

SUBJECT:	MONLIFE TACKLING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY SUMMER PROGRAMMES 2022 REPORT
MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	22ND SEPTEMBER 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide an update to Council on programmes and interventions delivered by Monlife through the summer, aimed towards tackling poverty, inequality and access to doorstep services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note the Summer of Fun investment of £140,000 from Welsh Government, a one-off payment that enabled collaboration across partners and contributed to the bespoke opportunities made available through the summer holidays. The service also received funding from Town and Community Councils, the Welsh Museums Federation and annual Welsh Government funding a total of £338,563.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 MonLife Summer Term Campaign

- 3.1.1 MonLife provides doorstep, free or low-cost opportunities and activities to children and young people. The summer campaign, 'extraordinary summer', was delivered collaboratively throughout Monmouthshire by internal and external providers.

- 3.1.2 In addition to departmental budgets, MonLife secured £140,000 from Welsh Government to deliver the Summer of Fun. The main outcome of the project was to engage children, young people and families, through cultural, social and physical activities. Sixteen projects worked independently under the Summer of Fun umbrella to achieve the set outcomes of the campaign.

- 3.1.3 This additional funding enabled project providers to leverage more funding to add value and extend their projects, due to the timing of this report final submissions and evaluations have not been completed, a more detailed report will follow. More consultation and meetings will be arranged with town and community councils to recognise their significant contributions.

- 3.1.4 As part of a comprehensive delivery programme, including safe recruitment, training and extensive support of the workforce, more than 90 staff were employed. It is anticipated that some of recruited staff could continue employment with us, however, the majority will return to FE and University studies.

3.1.5 Volunteers were actively engaged in all service areas and provided additional support to service delivery. The summer delivery programme presented more opportunities for our volunteers to engage, keep active and contribute to the values of Monmouthshire and our individual projects.

3.2 Targeted interventions

3.2.1 The Food and Fun scheme was a collaboration with MCC Education colleagues, based at five of our Primary schools across Monmouthshire and offered to those most vulnerable pupils. The scheme delivered a variety of fun activities as well as healthy hot meals and snacks, provided by our school catering team, for more than 200 participants a day. This scheme was funded by Welsh Government via the WLGA.

3.2.2 The Children services disabilities team, through Action for Children, continued to deliver their Summer Play Scheme supporting 60 children per day across four Monmouthshire venues, two days per week. The disability hubs are part of an annual programme of support.

3.2.3 In addition, and in collaboration with our partners, we created a wide range of accessible fun activities that promoted healthy outdoor activities, built confidence and brought children / siblings through shared experiences together.

3.2.3.1 Building Bridges supported young people with additional needs, aged 14 to 25 years through supported activities, transition and social experiences. Activities included residential camps, surfability, and skateboarding.

3.2.3.2 Quest Busters (QB) supported young people aged between 5 and 17 with additional needs and their siblings to access activities that may otherwise have been inaccessible. The summer project also supported families to attend activities together, therefore building sibling bonds and family resilience. Activities included, horse riding, surfability, and outdoor adventure days.

3.2.3.3 The Outdoor Partnership developed an inclusive adventure programme for Monmouthshire young people with mobility limitations, disabilities, and neurodiversity conditions. The focus of the programme was to provide a gateway into outdoor adventures and give Monmouthshire young people access to opportunities that support their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Activities included, climbing, canoeing, and outdoor adventure days.

3.2.3.4 There were 66 funded spaces to access the leisure centre Monmouthshire Games, where children enjoyed fun, games, access to daily swimming activities and meeting new friends in a safe space.

3.2.3.5 Many of these children identified will not access mainstream activities and are often not able to access activities with their siblings/families. The partnerships and programmes provided this year ensured that we were able to provide this unique experience, supporting the children, their siblings and their parents/carers. Supported by services and their fully qualified staff, who made the best use of our wonderful Monmouthshire and surrounding countryside and Gilwern outdoor adventure centre.

3.2.3.6 Monlife leisure services offer a variety of concession to assist access for all. These will all form part of our annual charging review.

- 25%-50% Discounted Passport to Leisure Scheme
- Family Swim (1 free child)
- Under 4's Swim for free
- Welsh Government free swim 60+ and under 16
- Armed Forces free swim
- DofE financial support
- DWP exercise referral financial support

3.2.3.7 Monlife sites including museums, attractions and countryside offer free access at the point of entry.

3.3 Welsh Language in the Community

3.3.1 Menter Iaith were a new partner to the summer programme this year delivering through the medium of Welsh. Complementing their summer programme, they promoted and offered a wide range of activities including textile workshops, giving children the opportunity to learn new skills by learning how to use a sewing machine and being able to design and create their own piece of clothing.

The finale of their summer programme, was a 'Gig', arranged and facilitated by Youth Forum members. Several Welsh language rock bands performed for members of the Youth Forum. The event provided an opportunity for young people to socialise – the Youth Forum is made-up of members who are currently at university as well as members from Coleg Gwent, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and Years 12 & 13 forms across Monmouthshire.

As well as a fantastic end to the summer programme, members of the youth forum gained valuable planning and event management skills by being responsible for the organisation and promotional aspects of the event.

3.4 Refugee Support

3.4.1 Monmouthshire has continued to support our refugee families throughout the summer, offering access to leisure centres and provided more than 60 spaces to the Monmouthshire Games, giving those families the opportunity to meet other people, stay active and in many cases, give parents some respite. Caldicot leisure centre linked with MCC passenger transport unit and

arranged transport for a large cohort of children and young people who are residing at Ty Magor, providing access to the Monmouthshire Games in the locality along with other activities in the surrounding areas.

3.5 Museum and Heritage Attractions

3.5.1 Our Heritage and Museum services have seen significant footfall post pandemic. We are keen to ensure we offer free access to our sites for those who are on limited budgets, elderly or those suffering from loneliness, and those families with extended siblings. Play audits carried out in spring 2022, enabled us to evaluate, review and inform our summer programme offering a wide range of free activities for our visitors and local communities. Offering activities as part of the summer programme has brought a new dimension to the breadth of provision within Monmouthshire.

Funding from Welsh Government Summer of Fun enabled us to purchase additional play resources which were recommendations of the Play Audits. This equipment will reflect where possible the collections held at each museum and will provide families with free opportunities for play. Throughout September the service is offering 'come and play weekend' at Abergavenny and Chepstow Museums. From the evaluation of these sessions, we will develop further opportunities. Learning will be applied across all our heritage sites.

3.5.2 Our Heritage Learning team were able to offer craft based make and take activities for 5–11-year-olds, inspired by the collections, themes and stories at Chepstow Museum, Abergavenny Museum and Castle, Caldicot Castle, Old Station, Tintern and Shire Hall, Monmouth.

3.5.3 The project delivered 10 separate sessions focusing on the themes of Medieval mayhem and Playtime through the ages. Craft activities include clay tile making, illuminated manuscripts, shield making and jointed knights, hobby horses, cup and ball, thaumatropes and peg dolls. In addition, 8 additional inclusive sessions were held and included games like boccia, ball games and balancing. The sessions had over 200+ children and families attend.

3.5.4 Caldicot Castle offered 'mini outdoor adventurers', which offered 3–7 year-olds an opportunity to have a guided tour around the grounds where they discovered bugs and creature that are native to the park and its woodlands; taking part in 'plant' eating challenges, bug and critter hunts. It concluded with controlled campfires with the children and parents enjoying toasted marshmallows.

3.5.5 We have engaged with a group of young people who are currently setting up a Youth Panel. This will be an ongoing piece of work, with the purpose to engage with other young people and inform how we can attract more young people into heritage/museums and provide suitable spaces for them to learn, meet and socialise. This follows on from Winter of Wellbeing Funding where we engaged with young people and put together their recommendations of how we reach out to this audience.

3.5.6 During all programmes we have engaged with participants, families and carers and will evaluate their responses to ensure their responses informs our future programmes and enables us to continue to provide free/low-cost activities in warm, safe environments throughout school holiday periods.

3.6 Countryside Access, Green Infrastructure and Outdoors.

3.6.1 The Countryside Access and Green Infrastructure Team removes barriers for those economically disadvantaged by promoting access to the natural environment and green space, beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to nature and heritage. By encouraging the use of countryside sites and the public rights of way network as a free-at-the-point-of-use resource for active travel, recreation and leisure use.

3.6.2 Free art activities and bug box building events were carried out over summer and an apprentice warden worked with the Countryside Access team learning new skills. Other Green Infrastructure projects supports orchard planting and community growing, new wild play areas and educational sessions and resources.

3.6.3 Visit Monmouthshire channels are developing new content promoting affordable experiences e.g. walking, leaf peeping/ autumn colours, picnics, views, stargazing, wildlife watching, play areas etc.

3.6.4 Our Gilwern outdoor centre became the hub for many opportunities, including residential stays for children with disabilities, team building visits and 1:1 support for vulnerable young people.

It is also the provider of our DofE Award, facilitating learners in achieving the skills, confidence and resilience required to be successful in this qualification, whilst providing the support and challenge that secures their progression across the bronze, silver and gold levels.

3.7 Active and Youth Engagement

3.7.1 Active play sessions were targeted at children where they can turn up and play, whilst in a supervised activity. Children were encouraged to use the safe surroundings of the outdoor space to create their own fun activities with qualified trained staff there to encourage and support games and activities. All 316 children who attended the sessions left with a healthy packed lunch provided by our on-site school catering team.

3.7.2 The 11years+ offer consisted of a diverse Programme, based upon feedback from the previous summer of activities. Our Youth Centres hosted a menu of opportunities for young people and acted as a base for a young person to access information and support when required.

In addition, the 11+ programme hosted targeted sessions for young people in year 6 only, to support transition from primary to secondary education, by means of offering events and trips within the school clusters. An opportunity for the young people to meet others who will be ential peers within school and

meet professionals working within the area and promote after school activities which will commence in September alongside the new academic year.

3.7.3 Building on our successful LGBTQ+ offer, young people had access to ongoing support and opportunities to meet other young people who are LGBT, campaign for social change and celebrate their identity.

3.7.4 MonLife's Youth Service and Sports Development worked in partnership with Gwent Police, County in the Community and Positive Futures to deliver a free six-a-side football tournament, held at Caldicot leisure centre to help reduce youth anti-social behaviour through diversionary activities and improving relationships between youths and various services like Gwent N-gage and Gwent Police.

The success of these initiatives has helped to secure Home Office, Safe Streets Funding targeting interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour in the Caldicot area.

3.7.5 Leisure centres, heritage attractions, museums, youth centres and our outdoor spaces all play a vital role in community participation, whether it be social, emotional, or physical activity, we continue to develop safe spaces where communities can gather. Through continued staff training and continuing to work closely with partners, we see these facilities as the front door to many opportunities beyond traditional delivery of programmes and sessions within.

3.7.6 Through Welsh Government exercise on prescription, our exercise referral scheme continues to offer individual centred support through partnership with our local clinicians and delivered at our leisure centres. The creation of further pathways for all through social prescribing schemes, for example: Active 60+, Free swimming and Department of Work and Pensions referral route, has helped us to target a wider population and engage with many more partners.

3.7.7 The leisure centres have targeted activities for children and young people ages 12+, throughout the summer months through initiatives such as come and play for £1, whether it be access to 3G pitches, table tennis, access to the fitness suite. The offer has been tailored from the feedback received by the young people.

3.8 Future policies, strategy and development

3.8.1 Within Monlife, the Council's heritage assets (museums, attractions and historic countryside sites) are a collective service group. In order to be successful in managing and developing these sites, the last three years has seen the development of a county-wide Heritage Strategy. A successful bid was made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and a full time Heritage Project Officer was appointed to address risks identified, bring our sites together and identify ways in which we can improve. The strategy identifies key areas of each asset and how we can manage them. This is our forward plan with strategic objectives and actions for the short, medium and long term. As a result, several projects are costed up and ready to go so that we can be

proactive and seek the funds to implement what we want instead of being reactive to funders.

As part of the Strategy, we have created a staff training programme, co-created with them, and produced a Monmouthshire Storybook for them to use as a reference guide. This will enable staff to cross-promote all our sites, provide a much richer visitor experience to those that visit as well as having more confidence to talk about Monmouthshire's wider heritage.

The strategy is due for competition in October and then implementation will begin.

3.8.2 The leisure service are in the early stage of developing a 'Leisure and Physical Activity Strategy for Monmouthshire'. The approach has been to set out and understand the wider outcomes that sport and physical activity can impact on particularly:

- health;
- rural poverty; and,
- social Justice – closing the gap

The 5 year Strategy will provide an audit of current sport and physical activity provision and activities across Monmouthshire. The strategy is for the whole of Monmouthshire but recognises the distinctiveness and characteristics of the different areas within the county.

The Strategy will also identify the gaps and needs for sport and physical activity facilities in the future. The implementation of the Strategy will help to ensure people have access to a network of accessible, quality-built sport and recreational facilities which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable.

Initial stage that have taken place include a community survey, stakeholder workshops, and further engagement will take place in the Autumn.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

4.1. A completed integrated assessment accompanies this report. **Appendix 1.**

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Having the opportunity to review our programmes data to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet local need. To continue to extend our partnership working and ensure we are meeting key council and national priorities. Continue working closely with statutory and voluntary services to ensure we are maximising the circular economy.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

There will be individual project evaluations from those services who have delivered and received financial support from the WG grant, which will assist with the overall project evaluation that is reported to the funders. Additionally,

all measures, outcomes and impacts will be measured and monitored through service business plans and the corporate plan quarterly reporting.

In addition, qualitative data has been gathered through visitor feedback, testimonials and children and responses to surveys where more than 600 responses have been gathered.

The infographic in **appendix 2** gives a snapshot of the impact received so far. More detailed evaluation will follow.

7. REASONS:

To update Council on programmes and interventions delivered by Monlife through the summer, and aimed at tackling poverty, inequality and access to doorstep services.

The collaborative and targeted approach to delivering these interventions has the potential to bring significant benefits to those individuals, families and service users across Monmouthshire. This report has demonstrated the range of interventions available and the willingness to increase this offer, increase collaborative working and find ways of engaging with those groups of people or individuals who are harder to reach.

We will ensure that where appropriate our buildings this autumn and winter are open, welcoming and we provide a space for our community to come where we can provide support, low-cost warm drinks and snacks.

We acknowledge that there is more to be done and anticipating the predicted further hardship that many are likely to face from this autumn onward, that we are prepared and ready to face these challenges and provide support to those most vulnerable.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 MonLife venues are safe, warm accessible buildings that will make every opportunity available to welcome our community and encourage longer dwell times, providing low costs warm drinks and snacks where possible.
- 8.2 Our buildings, particularly swimming pools, museums and castle will significantly be affected by the rising energy costs, potentially jeopardising the financial recovery from the pandemic. Leisure, cultural and tourism sectors are bringing together information via consultation and collectively engaging with government on the issues.
- 8.3 The table below represents the funding secured for 2022/23, to deliver the interventions and programmes detailed in the report:

Programme (Source)	Amount
A number of Town and Community Council, varying amounts	£51,000

Food and Fun (WLGA)	£88,333
Holiday Playworks (WG)	£25,606
Summer of Fun (WG)	£140,831
Families First (MCC - CCG)	£20,037
Federation of Museums	£12,756
Total Funding	£338,563

8.4 Monlife has recruited a full time Play Development lead who will bring together the success of summer 2022 and build on the partnerships and ensure targeted activities are offered. The work plan will be captured through Monmouthshire Play Action Plan.

9. CONSULTEES:

SLT.
Monlife DMT.
Monmouthshire Tackling Poverty and Inequality Working Group.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A.

11. AUTHORS:

Nicholas John, Leisure Services Manager.

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 077680 55408

Email: nicholasjohn@monmouthshire.gov.uk

