



Monmouth

Placemaking Plan Consultation Summary Report

May 2025

Purpose Of This Report

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary on the public consultation on the Monmouth Placemaking Plan, which took place between 14 March and 6 April 2025.

The consultation process was designed to gather views from residents, businesses, and others interested in the future of Monmouth on the vision and interventions for Monmouth town centre proposed to be included in the Monmouth Placemaking Plan.

The report contains:

- Information about the consultation process
- Collated feedback received
- Analysis of the feedback received

The feedback gathered through the consultation will inform the final Monmouth Placemaking Plan, to be produced in spring 2025.

How People Had Their Say

The community was able to participate in the consultation by:

- Using Monmouthshire County Council's consultation platform, Let's Talk Monmouthshire, to view information on the Placemaking Plan process,

register to receive updates, download the proposals, and complete an online version of the feedback survey.

- Attending one or both of the in-person drop-in consultation sessions held on 14 and 15 March 2025 in the Market Hall, Monmouth.
 - At these sessions, people could view a display of the draft proposals, discuss them with the consultant team and Monmouthshire County Council officers and provide feedback, and complete a hard copy of the feedback survey.
- Viewing an unattended display of the Placemaking Plan proposals in the Old Council Chamber at the Shire Hall between 17 March and 6 April.
- Completing a hard copy of the feedback survey, which could be obtained and returned to the Shire Hall throughout the consultation period.
- Emailing Monmouthshire County Council's regeneration team with comments.

The full placemaking plan document can be viewed at: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/placemaking-and-regeneration/>

Photos Of In-Person Consultation Event



Key Messages from the Consultation

Draft Vision

- **Level of support:** The vision received moderate support with 59% of respondents agreeing (combining "Agree" and "Totally agree"), while 28% disagreed and 13% remained neutral.
- **Key feedback messages:** The consultation indicates mixed opinions on the proposed vision for Monmouth as "the Jewel of the Wye Valley" that blends rich heritage with modern attractions.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** The vision might benefit from refinement to address the concerns of the significant minority who disagree, potentially emphasising practical improvements alongside the aspirational elements.

5 Goals

- **Level of support:** Heritage-focused and vitality-driven priorities received overwhelming support, with "Celebrating our history and rivers" garnering 86% agreement and "Creating a lively town centre" receiving nearly identical support levels.
- **Key feedback messages:** While most goals were strongly supported, "Making Monmouth smart" was less

popular, which has the highest disagreement rate (17%), suggesting digital initiatives are a lower priority for residents.

- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Focus implementation on heritage and vitality initiatives as these align most closely with community priorities, while potentially better explaining the benefits of smart technology initiatives.

Castle Hill Area

- **Level of support:** Strong support with 76% of respondents agreeing with improving visibility and access to the Castle area (38% strongly agreeing, 38% agreeing), while only 12% disagreed.
- **Key feedback messages:** Recurring themes included discoverability issues, perception of private ownership deterring visitors, physical constraints of the site, and desire for enhanced experiences like outdoor theatre and events.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Prioritise improved signage and interpretation, clarify public access rights, and consider developing the area for events; also explore improving connectivity to related assets such as Tibbs Bridge.

Church Street Independent Quarter

- **Level of support:** Overwhelming support with 82% of respondents endorsing plans for new entrance features, signage and lighting (50% strongly agreeing, 32% agreeing), with only 8% opposing.
- **Key feedback messages:** Key concerns included poor building conditions requiring enforcement, specific improvements needed for White Swan Court, high business rates hampering business viability, and accessibility issues caused by street furniture.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Address building condition through enforcement or support for owners, improve White Swan Court specifically, reduce street clutter, and recognise this project is already underway through Town Council efforts.

Agincourt Square Activation

- **Level of support:** Strong enthusiasm with 83% approving of regular markets and events supported by new infrastructure (48% strongly agreeing, 35% agreeing), while only 5% opposed.
- **Key feedback messages:** Respondents favoured consolidating Monmouth's currently fragmented market in Agincourt Square rather than Blestium Street,

improving market quality with local/artisanal products, and better integrating Shire Hall with the square.

- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Prioritise creating a unified market location in Agincourt Square, improve quality of market offerings, balance pedestrianisation desires with vehicle access needs, and enhance Shire Hall integration with the square.

Cinderhill Street Gateway

- **Level of support:** Mixed views with 55% supporting improvements (29% strongly agreeing, 26% agreeing), 14% neutral, and a substantial 31% opposing the changes.
- **Key feedback messages:** Major concerns centred on potential traffic disruption from narrowing roads, maintenance of planted areas, balancing aesthetics with functionality, and pedestrian/cyclist safety.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Reconsider the road narrowing aspects of the proposal, emphasise pedestrian safety improvements, ensure maintenance plans for planted areas, and consider a design more sympathetic to Monmouth's historic character.

Bus Station Improvements

- **Level of support:** Strong favour with 73% supporting improvements (39% strongly agreeing, 34% agreeing), 17% neutral, and only 10% opposing.
- **Key feedback messages:** More focus on functional and practical improvements like better shelters and weather protection, clear information displays and signage, aesthetics that complement the town's historic character, and bus service frequency improvements.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Prioritise functional shelter improvements and clear information displays, ensure design fits Monmouth's historic character, and coordinate with transport providers to address service frequency concerns even if outside the Plan's direct scope.

Slaughterhouse Arches

- **Level of support:** Overwhelming support with 84% endorsing the proposals (60% strongly agreeing, 24% agreeing), 9% neutral, and only 7% opposing.
- **Key feedback messages:** Strong emphasis on the untapped potential of this historic asset, concerns about sewage/river pollution affecting the area, flooding concerns, and the space's limited sunlight affecting its appeal as a place to linger.

- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Prioritise this well-supported project, address sewage and pollution issues as part of the development, incorporate flood resilience measures in the design, and consider the limited sunlight in activity planning for the space.

Dixton Road Gateway

- **Level of support:** Divided opinions with 48% supporting (22% strongly agreeing, 26% agreeing), 21% neutral, and 31% opposing.
- **Key feedback messages:** Major concerns about school traffic congestion, large vehicle access constraints, traffic diversion issues when the A40 is closed, and ongoing maintenance of planted areas.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Reconsider this lower-priority proposal, focusing particularly on the road narrowing aspects; if progressing, ensure designs accommodate school traffic patterns, large vehicle access needs, and address maintenance concerns.

Blestium Street and Monnow Bridge Arrival Point

- **Level of support:** Strong backing with 80% supporting enhanced facilities (47% strongly agreeing, 33% agreeing), 12% neutral, and only 5% disagreeing.

- **Key feedback messages:** Strong consensus on improving public toilet facilities, balancing attractive public space with maintaining necessary parking, enhancing the riverside setting, and ensuring designs complement Monmouth's historic character.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Prioritise public toilet improvements, carefully balance public space enhancement with parking needs, emphasise natural materials and traditional design elements, and maximise the riverside setting as a key visitor attraction.

Glendower Street Arrival

- **Level of support:** Strong favour with 73% supporting improvements (33% strongly agreeing, 40% agreeing), 18% neutral, and just 7% disagreeing.
- **Key feedback messages:** Focus on poor visitor experience and wayfinding from car parks to town centre, building maintenance and access concerns including scaffolding blocking routes, and preserving historic character while improving functionality.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Prioritise signage and wayfinding improvements, address building maintenance affecting access (potentially requiring coordination with private owners), and ensure

design interventions enhance rather than detract from historic character.

River Wye Gateway

- **Level of support:** Good backing with 68% in favour (33% strongly agreeing, 35% agreeing), 21% neutral, and 11% opposing.
- **Key feedback messages:** Strong support for a pedestrian bridge across the Wye, concerns about river pollution affecting appeal, recognition of the A40 severing the town from the river, and potential flooding issues.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Incorporate the pedestrian bridge into the proposal, address river pollution issues (potentially through advocacy if outside direct control), improve connections across the A40 barrier, and ensure flood-resilient design.

New Pedestrian Routes from Eastern Car Parks

- **Level of support:** Solid backing with 63% in favour (34% strongly agreeing, 29% agreeing), 26% neutral, and 11% disagreeing.
- **Key feedback messages:** Emphasis on poor condition of existing routes like Howells Place, need for better signage and wayfinding, recognition of property and access constraints, and particular focus on access to upper Monnow Street.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Improve existing route quality and maintenance, enhance signage to existing routes, work within property constraints to identify feasible new connections, and focus especially on improving access to upper Monnow Street.

Improving How the Town Centre Is Managed and Maintained

- Strong preference for traditional approaches, with targeting vacant property improvements receiving highest support (88% agreement), followed by

Five clear themes are evident in respondents' feedback about what was missing from the proposals:

consolidating markets (80%), while technology-oriented proposals received less enthusiasm (town centre mobile app 48%, smart technology 56%).

- **Key feedback messages:** Clear prioritisation of tangible physical improvements addressing vacant properties and enhancing markets over digital innovations, with strong support for community-led heritage events.
- **Implications for the Placemaking Plan:** Focus resources on the highly supported traditional management approaches like addressing vacancies and market improvements, while potentially scaling back or better explaining the benefits of digital initiatives.

3 Most Important

- Clear prioritisation with i) addressing vacant properties overwhelmingly identified as top priority (55% of respondents), followed by ii) regeneration of the Slaughterhouse Arches (41%) and iii) strengthening the Church Street independent quarter (30%).

What's Missing?

Main Streets and Infrastructure

The most prominent concern relates to Monnow Street's current state. Many respondents' express dissatisfaction with the temporary COVID-era pavement widening, citing

poor drainage, uneven surfaces, and accessibility issues. There's a strong desire to either improve these modifications permanently or revert to the previous layout with more on-street parking. The derelict former Peacocks building is repeatedly mentioned as an eyesore requiring urgent attention.

Accessibility, Parking and Transportation

Accessibility emerges as a critical issue, with many highlighting that the current town layout disadvantages elderly people, those with disabilities, and families with pushchairs. Numerous comments call for more parking (including some free short-stay options), suggesting that reduced parking has negatively impacted local businesses. Several respondents also note the need for improved public transport connections and better active travel infrastructure, particularly cycle routes that connect schools and different parts of town.

Cultural and Community Spaces

Many responses highlight the need for more cultural activities, better utilisation of Monmouth's musical heritage, and more entertainment for young people. There are suggestions to revive festivals (potentially on a smaller scale), improve riverside amenities, and create more social

spaces. Respondents frequently mention maintaining Monmouth's unique historical character while modernising sensibly.

Retail and Economic Vitality

Respondents express concern about empty shops and the need for a more diverse retail offering. There are calls for support for independent businesses, potentially through reduced rents or rates, and suggestions for more regular and vibrant markets. Several comments compare Monmouth unfavourably to Abergavenny in terms of retail variety and vibrancy.

Maintenance and Basic Services

A consistent theme is the need for better maintenance of existing infrastructure before new projects are undertaken. Respondents mention road repairs, regular street cleaning, weed removal, and maintenance of planters and street furniture. Several comments suggest that addressing these basics would significantly improve the town's appearance and attractiveness to visitors.