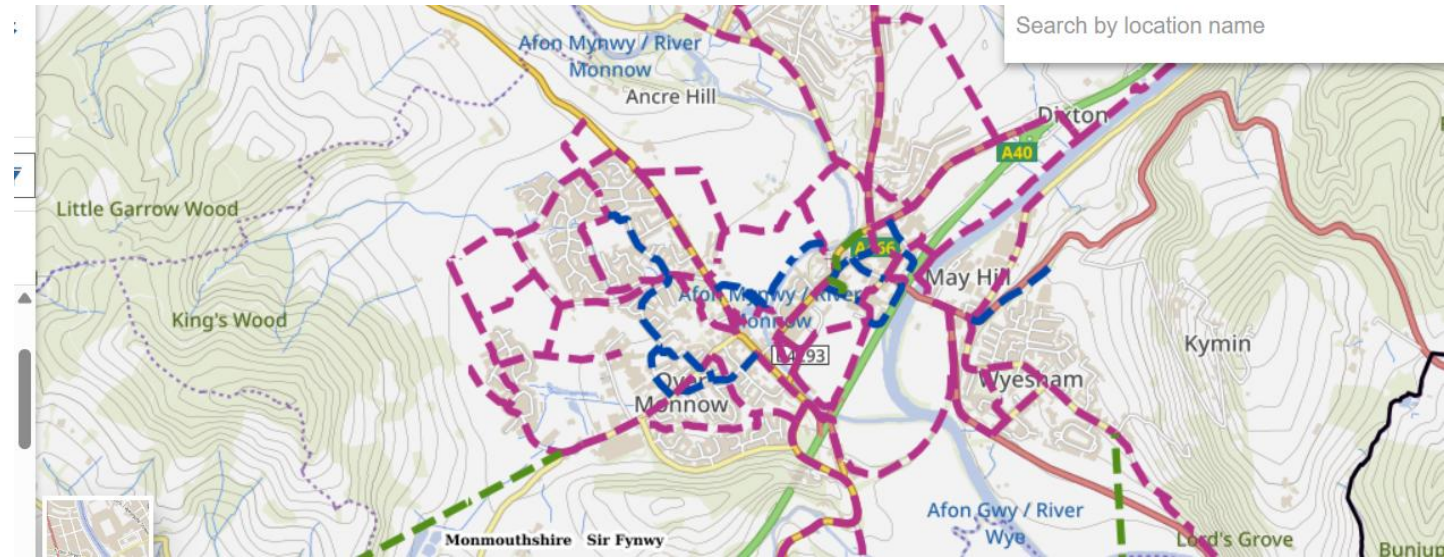
Active travel can be defined as:

- *Everyday purposeful journeys made by walking, cycling or wheeling, such as travel to school or work, rather than purely for leisure.*
- **The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013** - requires local authorities in Wales to continuously improve and plan for active travel routes and facilities, ensuring new road schemes consider pedestrians and cyclists, and promotes active travel journeys.
- Focus is on routes up to 3 miles to get to key destinations such as schools, key employment sites and town centres



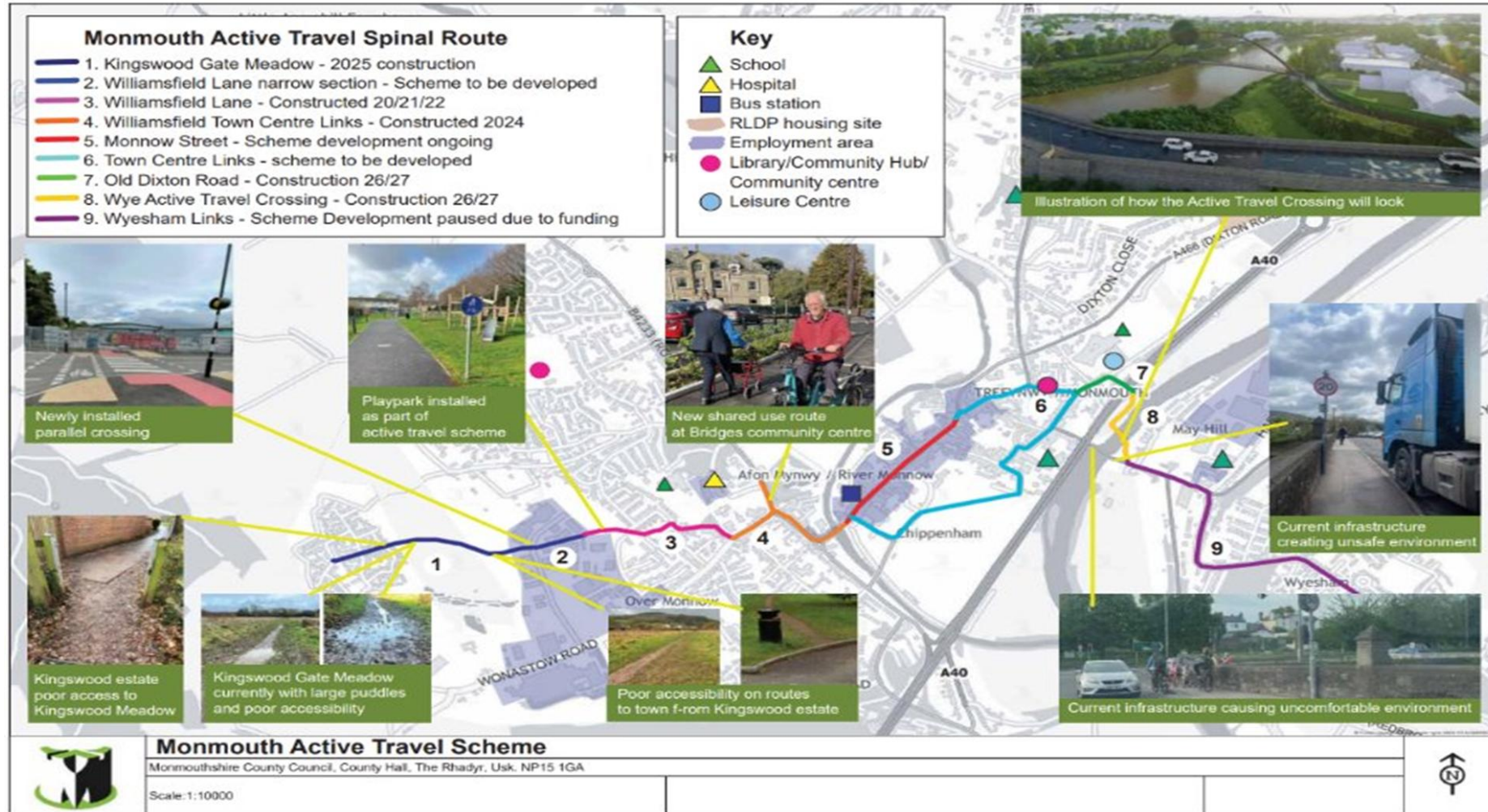
# Active Travel Network Map

- Last updated in 2020
- In the process of being up dated this year





# Active Travel Routes in Monmouth



# The Kingswood Gate scheme

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- Kingswood Gate Housing estate was built by David Wilson Homes in 2015, comprising 300 residential properties
- The estate lies separated from the main town of Monmouth
- Walking and cycling options are limited and either don't follow desire lines or do not meet the needs of the users.







Image of current path being used



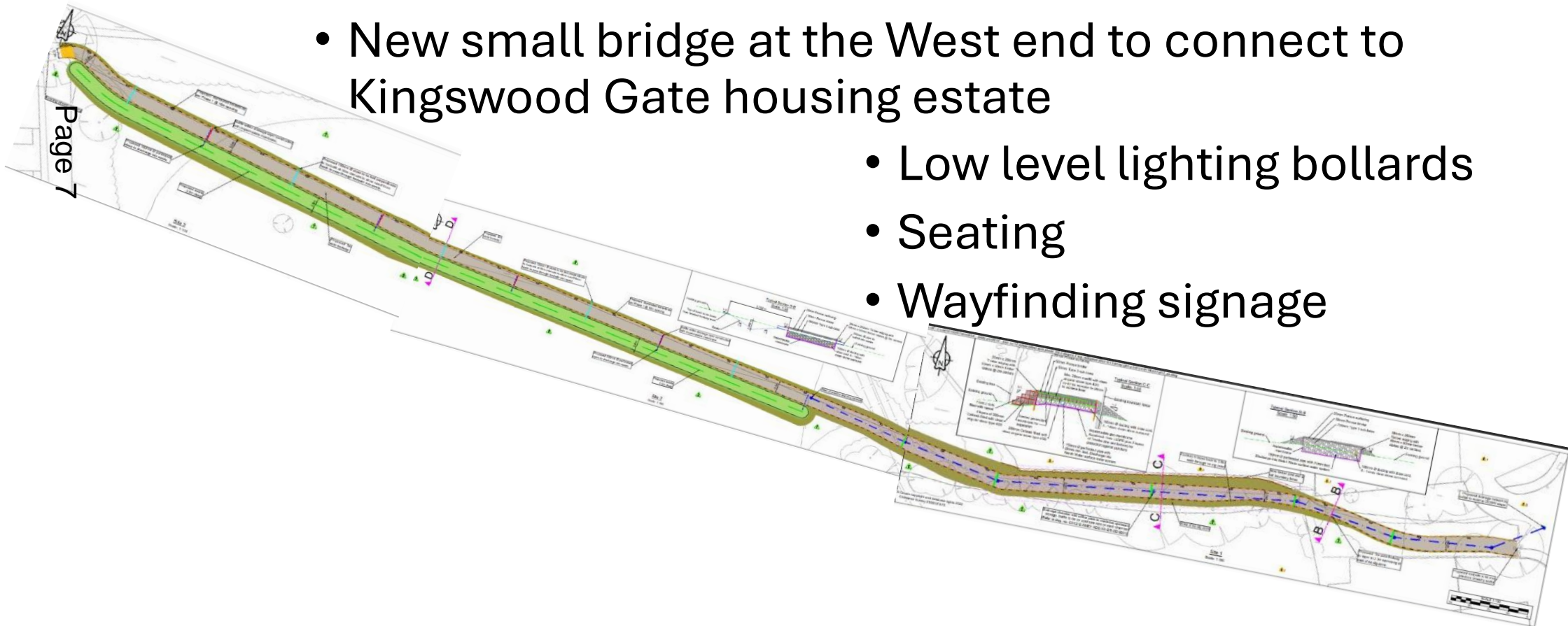
AI image showing what the path could look like when finished

# The Kingswood Gate scheme

- A 3 metre walking, wheeling and cycling path across the meadow
- Allows safe, direct travel to and from the centre of Monmouth

# Design features

- 3 metre wide path for walking, wheeling and cycling
- Permeable surface to allow for improved drainage
- New small bridge at the West end to connect to Kingswood Gate housing estate
  - Low level lighting bollards
  - Seating
  - Wayfinding signage

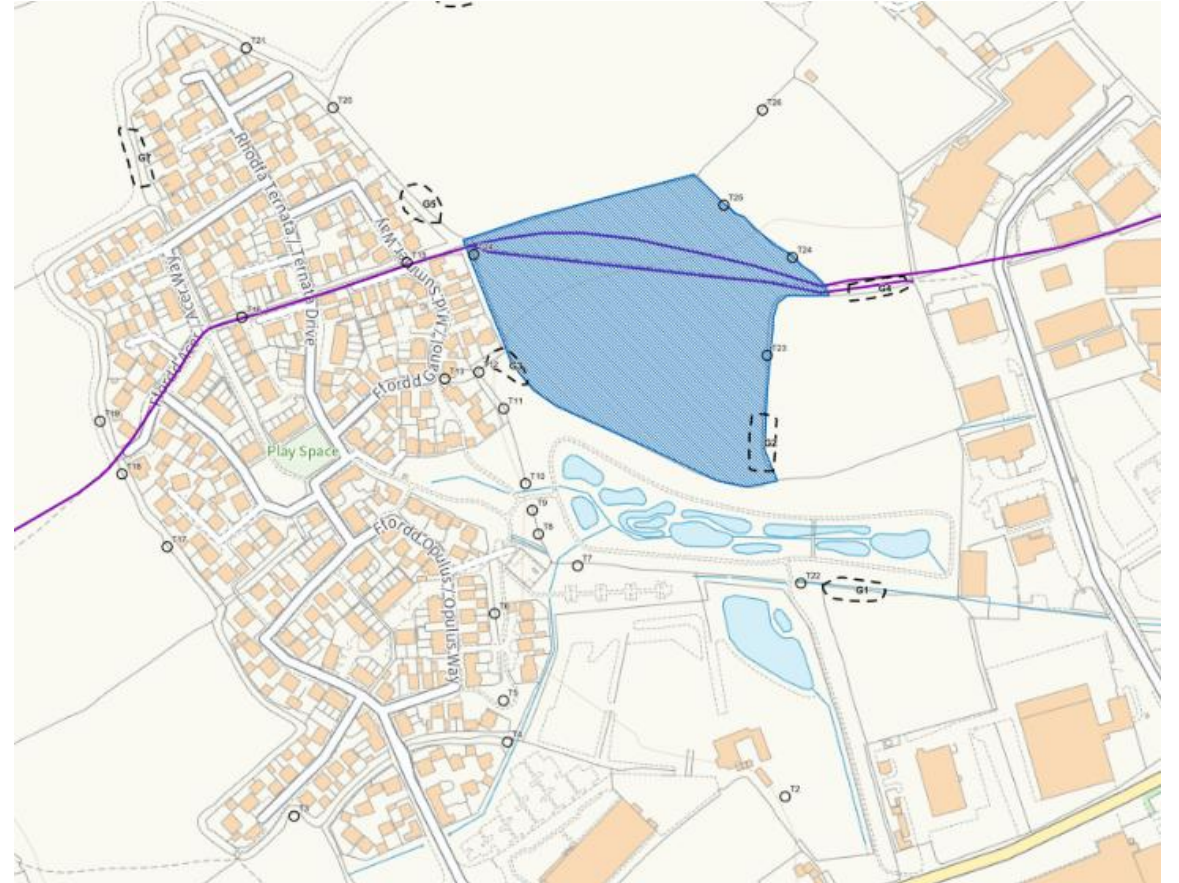




# Challenges of the site

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- A Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is a locally designated area with high biodiversity value due to its habitats and species, or geological interest, which is recognized and protected within the local planning system even though it lacks statutory legal protection.
- Tree Protection orders (TPO)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) – natural approach to managing surface water to control flooding
- Habitat Investigations – badger sets
- Public Rights of Way across the land – deletion of old route and creation of new route

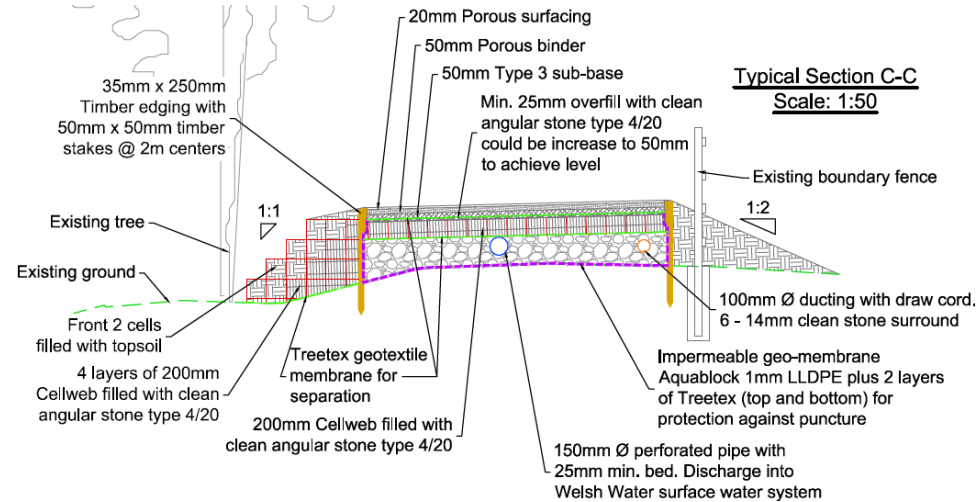




# Funding

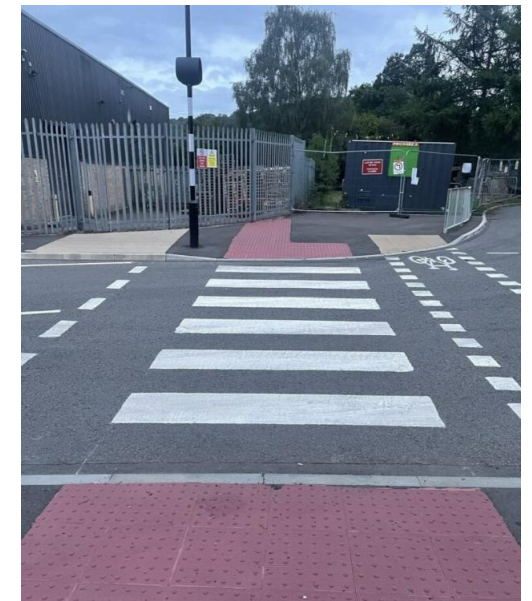
- Development and design costs
  - Section 106 contributions from the developer
  - Active Travel Fund from Welsh Government (ATF) – achieved via a bidding process each year
- Construction costs
  - Safe Routes in the Community Fund (SRiC) – achieved via a bidding process and is focussed on connections with local schools

# Construction



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- Started 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and due to finish in October 2025
- “No Dig” style construction
- Bridge section has been constructed using ground screws to protect nearby tree roots
- Will connect to the new pedestrian crossing at the Wonastow Industrial Estate



# Data collection

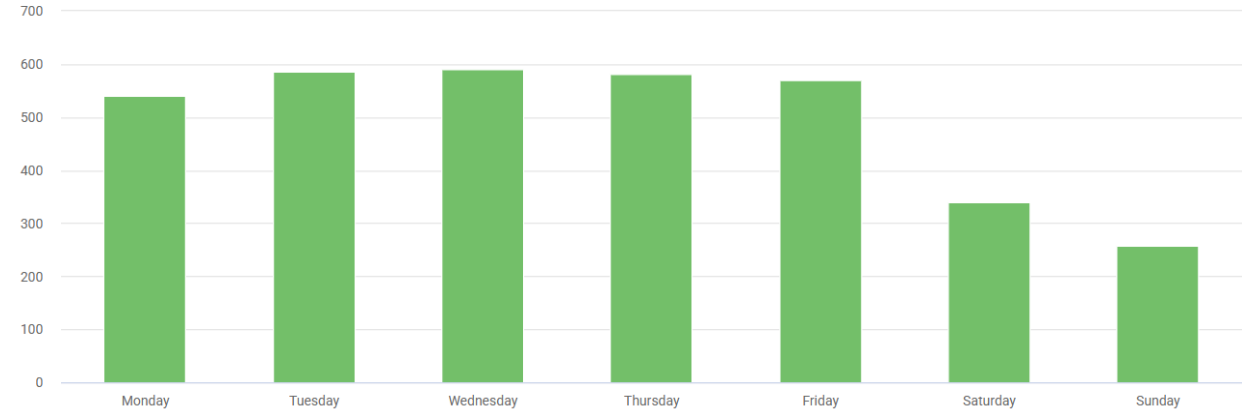
- Sensors in the WFL path
- Vivacity Cameras on Wonastow road
- Tag master deployable temporary sensor

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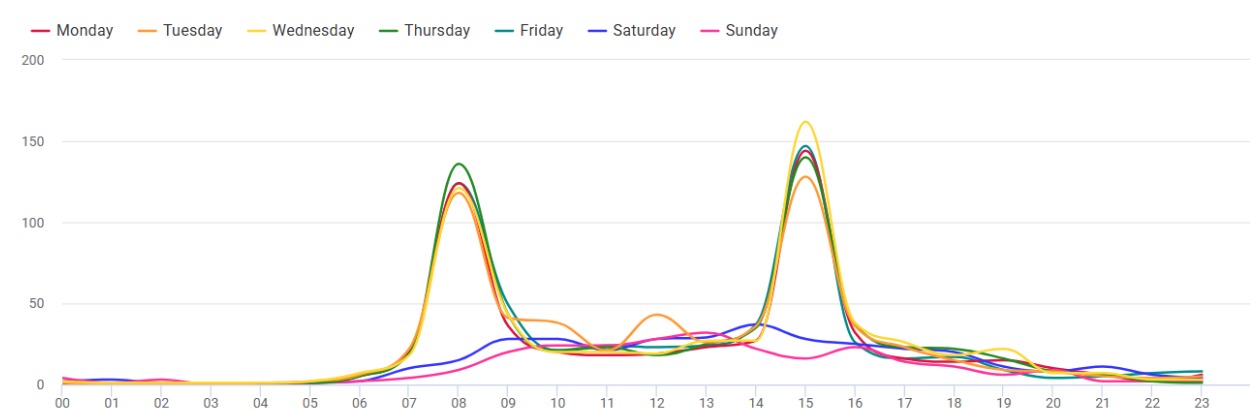
Typical week

Average counts by day of the week



Typical Day

Average hourly counts by day of the week







Thank you

[activetravel@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@monmouthshire.gov.uk)



## Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

### Monmouth LAF meeting notes

09/09/24

#### NRW Update:

##### 1. Land Management update:

The Team have been busy unfortunately dealing with the spate of recent wildfires across the area especially over the Bank Holiday WE, however we have been trying to continue with our day to day management works on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE)

Here are some key updates on recent and planned works across the area:

- The heathland grazing projects have had another year of success and the Cattle are being taken off Cleddon bog and Beacon hill heathland at the beginning of September, having grazed both sites all summer.
- We are hoping to undertake some horse logging within an area of ancient woodland in Wentwood forest.
- Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT) are working at Minnets field in Slade woodland, replacing the fences and carrying out some management of the field, including bracken and bramble removal from the priority site.
- Wye Valley National Landscapes are going to run a volunteer day at Beacon hill in October, helping tackle the birch within the heathland
- Wentwood steering group meeting planned for the 24<sup>th</sup> September and we are keen to engage with the wider landowner stakeholders and the National Landscape to look at the future of the site in respect to recreation and access. We hope to approach the LAF for some formal advice shortly once the stakeholder group has met.
- OGB1 tree works is a large part of our winter work program as well as larger scale ash tree works.
- We will be carrying out internal/external flailing along forest and public roads.
- Day to Day forest management such as litter/flytipping/grass cutting/culvert maintenance etc.

For any queries please use the Land Management Team contact email:

[forestsandnaturesoutheast@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:forestsandnaturesoutheast@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)

NOTE: For urgent or out of hours incidents / reports use the Incident Control Centre (ICC) :

0300 065 3000 (24/7) [Natural Resources Wales / Report an incident](#)

Reporting off-road vehicles: [contact@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:contact@gwent.pnn.police.uk) Call 101 @gwentpolice

## 2. Forest Operations update:

Current program is focused on managing tree diseases, Larch & Ash die back, most operations will start in September /October due to bird nesting and other protection restrictions. Site to be works are as follows:

- **Beacon Hill 72009:** Thinning
- **Whitestone 73003:** Thinning
- **Barbados 73020:** Thinning with some Larch removal
- **Llandog Bargins Wood 73526:** Clearfell
- **Chepstow Park 74002:** North West Thinning
- **Pant y Warren 74004** Thinning
- **Fedw Wood 74007 & 74233** Thinning and some minor Larch removal
- **Kemmys Inferior 77004:** Thinning
- **Wentwood 77040:** Horse Logging: Dispatch only

There is some general information on or Forest Operations the NRW website here:

[Upcoming forestry and land management work, Northern and Southern Wye woodlands, Monmouthshire - Natural Resources Wales Citizen Space - Citizen Space \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

To contract the Forest Operations team direct please use:

[SEForest.operations@naturalresources.wales](mailto:SEForest.operations@naturalresources.wales)

### Action points from meetings:

Serial & Type -Action -Decision -Note -Point	Owner	Subject:	Completed (if required)

Bob Campbell

[Uwch Swyddog Rheoli Tir](#) / Senior Officer, Land Management  
[Gweithrediadau De Ddwyrain Cymru](#) / South East Wales Operations  
[Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru](#) / Natural Resources Wales





## **MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

**9<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

### **Countryside Access Service Update**

**by Countryside Access Manager**

#### **Budget/staff changes**

- Julie Bloomfield site assistant has retired. Field Wardens are covering inspections of sites at present.
- Morag Sinton has taken a leave of absence for one year starting from 1<sup>st</sup> September. The Volunteer Co-ordinator role is currently being advertised.
- A new Community Links Officer role is being advertised and interviews will take place on 12<sup>th</sup> September. This role is paid from Access Improvement Grant and will work with Tom Arnold to facilitate doorstep opportunities, including improving and promoting access for all.
- Jack Capon has started as Assistant Public Rights of Way Officer, 2 days a week. This role is shared with Gavin Pugh (3 days).
- Colette Bosley has taken over from Matthew Lewis as Countryside, Destination and Environment Manager
- The Council is restructuring and Countryside Access is moving to a new Directorate called Place, Communities and Well-being. Craig O'Connor has been appointed Chief Operating Officer. Further information will be provided at November's meeting when the changes have been fully implemented.

#### **Legislative changes**

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##### [\*\*Sustainable Farming Scheme \(SFS\) 2026: scheme description\*\*](#)

The Sustainable Farming Scheme will begin on 1 January 2026 with the application form for the Universal layer of the scheme being available on the Single Application Form (SAF) via Rural Payments Wales (RPW) Online from March through to 15 May each year. Click the heading to read the final description of the Sustainable Farming Scheme in full.

## Written Statement: Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) – Final Scheme description

PRoW and public access have successfully been included within the regulatory baseline and are offered as an optional action.

A meeting is arranged between Welsh Government Designated Landscapes and Local Authorities countryside departments. It will be an opportunity for us to share practical ideas and suggestions specifically on how we ensure the regulatory baseline is adhered to and what involvement/information Local Authorities will need.

Information on the regulatory baseline and the optional action are included below.

### **Regulatory Baseline**

- in accordance with the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network you should adhere to the legal responsibilities on landowners to ensure the network is open, accessible, and safe for public use.
- you must manage Open Access land appropriately as set out in the Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000.

### **Optional Action - Improved public access to the countryside**

Enable people to access the countryside and enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of exploring nature and our farmed environment

#### **Aims**

This theme is designed to improve the accessibility of the farmed environment, encourage responsible recreation and improve the visitor experience. This can strengthen the link between the consumer and how their food is produced.

#### **Benefits**

This is an opportunity to improve signage or access furniture on farms. This means there are fewer barriers to people enjoying the outdoors safely. It also provides an opportunity to improve the visitor experience and reinforce messages about safe and responsible use of the countryside. This benefits visitors, farmers and livestock.

#### **Support**

As part of this Optional Action, WG will fund one-off capital items with a focus on improving accessibility (with an emphasis on least restrictive access) and / or improving the visitor experience. This could involve funding to:

- remove stiles where security of livestock is not needed
- replace stiles with gates
- install seats / benches at viewpoints
- install information boards to highlight:



- elements of the Countryside Code such as reminders to keep dogs on lead, no littering, or the importance of closing gates
- educational, cultural or landscape points of interest

Where possible we will promote existing Local Authority processes to support these activities.

This action is not designed to fund compliance with access legislation relating to Public Rights of Way (PRoW) or the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act which must be met as part of the SFS Regulatory Baseline.

### **Ongoing development**

Future development of this Optional Action could include support to improve the quality and / or quantity of rights of way both on an individual holding and on a collaborative basis. See Collaborative theme Collaborative Landscape Scale Activity.

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### [Introduction of the Environment \(Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets\) \(Wales\) Bill \(2 June 2025\) | GOV.WALES](#)

New Law - The Environmental Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets are finally out. This provides a new legal framework of accountability and enforcement for environmental laws in Wales.

There are four environmental principles – precaution, prevention, rectification at source and polluter pays – will be embedded in Welsh law, along with a duty on Welsh ministers and Natural Resources Wales to build these into their policy making.

A new environmental watchdog will be established – the Office of Environmental Governance Wales (OEGW) – to hold Welsh Ministers and public authorities to account on their compliance with environmental law, including through enforcement in the High Court if necessary. The OEGW will also provide advice to Welsh Ministers and monitor the application and effectiveness of environmental law across Wales.

The independence of the OEGW is likely to be a hot topic over the coming months, as Welsh Ministers want to appoint the body's Chair and other board members, with little input from the Senedd. At present, there is no provision in the bill to safeguard the body's independence or financial security, as there is in English and Scottish legislation.

A framework to set biodiversity targets is included in the bill, although there is no headline target to drive immediate action on nature recovery, and the first targets are

not due until three years after the bill has passed.

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## Countryside Sites

Annual tree inspections have been carried out at our 9 sites. Assessments are made regarding the health and safety of the trees on our managed sites. Disease and the dry weather have had an impact. Issues such as Ash dieback, or any limb damage as a result of high winds etc. are recorded. Any trees which under the QTRA assessment are deemed a danger to the public are logged and work programmed.

### **Two Green flag awards have been received for Castle Meadows and Rogiet Country Park**

An application has been made to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for TWIG grant. This project would involve:

- establishing a Friends of Group at Goytre Hall Woods,
- accessibility and signage improvements,
- removing the ash and establishing an open glade which volunteers could plant with native species and other woodland management improvements.
- Establishing leaky dams
- Improvements to outdoor learning area
- Green Skills Training, such as providing outdoor curriculum training
- Communications
- Dog campaign
- Updating Goytre Hall Wood Management Plan

## Bridges

During the month of August contractors have been busy. In total 7 bridges have now been removed and replaced with steel beamed bridges which we hope will increase the longevity of the bridges. These 7 bridges have been subject to closure notices these notices can now be removed and the paths re-opened. The photographs show the type of bridges we have installed.

The 7 bridges have been installed at:

- Trevyr and Roan Oak in the Grosmont area
- Llansoy
- Llangunnog
- Wallstone Farm adjacent to the WCP (neighbouring St Pierre Golf Club)

- The Bont
- Woolpitch Wood

We are hoping to get a further 5+ bridges installed in the next couple of weeks. Landowner permissions have been granted, and the contractor has scheduled dates for installation



4 large bridges at Crossway, New House, Tal y Coed and Sunnybank have been surveyed to gather relevant information for their replacements and we are now awaiting results from the geomorphological studies.

Bridges have been removed at:

- Cwmcarvan
- Trefaldu Fishing ponds
- Glen Trothy



- Sunnybank and Talycoed
- Pill Farm (near the WCP close to the Newport border)

All these bridges were in a very poor condition and the Council could be liable if members of the public tried using them. 4 other bridges are to be removed in September.

### **Vegetation Clearance**

Ongoing clearance work has been carried out by Volunteers, Wardens and Contractors across the network. Clearance work has been carried out on local routes, promoted routes eg Wye Valley Walk and National Trails such as ODNT and WCP.



Example of vegetation clearance on Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

## **The Wales Coast Path app: Record, Save and Track your walks**

Ever wondered whether you are literally on the right path? Want to save your walks and check your progress?

[Read more about The Wales Coast Path app](#)- designed to keep you on the path by showing where you are on a map, record walks you've done in the past into the app and keep track of your overall progress. It's great way to stay motivated and see where else you need to tick off!



Want a more simpler way of tracking your progress? Try the [Wales Coast Path Passports](#), one for each of the 8 regions of the path where you can tick off and date each completed section - either electronically or printed off.

## Are you a business along the coast path?

If so, there is a business newsletter with useful information on how you can make the most of the path for your business. You'll receive info on the available resources to help you *and* your customers.

Click Subscribe below and answer Yes to the question "Are you a business owner?" to receive NRW's business updates. [Subscribe to business newsletter](#)



**Events** See what's happening on the path with NRW's [online events calendar](#).

**Have you got an event on or near the Wales Coast Path?** Submit a [Suggest an Event form](#) to NRW and they will promote it on the website (subject to approval). You can also approach Monmouthshire's Countryside access or Destination Management Team to promote an activity on Visit Monmouthshire.

## Useful information

[Read more about the Countryside Code](#)

Be adventure SMART [Read how to be more prepared before heading out onto the path](#)

Public Rights of Way Working Map [Public Rights of Way - Public Rights of Way Map](#)

[Countryside Access Improvement Plan](#)

[Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide](#)

[Monmouthshire PROW Biodiversity Action Plan](#)

[Visit Monmouthshire](#) details the walks, rides and events that are available, along with accommodation and other attractions

[Public Consultations including Public Path Orders](#)

To report a problem use our interactive working map link above. Alternatively you can email [countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk) or write to



Countryside Access, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall. The Rhaydr, Usk  
NP161GA

**Urgent issues such as a broken bridge can be reported on 01633  
644850**