



## **VELOTHON 2017 – Comms & Engagement Update**

Abby Barton - July 2017

## **To engage with the Monmouthshire community, to transform previous negative perceptions of the event**

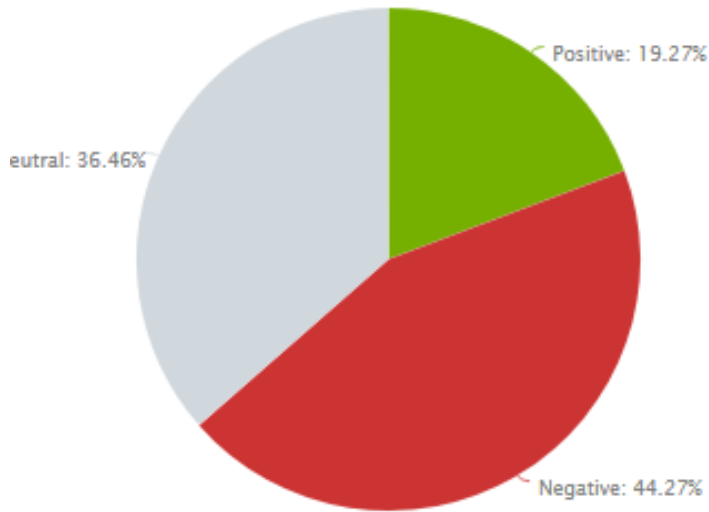
- To launch community engagement activity earlier in the year to involve community groups
- To create excitement and enthusiasm on the approach to the event to send out a 'cycling friendly' message to ensure Monmouthshire benefits from an influx of cyclists training for the event
- To make the most of the commercial opportunities that the Velothon represents on the day of the event itself, through encouraging local people and residents to make the most of closed roads

## **To attract more visitors to Monmouthshire**

- To encourage people training for the event to visit Monmouthshire and spend time exploring the area, cafes, restaurants and pubs

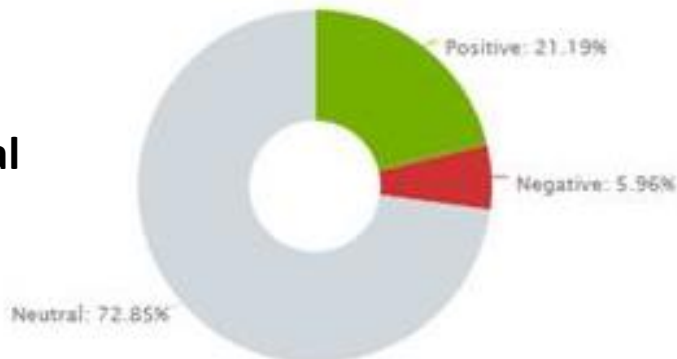
# Scoping the business problem

## 2016 Press coverage



**Source:**  
Meltwater

## 2016 Social media coverage



### Background:

- In 2016 Monmouthshire's opinion was divided. People either loved or loathed the Velothon. Negative comments on social media were accompanied by passionate, positive responses by others
- Press coverage reflected this division with **44.2% negative and 19.2% positive** mentions of the Velothon in relation to Monmouthshire in the press and 21.9% positive mentions on social media
- Frustration was voiced by residents about the threat of closed roads in the Llanfoist, Usk and Goytre communities in particular

# Evolving a community communications & engagement strategy and plan



17 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017	Early community engagement – public meeting in County Hall
6 <sup>th</sup> March - meeting held with Usk Town Council	<b>Cycle Usk team created</b> - including MCC, Velothon, Usk Town Council and local cyclists
April 2017	<b>Engagement strategy produced and community outreach work</b> evolved with Usk Primary School and Cycle Usk team
12 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>'Bike off' event held</b> at Usk Primary School
w/c 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	<b>Beautifully decorated bikes start appearing in Usk</b> – coverage secured of the event
May/June/July	More and more bikes appear, the treasure hunt begins and bespoke cycle routes are launched Positive PR issued to create more positive buzz on the approach to the event <b>Staff engagement</b> – championed with a staff competition <b>Schools engagement</b> – via Welsh Cycling events in local schools (this legacy will continue into September with follow-up sessions planned)
9 <sup>th</sup> July	Supporters fill the roads in Usk with a festival feel. Great to welcome TV and press journalists to Monmouthshire

# Results: Bike off success



**VELOTHON WALES**

## The Great British Usk Bike Off!

Join us at Usk Primary School for a 'Bangers and Bikes' decorating party between 3.30 – 5.30pm on Friday 12th May 2017

Come along to decorate old bicycles which will welcome visitors to Usk this summer for the Velothon which is being held on Sunday 9th July.

Old bicycles and some paint will be provided. Please bring along brushes and recycled materials to be upcycled. Please come along wearing VERY old painting clothes and join the fun.

For more information please contact: [usktowninfo@gmail.com](mailto:usktowninfo@gmail.com)

Monmouthshire Air Fynwy logo and Usk Town Council logo at the bottom.

### Sea of colour to welcome cyclists



**COLOURFUL** Old faded bikes, Monmouth Herald and Cllwr Gwyn Roberts, Mayor of Usk, outside the Sessions House which is on the main square.

**By Neil Griffin**  
0950 777048  
[neil@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:neil@monmouthshire.gov.uk)  
Twitter: @neilgriffin

Party to promote the Velothon and decorate town bikes to be displayed around the town in the weeks to the summer week.

Mayor Gwyn Roberts, a member of the Welsh Government's "Colours" group, said the project was "a very good idea" and that it was "very good to see the town and its people taking part in the project."

**NATURE** The old used Monmouth Herald bikes decorated to represent nature.

- Local families, local residents, and Usk Town council all joined the event and follow-up event
- Good social media and press coverage generated

## Monmouthshire Free Press

Wednesday 3rd May 2017

### County gearing up to welcome the Velothon



FAMILIES, community groups and local businesses in Monmouthshire are getting ready to welcome cyclists training and participating in this year's Velothon Wales 2017 to be held on Sunday 9th July.

A 'Cycle Usk' team will decorate the town and encourage local enterprises to welcome people training for the event - as well as spectators on the big day - and boost local business.

Monmouthshire County Council's recycling and waste teams are currently saving old bikes left at waste disposal sites.

Usk's community will decorate these for display around the town from June to welcome cyclists during training and on the day of the event itself.

Usk Primary School is hosting a 'Bangers and Bikes' party between 3.30pm and 5.30pm on Friday 12th May to decorate cycles.

Paul Matthews, the council's Chief Executive said: "Monmouthshire sends a warm welcome to people training for the Velothon in our beautiful county - the perfect setting for cyclists to prepare for this summer's event."

"We have many wonderful cycling friendly cafes, restaurants and pubs so I would encourage everyone to stop for a coffee, cake and rest."

"Any communities who would like to decorate their towns, villages or streets are urged to contact us and we will be happy to provide bikes donated or rescued at our recycling centres to replicate Usk's approach."

Nigel Russell, the event director for Velothon Wales commented: "Monmouthshire always goes the extra mile to make riders and supporters feel welcome, and we cannot wait to see some of the creations as cycling continues to make a positive impact on the county."

Any donations of paint, brushes, or craft materials to decorate bikes will be welcomed.

For donations or to get involved with up-cycling some bikes, decorating other towns, villages or streets email [communications@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

# Results: Bike off success



- Social media coverage on the MCC, Usk Town Council pages and Velothon pages
- **Walesonline covered** the 'bike off'
- **Dedicated cycle routes** produced and shared
- Local businesses and residents all got involved and provided their support
- **Cyclists start stopped in Usk** as part of training
- **BBC2** have been filming in Usk with local children as part of a 'preparation for Wales in Bloom' programme
- **Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:** *"I'm delighted that the people of Monmouthshire are embracing and celebrating the arrival of the Velothon in such varied and creative ways. This welcome will no doubt leave an impression on the cyclists and spur them on and will create a great atmosphere for local people during the event. Spectators in Wales usually give visitors and home-grown competitors alike a real warm Welsh welcome and can add to a fantastic atmosphere, and we're looking forward to a legendary Velothon Wales this year."*

# Results: the day went well in Usk



- **Reach of 46,400** generated on the MCC Facebook page and **43,262 impressions on Twitter** from the event
- **Party atmosphere in town** as people filled the streets
- **Local businesses opened** for business so spectators could make the most of the day
- Cyclists were overheard saying *'this place is great'* and seemed to be really enjoying it
- Feedback was received: *"Have to thank everyone in Wales for all the support. In other locations you get tacks on the road. In Wales you get shouts of encouragement, flag waving, bunting, painted bikes lining the route, it was like a stage of the Tour de France. Thanks to all involved on a top event, felt like a pro rider for the day."*

freepressories.co.uk      Wednesday, July 12, 2017



Cyclist greets the son of a local shop owner, left



Bob Greenwood greets the Velothon riders in Del, Pembrokeshire County Council

## Cyclists enjoy 'best event yet'

**By Neil Griffiths**  
neilgriffiths@freepressories.co.uk

THOUSANDS of cyclists and their families took part in the annual Velothon in Del on Sunday. Organised by the Del Road Race Club, the event has more than 400 participants and is the largest cycling event in the area.

The annual event, which has been running since 1985, is the largest cycling event in the area. It is held in Del, Pembrokeshire, and is the largest cycling event in the area.

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Mark's best friend joins the event



Spectators allowing passing Velothon riders



Five cyclists in Tappu Square, Del

Thursday, July 6, 2017      southwalesargus.co.uk/news

## Wheely colourful bikes greet Velothon riders

Ahead of this weekend's Velothon, the generosity of Usk came together to turn some old bikes into works of art. Now you have the chance to hunt the bikes



**BLOOMING:** Upcycled flowers in Usk with their colourful bike

The delisted with the way Usk Primary School, the Usk community and businesses have embraced the Velothon to welcome cyclists to our beautiful town.

This is a fantastic cycling event and the school has been delighted to see the school's old bikes given a new lease of life. The school has been delighted to see the school's old bikes given a new lease of life.

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**GREEN:** The market table certainly includes the delisted



**WAZZLES:** The town square argues bike is out of the yellow delisted around Usk by The Green Usk Bike Co



**CREATIVE:** Ideas of the school you have had on the Green Usk Bike Co

For all the latest news log on to [southwalesargus.co.uk/news](http://southwalesargus.co.uk/news)

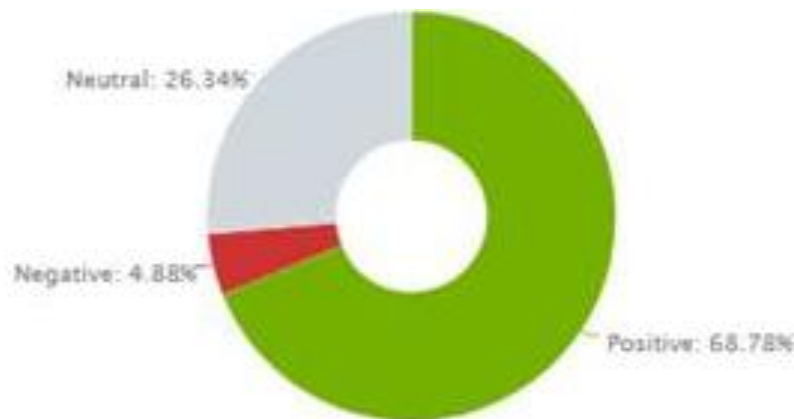


**Overall performance:** this demonstrates the power of effective social media to drive positive digital engagement

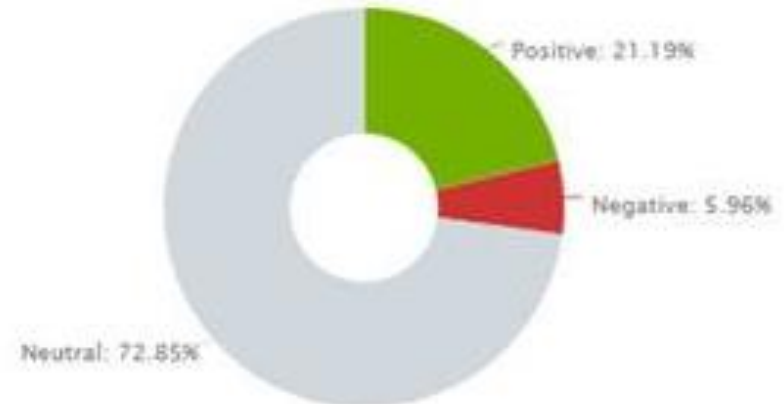
**Source:** Meltwater

## Social media sentiment

2017



2016



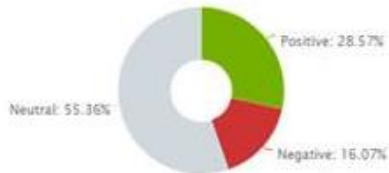
- The effective partnership between MCC, Usk Town Council and the Velothon team has proved to be effective
- The positive community engagement has increased positive social media sentiment about the Velothon in Monmouthshire from 21.19% to 68.78%

**Overall performance:** this year negative press mentions about have significantly dropped – particularly in Usk where the ‘Bike Off’ was held

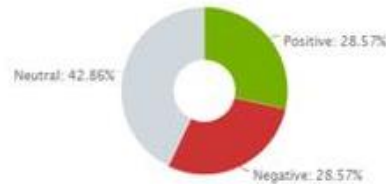
**Source:** Meltwater

## 2017

Usk Sentiment 2017



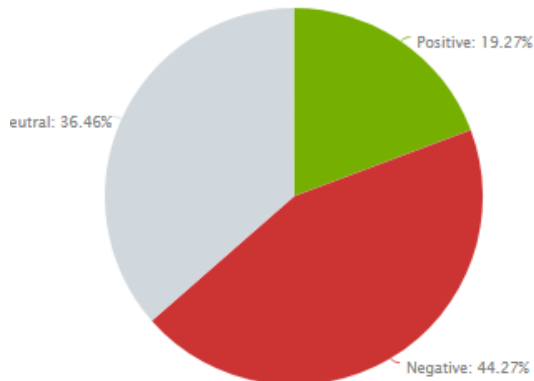
Llanfoist Sentiment 2017



All Areas Sentiment 2017



## 2016



- Negative mentions of the Velothon have dropped dramatically from 44.27% to 25.95%
- Positive mentions have increased from 19.2% to 22.27%
- The community activity in Usk has particularly improved perceptions with 28.7% positive mentions (v. 22.7% general feedback) and only 16.06% negative references

Even better if: a better relationship is developed between the Velothon and the Abergavenny Chronicle and some frustrated residents

**Llanfoist residents to be housebound by Velothon**

WE are again confined to remain house bound for 5.5 hours on Sunday July 9. Down from 8.5 hours last year. No rolling access as promised by Velothon.

Their self-righteous arrogance rides indifferent over my and numerous citizens' rights to enjoy freedom of movement here as the rest of the UK.

**Ben Jones**  
Llanfoist



**An Olympic surprise**  
Olympic swimmer Jazz Carlin dropped in to meet pupils at Llanvihangel Crucorney School this week

**Velothon apologises for carer confusion**

**The Clive and Lucy show**

**ABERYSTWYTH** Daily News

- Recommendation:**
- 1) The Chronicle are a key title for Monmouthshire CC so they will need to be managed more closely in 2018 to reduce negative PR
  - 2) Direct contact to be made by the Velothon to residents who have voiced their concerns to prevent 'letters to the editor' (Abergavenny Chronicle and Argus), frustrated emails and negativity around businesses not being able to trade editor not being able to work due to road closures