

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

No	Action	Already Done (October - February 2020)	Short Term Action Points
Action 1	Completion of the primary school database covering MCC and surrounding LA footprint. To include capturing a range of information from basic contact details to their purchasing of outdoor education services (from you, from others). Try and capture what are their different reasons for engaging with outdoor services – for learning and development, or adventure etc. Know which schools get PDG funding (see Appendix A). The database should be a shared resource, with joint responsibility across both sites for its regular updating.	* All schools marketing list created - separate tab for each local LA. Monmouthshire schools have a separate contacts list and booking tracker. All schools in Monmouthshire & BG contacted re their bookings and for any schools that don't use us - why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Shared Place for all Documents determined and all officers aware • Schools list for Gwent Area to be provided showing name of each school, contact name and number – indicate which schools have not be contacted • Provide list of all users over the last two years (to include numbers / number of FSM children) • Provide list of reasons why schools had chosen not to rebook • Contact all bookings for summer term to discuss rebooking / deposit return etc. Cancellation tracker created and saved in SharePoint to track all contact that has been made with schools and to issue refunds where requested. • Map and agree future booking process and develop the Clarity system
Action 2	Use the database to identify your current account and future prospectus. The immediate focus must be to retain those schools who engage with the service, exploring how the service can remove any barriers that put at risk their business. If feasible, make these changes. Identify a prospectus pipeline and plan for how and when to engage so as to maximise the opportunity of securing new business.	* Data has been captured to identify how many schools from each local authority use us and how many don't. This enables us to see where the retention of schools is essential ad growth for new business is needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Brochure sent round brochure for comments • Final pictures sent 27/05/2020 and once agreed photo consent will be confirmed. • For each reason given for not using the service – identify barriers and suggest options to help to remove / overcome them? • Prepare list of potential schools / other clients outside of Gwent area etc. • As with Action 1 schools categorised as: currently booked , booked within the last 2 years and booked historically with us

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Action 3	Actively engage with local provider networks, the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (SWOAPG). This is a representative organisation for all providers of Outdoor Adventurous Activities in the South Wales and Brecon Beacons area. With over 60 profit /not-for-profit outdoor operators involved, for a modest annual fee (circa £75) the service can network, understand best practice and be alert to market changes and developments.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide list of local networks, contact details and any membership fee – outline potential benefits from each group to the service • SWOAPG Full corporate membership £78 is recommended for all Providers who wish to fully support SWOAPG's work and is essential for all Providers operating gorge-walking. • AHOEC membership £120 GOLD standard badge
Action 4	Investigate a range of professional bodies and become a member of that organisation which will help the service be better prepared to respond to and take advantage of changes in the sector.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide list of potential professional bodies that we could become members of - description, contact details and any membership fee – outline potential benefits from each organisation to the service • BC / Canoe Wales £800 approx. approved centre / we can run accredited courses • IOL £263 level 2 for organisations with 6-20 FTE staff. Includes 5 FREE job adverts per year, unlimited event listings and access to IOL Course Accreditation.
Action 5	Investigate the feasibility of Gilwern becoming an integrated hub for children and young people's services, offering affordable services to address key priorities.	<p>*3 pilot programmes have been delivered engaging with children and young people in both Primary and Secondary Education. Programmes have been delivered working in partnership with MonLife colleagues across services utilising individual skill sets to maximise the individual's experience.</p> <p>* Conversations have taken place with colleagues in Sport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide full descriptions of the pilot programmes – identify resources used, income raised and outcomes achieved (stories to be provided for future use) • Provide descriptions of potential alternative education offers • Provide narrative of any discussions with other areas of MCC (e.g. Social Services, Housing). Provide detail on the ALN programmes and discussions and work with OE so far

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

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		Development around growing an alternative education offer using statutory services to refer young people in a funded capacity, Gilwern will be an integral part of this offer.	
Action 6	Create a whole school offer, from year 3 to 6, that maps a learner journey showing progression and development. Then incentivise schools so this reinforces the service's role as a key partner, building on its USPs – high quality learning; trusted provider; strong partnership between the school, the pupils and the centre staff; etc.	* Development of the new MonLife Outdoor brochure started and work began on linking in with learning outcomes and creating an offer that fits in with the current education requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide final booking form – review and reefer any comments back • Confirm with safe guarding details and T&C's • Draft out potential learning journey for year 3 – 6 which may involve liaising with Education and other MonLife colleagues • Ongoing work and awaiting Learning Managers input • Research curriculum reform and assess impact on product that we offer
Action 7	Review activities on offer to ensure the service continues to major on things that schools cannot do, maximising the local environment to do them in. To include reviews for off-site activity to ensure venues selected remain adventurous and exciting. Provide schools with a range of self-guided activities they can do in the evenings, with the option of having evening activities provided if required.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide list and description of all products we offer – both to schools and other clients. Make reference to the corporate price list. If no price is available, add it to the corporate price list TBC • Identify list of products we could offer as evening activities to schools. As above • Identify wider MonLife staff who may be able to contribute to evening activities
Action 8	Review the primary offers so provision addresses Curriculum 2022, 'wrapping it up in a bow' to make it easy for schools to see how what you offer is of direct benefit to them. Do the creative thinking for them, piloting your work as you progress.	* As above - preparing content for the new brochure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 7 (research). • Further discussion with youth and community team, and MonLife learning. Suggestion to make contact with CYP once ideas are confirmed. • Other areas to consider are the learning out comes for English based schools, FE and groups. Share experiences with learning group.

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gilwern had a GCSE geography residential and Hilston had a college Public Service residential and both to be developed and new schools / colleges identified
Action 9	Use the service's insight to pilot new primary school offers. For example, a collect-and-return adventure day for schools from schools, eliminating the school's transport costs and maximising the delivery time.	* We previously tried this with a Monmouthshire school however the distance travelled and resources needed demonstrated this was not a realistic offer to develop across the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review details of previous pilots so that we can establish financial contribution to the service. Potential to engage with MCC transport. Long term to follow up. Dewstow model as an example of how it can work locally with our minibuses
Action 10	Explore how the service might commission others to undertake a study of its alumni to evidence the benefits of engagement (drawing on the Brathay Trust example). There are other sources from which to draw (see below). Undertake this work if possible. To source a broad range of impact statement from schools.	* We currently use an online feedback system that every visiting school gets a link to at the end of their trip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide previous feedback analysis for assessment Capture the feedback, case studies and testimonials we require as part of the MonLife performance and evaluation framework as set in the new KPI set Once residential visits commence the completion of the feedback system will be an evening activity with iPad on site.
Action 11	Consider the products offered by other operators that appeal to a secondary school market and use your local insight to pilot products that appeals to this target group. For example, helping them to transition between primary and secondary or relieving stress at exam time.	* Contact has been made with the Secondary Schools in Monmouthshire to find out why they no longer use us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide list and details of current offer for Secondary Schools Research and prepare a list of products offered by other operators for secondary schools Link to Action point 8. Capitalise on DofE product – target MCC secondary schools with OE product and opportunities. Re-engage GCSE/A level activity intensive courses. Identify new DOE markets for the 21/22 season
Action 12	Build on the service's connections with the sport development function and develop its holiday programme, working to maximise the opportunities presented by sport climbing featuring in Tokyo 2020.	* TMG Outdoor Adventure Days launched in early 2019 with approx. 150 attendances and £5000 income generated. * The original offer was aimed at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full appraisal of TMG outdoor Adventure Days – resources used / staff time etc. to be gathered Research accreditation schemes for young people Refer and review for corporate price list Confirm plans regarding TMG and COVID 19 for the

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		Secondary school age but we had limited success so we changed the target audience to 8 - 12 years and saw numbers increase significantly as a result.	rest of the 20/21
Action 13	Set clear parameters on acceptability, feasibility and viability for special events/one-off bookings, with an agreed approval process.	* Previously we have accepted many one off bookings without much thought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine principles for taking one off booking
Action 14	<p>Develop a simple operational dashboard that can be used to record, track and measure performance. To discuss and agree this as a group, choosing metrics that will help the service track things that are of value to its long-term viability. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughput figures: bookings by schools (per LA footprint), user days, and user numbers. Utilisation: room occupancy (set baseline and then track actuals). Forward order book position (value of future business secured at any point in time). Financials: income / cost ratio, payroll costs as a % of revenue; subsidy per user. 	<p>* A booking spreadsheet has been created which shows user numbers per booking and also the amount of user days per booking.</p> <p>* All available spaces for hire have been identified at Gilwern.</p> <p>* On the spreadsheet we calculate an estimated value of each booking so that we can have a running financial position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide booking spreadsheet for 18-19 and 19-20 Review use of Clarity for identification of key usage data – initially assess what is needed for the service prior to exploring the options. Options of booking instructors and activity bases with the correct ratios? Review use of 1-31 process (digital equivalent) Research and compile list of competitors for room hire/ bunk house / b&b
Action 15	Present the headline financials in a P and L format, with the subsidy / balancing line clearly identified. Ensure the income lines are of sufficient detail that the different income categories can be recorded and tracked. Share this with teams and discuss the implications.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial training for site co-ordinators Review use of coding and set up any new requirements Design Reports
Action 16	Profile the budget to identify trends in income and spend and highlight downtime and pinch points.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reprofile budget based on previous trends

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

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Action 17	Start the process of identifying fixed and variable costs and the minimum volume and type of business that needs to be generated to move towards breakeven.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action once points 15 & 16 done
Action 18	Start the process of identifying returns from each product so there is an improved appreciation of what loss leaders are and where surpluses are generated. Use this information to then make decisions on what to retain, what to withdraw/ scale back and where you should scale.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify full list of products provided Add to corporate price list
Action 19	Consider how to encourage better collaboration between the sites, sharing resources, reviewing performance, managing risk, creating a collective responsibility of purpose, and celebrating success.	<p>* New procedures and programmes have been implemented in both sites - such as Clarity, booking spreadsheet and all school marketing list.</p> <p>* There is now a consistency with pricing, booking procedures, invoicing and all other admin tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure both sites are using same administration process This is happening and will increase with the new clarity updates and staff training
Action 20	Ensure that the site co-ordinators are educating, discussing and debating with their teams their collective responsibility for business change, being clear on the implications of not delivering budget.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a – when site is operational again
Action 21	Explore the merit in undertaking validation of the quality of your service delivery. This should test the full range of service and include customer care / safety management, facilities (including minibuses) and leadership and management. The obvious choice is the AHOEC Gold Standard but there may be others. Successful Gold Standard		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing accreditations and ensure that we are using tier accreditation marks Research other external accreditations that would benefit the service – draw up a list and explain what we would need to do to achieve it There are changes with organisations providing LoTc and Adventure Mark in Jan 2021 And AALA has

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

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	accreditation automatically entitles the provider to the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge and Adventure Mark accreditations on payment of a further nominal fee.		been retendered and is now run by Adventure – Risk Management Services (Adv-RMS)
Action 22	The website needs an overhaul, using content that engages and excites the user with a view of turning 'lookers into bookers'. While GOES staff can provide the copy, there is a need to secure the services for a period of a marketing post (a short-term contract role) to undertake this work.	<p>www.monlife.co.uk was launched in January 2020.</p> <p>* All of our current images are being sorted through to find the best ones for the new page.</p> <p>* The content of the webpage is being updated.</p> <p>* An e-brochure is currently being developed and also a new booking form.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current pages of the MonLife website and provide content to update to describe services we offer / relevant pictures / stories etc.
Action 23	Using a marketing specialist, complete a brand asset register and ensure there is an implementation plan for the rebrand roll out across the service, to include everything from vehicle livery, to clothing and quotation templates.	<p>* Brand guidelines have been established and have been rolled out across MonLife Services.</p> <p>* All staff have been issued with branded uniform.</p> <p>* Both the website and e-brochure will have consistent branding and allow cross advertising between MonLife services.</p> <p>* New letterhead, email signatures and booking forms are now also consistent with the brand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that guidelines are being adhered to Check all methods of communication to ensure correct brand Identify any additional costs of compliance

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

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Action 24	Improve communications with your customer base, both in advance of their arrival and after they leave. Use the MonLife newsletter to reach new audiences by profiling non-term opportunities activities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document the new process for dealing with pre-arrival and follow up post Explore option of iPad usage to gather data on site from users Work with Marketing Manager on what information is required to feed in to the MonLife newsletter
Action 25	Move away from the summer-term annual mail out to schools (as adopted by Hilston Park) and adopt the process used at Gilwern, with schools being able to sign up for their return visit whilst they are at or shortly after leaving their residential. Such an approach will reward those who commit and give schools time to work with parents to utilise payment plans.	<p>* Booking forms have been made available for schools to complete for the following year whilst at site / take away with them to complete and then return.</p> <p>* A follow up email is then sent to confirm the booking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process has already changed – map the stages of the new process so that all fully understand it
Action 26	Delegate fully the responsibility for responding to the central email contact point to the administration team, agreeing a process of tracking progress so the status of the enquiry can be easily understood at any point.	<p>* A new email address has been created which the site co-ordinators, the admin staff and leisure services manager has access to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New email address being used. Map process so all staff understand Establish a tracking process to ensure all queries are dealt with Review the new booking form and make changes so that it is more suited to the service Form now reviewed the booking form and will submit a revised version for approval
Action 27	Ensure the highest standards of safeguarding are maintained at all times. It is particularly important to ensure children's accommodation remains secure which may require installation of some form of access control system.	<p>* Completing quarterly SAFE's to ensure a clear policy and procedure is in place.</p> <p>* Staff are aware of the DSL and know how to report any concerns.</p> <p>* All staff are trained in Safeguarding and this is monitored centrally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

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Action 28	Outdoor service provision has a strong connection locally, with an alumni in excess of 150,000 users over the 40+ years of operation. There is merit in developing a 'friends of' group, exploring the work of charity 'Friends of Plas Doly-Moch' which supports the work of Coventry's Outdoor Education Residential Centre. Such a group could support the continued work of the centres, promote the services provided, create links to other relevant groups and organisations and, importantly, raise funds. This could unlock donors and start to explore other forms of social investment funding.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On hold at the moment
Action 29	Investigate opportunities to partner with organisations and to apply for grants and contracts that aim to tackle issues that the centres are well positioned to address, for example, social isolation and loneliness. Use your insight and impact to diversify income sources, locking into local agendas and key corporate priorities as overviewed in section 3. This action needs to be undertaken in tandem with actions detailed in section 7, longer term thinking.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On hold at the moment
Action 30	Explore opportunities to provide services for those seeking to withdraw from outdoor education service provision. This could be on behalf of those already operating locally or those providing services elsewhere that are looking for innovative solutions for their withdrawal from direct provision. Either options should secure a long-term provider agreement. This action needs to be undertaken in tandem with actions detailed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On hold at the moment Continue to gather market intelligence about other operators

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

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	in section 7, longer term thinking.		

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

Quick Wins Section

No	Quick Win	Agreed Action Points
Action 1	Having a clear line on responsibility for approval and sign-off of one-off activities is key.	Confirm levels of authority / responsibility and sign off
Action 2	Delivering efficiencies and generating additional facility revenue; improving returns from your facility asset base; improved income by adjustments pricing for commercial and private lettings; improved sales by improved marketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand current cost base and drivers and identify potential savings • Review current charges in relation to commercial and private lettings • Develop marketing plan and strategy for when we re-open
Action 3	In terms of staff-related costs, there are savings to be made associated with the imminent departure of the Head of the Outdoor Service. There may be scope to reduce the administration costs when the current administrator at Gilwern switches roles at Christmas. Whilst it is important to retain a level of administration capacity, the current allowance seems high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details of all work/ processes that are undertaken by admin team in order to establish if there are any potential savings to be made. • Following the service restructure staff regularly work across both sites.
Action 4	Robust instructor/leader staff scheduling is key, with the amount of non-delivery contact time minimised and outputs scrutinised. The fluctuations in occupancy rates would indicate there are savings to be made. Sharing staff resource across the two sites should continue and be extended wherever possible to minimise use of freelancers in all but exceptionally busy periods. Staffing levels need to be set based on the current, not projected, level of business. Given the booking flows, this should be relatively straight forward to predict, with consideration given to a move to annualised contracts to build in maximum flexibility to deploy staff as the service dictates	On hold
Action 5	Carrying two site co-ordinators with an 80:20 management: delivery allocation should be reviewed to ensure this remains affordable. Initial indications are that the site coordinator at Hilston Park could move to a more balanced management: delivery mix.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate what the ration should be – establish what tasks are needed to be done by “management” • Conformation required follow the service restructure

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

Action 6	Efficiencies could be delivered through procurement gains. Using the services of specialist procurement businesses (for example, in the area of food and beverage) will drive down further operating costs as well as providing service enhancements (for example, producing list of allergens for each menu provided). Using specialists to deliver procurement efficiency savings will ensure the site co-ordinators are not diverted to address areas that are not their areas of expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations with suppliers on hold until reopening • In recovery plan, continue to develop plans around catering provision and menus • Identify any staff training needs
Action 7	Priced correctly, with any increased service charges offset met from the existing operating costs, improved facility revenue should be generated	On hold
Action 8	The Hilston Park Lodge is in an idyllic setting. A previous decision was made to configure the property as overflow centre accommodation, with the option for rental for small groups. This undervalues the asset. To maximise the potential income from the dwelling, it is recommended the Lodge is converted to service either a holiday booking, capitalising on the uplift in tourism, or short-term unfurnished residential rental.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise protocol on usage of building with suggested charge rates. Will need to be compared with market rates. • Holiday letting is not viable to due insurance MCC restrictions. • Group Accommodation booking services have been terminated 01/04/2020
Action 9	The main house at Hilston Park is currently available for hire via the third-party website www.groupaccommodation.com . The main section of the Hilston Park website refers to self-catering accommodation for the Lodge but not the main house. Market analysis shows there is limited stock within the locality for larger group bookings, with only a handful of sites available that can accommodate more than 30 people. There is a need to refresh the imagery and narrative on the web page, with content that better resonates with the target audience. Indicative pricing should be provided for both catered and non-catered hirer, with adventure activities an optional extra.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise protocol on usage of building with suggested charge rates (as in action 8) • Market analysis and web page development for this product on hold • As above
Action 10	Ensure that the Council's events team are aware of the opportunity for rental of the camping field at Gilwern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events team no longer exists • Plan to ensure site is ready for camping – identify works / costs • Engage with Marketing Manager re marketing etc.

Appendix 1 - Outdoor Adventure Service – Action Plan

Action 11	Charges for the academic year (not financial) are exceptionally low, with illustrative prices ranging for £3 for a breakfast, £70 for the conference room hire that includes refreshments and £110 per day to access the hire ropes course (providing organisations have their own insurance and staff are suitably inducted).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market analysis required of rates from other providers but also of room hire etc. • Provide Marketing Manager with list of products to enable comparisons • Following the floods 02/20 work is needed to recover the camping area. • SL to get fencing quotes
Action 12	Having an improved understanding of the cost base, with a pricing policy that aims to maximise revenue, not simply cover costs, will ensure prices are better attuned to the market. Use by commercial operators of the site in particular needs review given the client listing of some of these users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Manager to provide 19/20 cost base so team can understand cost drivers etc. (other providers pricing in action 11)
Action 13	The initial focus needs to be on improved marketing for those parts of the business most likely to return a positive net contribution to the core operating costs. This also needs to be focused on third party websites that will probably have higher levels of user traffic. For example, the Visit Monmouthshire website (https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/) has reference to Hilston Park but only in relation to adventure activities, not featuring on its conferences and meetings listing. It would be a relatively simple and inexpensive task to undertake a review of all such sites and provide them with good copy to improve sales via third party channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On hold