



# A Cultural Strategy for Monmouthshire

## 2025 - 2035



monmouthshire  
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## Welcome

from Council Leader, Mary Ann Brocklesby

I am always amazed at the excellence and diversity of culture in Monmouthshire. Our county really does have something for everyone. What's more I am inspired by the extraordinary breadth of talent of all ages who contribute to the vibrancy and quality of our cultural life.

Monmouthshire Council has a wonderful inheritance of historic buildings, exciting museum collections, beautiful parks, the Borough Theatre and Caldicot Castle which we hold in trust for future generations and manage on behalf of the public.

Even more importantly, and alongside Town and Community Councils, we have a role in supporting the many volunteers who make community events and performances happen, bringing people together and brightening all our lives.

The cultural industries are important to our economy. Monmouthshire is home to hundreds of amazing people – from poets to musicians, textile artists to ceramicists and film makers to landscape painters to name but a few - who create the culture we all consume and bring wealth and visitors to our county.

This Strategy aims to bring all these strands together, as part of working towards a greener, fairer Monmouthshire, where everyone can enjoy their chosen activities in our thriving towns and beautiful landscapes.



## Welcome

from Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism, Sara Burch

Monmouthshire is a wonderful place to live and visit because there is always something happening. This Cultural Strategy sets out our plans to support and amplify our county's rich cultural life.

We want a future where everyone, at every stage of life can be creative and active, can find the thing that makes their heart sing, and find other people who share their passion.

We want to be a county where strange and delightful things occur in the landscape, that hosts world-class events as well as the intimate and local, contemporary as well as traditional, and where people visit as much for cultural experience as for our breathtaking scenery. So many people give their time to run events, share their skills and enrich life in Monmouthshire towns and villages.

Our county is also full of people making a living through their creativity and by providing experiences and hospitality that give pleasure and bring people together. This strategy aims to celebrate their achievements and address how, by working together, we can create even more opportunities, more employment and more moments to treasure.

# 1. Monmouthshire's Cultural Strategy

Nestled between the gentle curves of the River Wye and the rolling hills of the Brecon Beacons, Monmouthshire stands as a vibrant testament to the interplay of natural beauty and human ingenuity. From historic towns where stories of Roman legions and mediaeval monarchs mingle with the bustle of local life to the tranquil countryside dotted with stone cottages and hidden abbeys, Monmouthshire's landscape is a canvas painted with centuries of culture, history and resilience.

These landscapes offer not only visual splendor, but also serve as places of inspiration, recreation, and connection. Artists, writers, and musicians have long turned to these hills and rivers for creative spark. The walking trails, cycle routes, and waterways invite residents and visitors alike to experience the outdoors, fostering well-being and a sense of belonging.

Monmouthshire is blessed with a wealth of tangible and intangible heritage. Its castles, such as those at Caldicot, Raglan, Chepstow, and Abergavenny, stand as enduring witnesses to the county's strategic significance across centuries of conflict and alliance. Market towns bustle with echoes of medieval trade, while rural churches, bridges, and stone cottages speak of lives lived.

But heritage in Monmouthshire is not only found in stone and mortar. It lives in stories passed down by families, in local festivals, crafts, and traditions. Agricultural fairs, music gatherings, and seasonal celebrations all contribute to a rich calendar of cultural expression anchoring communities in a shared sense of place and memory.

The Welsh language holds a cultural and historical significance for Monmouthshire, serving as a vital expression of local identity and heritage. Hosting the National Eisteddfod of Wales created a sense of excitement around the language and local eisteddfodau are regularly held in towns across the county. Integrating the Welsh language into the county's cultural strategy strengthens community cohesion, supports educational opportunities, and attracts visitors who are keen to experience authentic Welsh culture. The preservation and promotion of the Welsh language not only honours the region's rich linguistic heritage but also ensures that future generations remain connected to their roots, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.





Faith has equally played a formative role in shaping Monmouthshire's cultural landscape, with its rich tapestry of churches, chapels, and faith-based traditions reflecting centuries of spiritual and communal life. Recognising and embracing the diverse expressions of faith within the county's cultural strategy supports inclusive community engagement and mutual understanding.

By embedding both language and faith into its cultural strategy, Monmouthshire reaffirms its commitment to celebrating diversity, nurturing cultural vibrancy, and strengthening the unique character of the county.

Creating a cultural strategy for Monmouthshire will assist in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the county, ensuring that future generations can appreciate and learn from it. Implementing this strategy now is crucial because it aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of culture in enhancing the quality of life. By bringing this strategy to our communities, we can ensure that cultural resources are accessible to everyone, promoting inclusivity and diversity. This approach not only enriches the lives of individuals but also strengthens the social fabric of Monmouthshire - a well-defined cultural strategy will attract tourism, boost the local economy and create job opportunities.

The cultural strategy for Monmouthshire is an investment in the county's future. It is a statement of confidence in the power of culture to unite, inspire, and transform.

It will ensure that Monmouthshire's stories are told, its creativity is celebrated, and its communities are empowered to shape their own futures. The county's historic bridges, connected routes, and river crossings have always brought people together, fostering the exchange of ideas, customs, and commerce. By encouraging new ways of experiencing and interpreting our environment through festivals, art, storytelling, and sustainable tourism, we aim to ensure that Monmouthshire remains alive with meaning for present and future generations.

By working together across boundaries and generations, we can build a cultural legacy that will inspire, sustain, and connect us for years to come. Whether you are a lifelong resident, a creative professional, a newcomer or a visitor, you have a role to play in shaping the cultural life of this remarkable county.

Monmouthshire's story is still being written. With imagination, commitment, and collaboration, we can ensure that its next chapters are rich with possibility.

# The impact and influence of culture

Culture is a living, breathing force that shapes the fabric of our lives and communities. At its heart, culture is a vessel of shared stories, one that anchors individuals within a larger collective. Participation in cultural traditions, celebrations, and rituals strengthens the sense of belonging. Whether through language, cuisine, music, or dress, culture provides markers of identity, affirming individual worth and connection to others.

Culture broadens horizons and opens doors. Exposure to diverse artistic forms, narratives, and perspectives encourages curiosity. It provides opportunities to learn, to dream, and to imagine new possibilities. For many, cultural activities are gateways to discovering hidden talents, developing skills, and pursuing passions.

One of the most significant contributions of cultural engagement lies in its ability to support mental health and well-being. Participation in culture can reduce stress, enhance mood, and contribute to better physical health by encouraging active lifestyles. Culture supports emotional resilience and lifelong personal growth, enriching individual lives and the wider community. The act of participating in a concert or bellringing group or attending a theatre performance can lift spirits and alleviate feelings of isolation.

The community values difference and celebrates slowness - not as a lack of action, but as space to breathe, reflect, and grow.

The creative arts demand imagination, discipline, and resilience, encouraging participants to challenge themselves and explore new aspects of their personalities.



Overall, involvement in cultural activities supports emotional resilience and lifelong personal growth, enriching both individual lives and the wider community. The act of participating in a concert, attending a theatre performance or bellringing group can lift spirits and alleviate feelings of isolation.

The creative arts demand imagination, discipline, and resilience, encouraging participants to challenge themselves and explore new aspects of their personalities.



For some, the journey leads to professional paths in the creative industries - artists, writers, technicians, performers, designers, and craftspeople whose contributions enrich society. The cultivation of creative skills through cultural participation not only drives personal development but also helps build vibrant economies.

Creative industries generate employment, attract tourism, and stimulate innovation across sectors, such as film, music, fashion and design, contributing significantly to local prosperity. Events also act as an economic driver, providing opportunities to support local businesses in areas such as event management, hospitality and transport.

Monmouthshire has provided the backdrop for blockbuster films such as Captain America and long-running BBC series including Doctor Who. The film adaptation of Owen Sheers' 'Resistance' is set in the remote and stunningly beautiful Vale of Ewyas while the more recent Netflix production 'Sex Education' features a variety of picturesque locations within the inspirational Wye Valley. We also have the ITV period drama Sanditon filming extensively at Caldicot Castle, with the Michael Sheen directed BBC drama 'The Way' and Guy Ritchie directed Netflix drama "Young Sherlock Holmes" both filming in Monmouth.

### **So, what makes Monmouthshire... Monmouthshire?**

It's the quiet power of the landscape, the deep roots of heritage and the spark of creativity. Here, culture isn't something we attend, it's something we live.



Cultural Activities intrinsically link with **Tourism**,  
**Creative Capacity** and **Improved Economy** that ultimately  
benefit individuals' **Health** and **Wellbeing**.



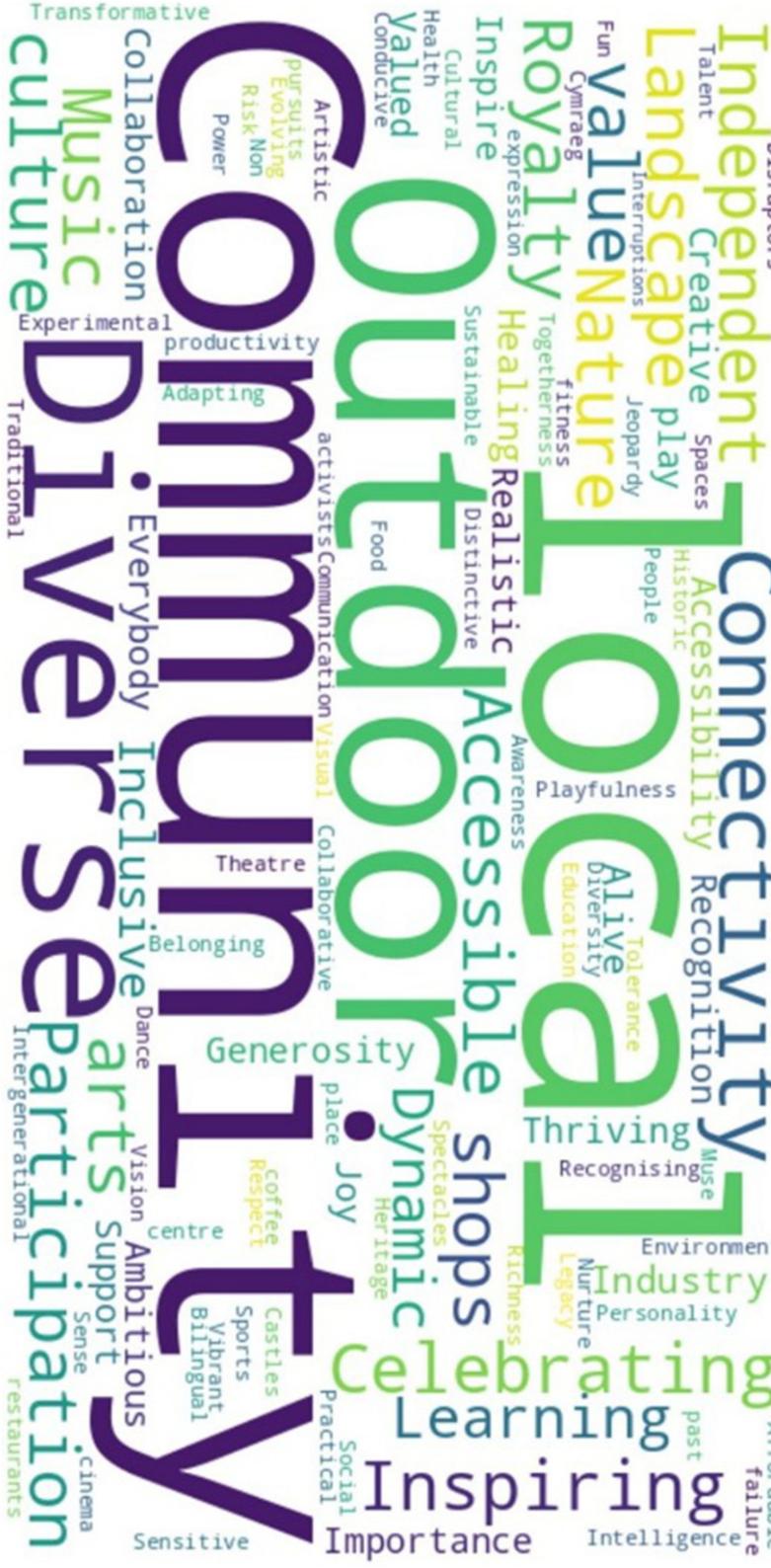
## What is happening across Monmouthshire

### Festivals & Shows

Festivals and performances are central to Monmouthshire's cultural life, providing a stage for talent, collaboration, and the sheer joy of gathering. Some highlights of our calendar include:

- **Wye Valley Festival:** Celebrating music, art, and the sublime landscape that inspires them, this festival brings together performers and audiences in venues as varied as ancient churches and outdoor woodland glades.
- **Medieval Festivals:** Reenactments, jousts and historical workshops transform visitors back in time, giving new life to Monmouthshire's castles and historic sites. History is not just preserved here - it is performed and lived.
- **Devauden Festival:** An eclectic music festival with a family-friendly vibe, Devauden draws a passionate crowd for a weekend of concerts, workshops, and fun. Local bands share the stage with national acts, showcasing the county's musical diversity.
- **Abergavenny Food Festival:** This celebrated event draws foodies from across the UK and beyond to sample the region's produce, watch live chef demonstrations, and learn about sustainable food culture. The festival is a feast for the senses, reflecting the county's rich agricultural heritage and innovative spirit.
- **Agricultural Shows:** Shows at Monmouth, Usk and Chepstow play a vital role in supporting local agriculture, stimulating the economy, and nurturing a vibrant community spirit. They unite people, preserve rural traditions and showcase the best of the region's heritage.
- **Literary and Writing Events:** Monmouthshire is a haven for writers and book lovers. Literary festivals, author talks, and book clubs abound, turning market towns into homes for storytelling and the written word.

Festivals are not just fleeting spectacles; they are year-round projects anchored by creative committees and community participation. They help foster new friendships, spark inspiration, and nurture the next generation of artists and performers.



## 2. Our Purpose

Monmouthshire's vibrant creativity, culture, and heritage will inspire thriving, connected communities and a prosperous, sustainable future by empowering creative talent, celebrating diversity, and fostering well-being for all.

## Our purpose

By 2035, our ambition is for Monmouthshire to be recognised nationally and internationally as a destination where culture flourishes for both visitors and residents, seamlessly blending history, creativity, and well-being.

Culture can address inequality, enhance personal wellbeing, and foster social connections. By providing shared spaces for expression and dialogue, cultural activities can create opportunities for inclusion, celebrate diversity and bridge divides, helping to reduce social disparities. Research shows engagement with arts and culture supports mental and emotional health and offers outlets for creativity, reflection, and stress relief. Furthermore, cultural events and traditions unite people, strengthening community bonds and a sense of belonging, which are essential for a harmonious and resilient society.

Continued investment in active travel routes promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling, reducing reliance on cars and lowering carbon emissions. They enhance community connectivity, making it easier and safer for people to access local services, schools, and workplaces.

Monmouthshire's outstanding natural heritage will be cherished and protected and together we will ensure our landscapes and biodiversity are valued for generations to come. Whether facing the challenges of climate change, demographic shifts, or economic uncertainty, Monmouthshire will be ready to adapt and respond. Culture is a source of resilience as it helps communities reflect, reimagine, and rebuild.





Our parks and open spaces will continue hosting major events and festivals, drawing thousands of visitors each year and providing local people with spaces to connect, celebrate, and play.

Through ambitious placemaking, we will breathe new life into our communities. Our museums will continue to tell the stories of our communities through their diverse collection of documents and objects, hosting exhibitions that evoke pride, challenge and reflection. Our libraries will continue to host literary events for all ages and we will continue to offer space in our buildings for artists and makers. Town centres will be revitalised, and both towns and villages will be animated by an ever-expanding array of events, creative projects, and public art. By providing safe, connected environments for leisure and recreation, we will empower individuals and families to lead active, healthy lives.

Together we will foster communities that are vibrant, resilient, and connected. Cultural activity will champion the customs, traditions, and figures that shape our rich heritage, celebrating the diversity and depth of our communities. It will contribute to a thriving, sustainable economy by driving skilled employment and creating rewarding jobs.

Monmouthshire will welcome growing numbers of visitors in ways that are sustainable and positive for local communities. Monmouthshire's towns and villages will be alive with cafés, restaurants, galleries, leisure activities, and creative businesses, offering everyone the chance to enjoy and participate in our cultural life.

The strategy is a commitment to place culture and its people's wellbeing at the centre of Monmouthshire's future. By harnessing the power of creativity, heritage, leisure, and community, we will build a county where people and places thrive together, memories are cherished, and new stories are written every day.

### 3. What makes Monmouthshire Monmouthshire?

Monmouthshire is buzzing with creativity. People speak passionately about the land itself. The Black Mountains, the Usk and Wye Valley, Tintern's mystical atmosphere, and our National Landscapes (previously AONB) create not just stunning backdrops but deep personal connections. For many, the landscape has been life changing. *"I didn't realise I was an artist until I came to Monmouthshire. The county doesn't just support creative practice, it awakens it. The soil is good, the views are better, and the impact on wellbeing and imagination is lasting"* (Workshop Participant).

This is a place where nature and culture are intertwined. The canal rich with history and wildlife is more than a historic route, a place for everyone, from walkers and families to artists and heritage lovers.

Monmouthshire boasts a remarkable density of castles and churches. These heritage assets are not just monuments; they are reminders of the county's long and varied past, and often serve as venues for events, performances, and festivals.

The county's identity as a borderland adds complexity. There is a strong sense of place, of movement and meeting points. Improving cycle and walking routes help people experience the landscape in a more connected and sustainable way.

From Abergavenny to Usk, Chepstow to Monmouth, each town has its own personality and traditions. The living levels at Magor and Undy reflect a rich historical landscape shaped by past industrial and rural activities, significantly influencing local identity, community life, and the preservation of South Wales' cultural heritage. The network of villages creates a cultural patchwork that is unique to Monmouthshire.





## What's happening across Monmouthshire

### Art

Creativity in Monmouthshire flourishes through a dense network of local groups and clubs and Monmouthshire's landscape is dotted with creative hubs where ideas are born, rehearsed, shared, and celebrated.

- Wye Valley Sculpture Garden provides an opportunity to experience creative practice.
- Artists Meet Ups like Abergavenny & Grosmont Drink and Draw where artists gather to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and find new inspiration in each other's work.
- Dramatic Monmouthshire: From pantomimes to serious theatre, amateur dramatics groups provide a supportive home for aspiring performers and backstage wizards.

This grassroots activity is the lifeblood of the county, ensuring that culture is always evolving and that everyone finds their creative voice.

# What's happening in our communities

We asked our local communities what exciting things are happening in the area and their answers painted a vibrant picture of culture, community, and celebration. These are just some of the responses:

Local organisations help drive creativity. Dance Blast brings movement and energy to the community, Suitcase Theatre offers imaginative performances, and the Film Society fosters thoughtful discussion through cinema. The amateur arts scene is thriving too, with passionate people creating and performing across the county.

Music has a strong presence, from world-renowned Rockfield Studios to events like Castell Rock that tie performance directly to place. Pubs such as the Hen & Chickens and the King's Arms in Abergavenny, are part of the cultural ecosystem where local stories, songs, and community gatherings thrive.

The AM and Raglan Music Festivals, and the Wye Valley River Festival bring people together through music, performance, and shared values. VE Day commemorations also stand out, reminding us of the deep connections between culture and history.

Agricultural shows in Monmouth, Usk and Chepstow capture the vibrant spirit of rural life where tradition meets innovation in the heart of the countryside.

Monmouthshire boasts a vibrant sporting scene which enriches its cultural life. Chepstow Racecourse, renowned for hosting prestigious fixtures such as the Welsh Grand National draws crowds from the region and beyond.



Our picturesque countryside is an attractive destination for amateur and professional cyclists, from local sportives to the Tour of Britain. These are opportunities for participation and spectating and bringing local communities together.

But it's not just the big events that people are talking about - smaller, more unique events are equally loved. From the Plant and Seed Swap by Transition Town Monmouth to the wonderfully quirky duck herding at Monmouth Carnival, there's a joyful sense of creativity everywhere. The Wye Makes and Far Open Art Trail give artists a chance to shine. There's even a "May the Fourth Be With You" performance for Star Wars fans.

And whether it's a community archaeological dig, a theatre production in an open space or a cosy book club gathering in a local community centre or even a pub, the cultural calendar is full of surprises.

The places that host these activities are just as important. Beloved venues include the Borough Theatre, Melville Theatre, Bookish and the bustling Abergavenny Market. The Savoy Theatre in Monmouth and the Chapel and Art Shop in Abergavenny offer more intimate cultural experiences. The newly refurbished Drill Hall in Chepstow and Monmouthshire's many community halls hosts events of all kinds.

Creative spaces like TogetherWorks in Caldicot and relaxed settings like The Boat Inn, Penallt, and Robin Hood, Monmouth, a 'Night out' supported cinema showing in a village hall, prove that culture happens everywhere - from formal venues to informal community hubs. Even the natural beauty of Wentwood Forest plays a role in Monmouthshire's cultural life.

These events embody Monmouthshire's ethos of "everyone welcome" - where amateurs and professionals, old hands and curious newcomers, are all encouraged to participate.



# What's happening across Monmouthshire

## Community

Community is the golden thread running through the fabric of Monmouthshire, evident in the multitude of grassroots and community-led events that light up the calendar year-round. Among them are:

- **Monmouth Lantern Parade:** Each winter, Monmouth's streets are transformed into a river of light as locals craft and carry lanterns, illuminating both the town and the bonds between neighbours. What began as a simple act of gathering has blossomed into a cherished annual tradition, bringing people of all ages together to celebrate creativity and unity.
- **Mari Lwyd Tradition in Chepstow:** Folk heritage is alive and kicking in Monmouthshire. The ancient ritual of Mari Lwyd, where a horse's skull, decked in ribbons, leads a singing procession from pub to pub. This event keeps the myth and magic of Welsh folklore pulsing through Chepstow's streets.
- **Usk in Bloom:** Every summer, the town of Usk explodes in a riot of colour as locals compete and collaborate to make their gardens and public spaces blossom. It's not just about flowers: it's about pride, friendly rivalry, and the collective effort that transforms the entire town.
- **Monmouth Living Windows:** Shopfronts become living canvases, animated by pop-up performances, art installations, and imaginative window displays. This event blurs the lines between everyday life and performance, inviting passers-by to pause, reflect, and connect with the creativity at the community's core.
- **Pride Events:** Monmouthshire's Pride celebrations, wherever they spring up are thriving and growing. These events champion inclusivity, diversity, and the right for everyone to live authentically. From rainbow parades to community discussions, Pride in Monmouthshire is a beacon of acceptance and celebration.

These events thrive on volunteer power, local know-how, and an openness to all, making them the true soul of the county. They are more than just dates in the diary; they are living expressions of Monmouthshire's warmth and togetherness.



## 4. Accountability and Action

Culture is a vital driver for achieving Monmouthshire's broader ambitions and realising the goals of the council and its partners. Our long-term vision is ambitious but realistic and will bring together a variety of organisations to ensure delivery.

Delivering this strategy will require steady and consistent leadership, good governance, and close collaboration by individuals and organisations from across Monmouthshire and beyond. Delivery will happen through creative arts, heritage and leisure organisations who collectively make up the 'cultural sector' alongside its wider community groups, businesses, education providers, and public bodies, each of whom has a role to play in developing and promoting culture across the county and all benefit from doing so.

Effective delivery also relies on the proactive involvement and leadership of the County Council, community and town councils, alongside stakeholders and partners. Whilst the council ensures that the cultural strategy aligns with wider community goals and local development plans, community and town councils support and fund events and venues and act as vital links to local residents, fostering a sense of ownership, encouraging participation, and ensuring that the strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of the people it serves.

Monmouthshire Council supports cultural activity through several roles:

- **Regulator:** Oversees planning, licensing, and public safety at events through collaboration with internal departments, emergency services and hospitality businesses.
- **Educator:** puts cultural experience at the heart of the school curriculum and provides lifelong adult education opportunities.
- **Public Realm Steward:** Maintains streets, town centres, parks, open spaces and public rights of way to ensure they are clean and accessible culture filled spaces, enjoyable to all.
- **Landlord:** Responsible for venues where cultural activities take place, partnering with tenants, often volunteer-run to improve use, access, and sustainability.
- **Funder:** Channels funding and resources to support cultural initiatives through partnerships.
- **Information Hub:** Our Tourism team and the Visit Monmouthshire website promote the county as a visitor destination. Working in partnership with Town Councils, hospitality and culture businesses and events promoters we can do more to raise the profile of Monmouthshire and develop audiences.
- **Service Provider:** We operate museums, theatres, heritage sites, leisure centres and libraries.

As a body with county wide responsibility in the areas listed above we will strive to create opportunities for culture to thrive and develop within Monmouthshire in partnership with our communities and creative practitioners.

Engaging with local businesses, cultural organisations, and educational providers broadens the reach of the strategy, leverages expertise, and fosters innovative approaches to cultural development. The council with its partners can maximise the cultural, social, and economic impacts of the strategy, contributing to the vibrancy and resilience of Monmouthshire's communities.

Within the first year, a Cultural Partnership Forum (CPF) for Monmouthshire will be established. This Forum will be responsible for overseeing the implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the cultural strategy. The Cultural Partnership Forum will comprise representatives drawn from the public, private, and voluntary sectors, ensuring a broad mix of expertise and perspectives relevant to Monmouthshire's cultural landscape.

- The Forum will provide strategic leadership for the cultural strategy, shaping priorities and ensuring alignment with local and national agendas.
- It will monitor delivery against agreed objectives in the action plan, review outcomes and impact, and make recommendations for adaptation or improvement as needed.
- Forum members will continue to engage with communities who have participated bringing this Cultural Strategy to fruition.

- Forum members will engage with hard-to-reach community groups ensuring that everyone is able to participate
- Members will act as ambassadors, engaging their respective networks and communities to foster participation and gather feedback.
- An annual report will be developed to give an update to reflect progress, challenges, and emerging opportunities.

By establishing a robust framework, Monmouthshire aims to create a sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic cultural sector, ensuring that cultural activity is embedded in decision-making and delivers meaningful benefits for communities, partners, and visitors alike.



The strategy has an initial 2-year action plan that will establish clear foundations for delivery. Establishing baseline data in the action plan is crucial as it will allow the CPF to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of stated actions against a clear starting point.

The CPF will develop this initial action plan to create a 10-year plan.

The actions within the plan have been grouped into three key themes: Places, People and Creative Capacity. The right combination of Places (buildings, spaces and facilities) and a great programme of events and activities can inspire People, creating opportunities and learning, which will ensure we grow Creative Capacity through our communities and county.

**Places** - our buildings, spaces, and facilities provide the canvas upon which cultural activity takes place. They must be accessible, flexible, and welcoming, designed to host a rich programme of events and activities that spark curiosity, inspire learning, and forge lasting connections.

**People** – culture in Monmouthshire doesn't exist in a vacuum – it lives and breathes through its people. From community volunteers and storytellers to ambitious artists and active audiences. It is people who bring vibrancy, meaning and connection to the county's cultural life.

More than just events or venues, culture here is a living network of relationships, shared memories and mutual care. Monmouthshire's cultural life also helps tackle social isolation, especially in rural areas offering social connection, safe, inclusive spaces and renewed purpose. Culture offers something vital in these moments: the opportunity to be part of something meaningful.

Community participation has the power to build empathy, belonging and emotional resilience. Cultural moments often feel bigger than just entertainment – they are transformative.

Ultimately, people make culture possible. They show up, create, organise, volunteer, remember and imagine. When people feel included, respected and supported, that culture becomes stronger and truly alive.

**Creative Capacity** is the heartbeat of a vibrant cultural ecosystem. It is the measure of our ability to nurture and unleash imagination, innovation and artistic excellence within our communities.

However, creativity needs care, attention and investment if it's to thrive. Across the county, there's a shared desire not just to protect our cultural life, but to nurture the creative capacity of our communities from early years through adulthood.





Monmouthshire is blessed with a rich tapestry of stories, landscapes, and creative energy. Its cultural strategy is a declaration of confidence in that heritage and a commitment to future prosperity. With a carefully designed action plan, Monmouthshire can ensure that its cultural strategy is more than a statement of intent, it becomes a catalyst for genuine change.

It will enable the county to set priorities, mobilise resources, build partnerships, and measure progress in a transparent and inclusive way. Most importantly, it will empower communities to shape their own cultural destiny, ensuring that Monmouthshire's legacy endures for generations to come.

The strategy and action plan together will guide Monmouthshire toward a future where culture is not just preserved, but celebrated, developed, and shared by all.

## 5. Measuring our Success

This chapter outlines a detailed Cultural Strategy Action Plan for Monmouthshire for a two-year period, focusing on enhancing creative capacity, community engagement, and place development through a series of targeted actions. The plan emphasizes partnerships, education, accessibility, and sustainable cultural growth to benefit residents and visitors alike. In March 2027, a new action plan will be developed and published which will have clear baseline data within to show transparency, changes made to focus the strategy and identify emerging impacts.

Theme	Creative Capacity				
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
1	Establish a Culture Partnership to facilitate the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and its future development	Appointment of Cultural Forum and Chair Agreed existing workplan for first 12 months First review/revision of action plan – January 2027 Developing and agree a 3-year action plan from April 2027 – March 2030	<a href="#">Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf</a>	MCC and partners	April 2026
2	Establish clear baseline data that provides a factual starting point against which all future progress and changes can be measured	Agree baseline data for effective monitoring and evaluation by setting measurable indicators of success, and offering transparent evidence of what has changed due to the strategy's implementation	<a href="#">Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf</a>	Cultural Forum and Creative Cardiff	June 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
3	Sustained focus on shared marketing and publicity resources for the cultural sector in Monmouthshire	<p>Review of current opportunities for creative community to share information</p> <p>Develop an events calendar that utilises our spaces to deliver events for residents and visitors making a positive contribution to the local economy.</p>	<a href="#"><u>Destination management - Visit Monmouthshire</u></a> New version to be added	MCC	June 2026
4	Review current community education course offer and identify opportunities to align with Cultural Strategy to enhance opportunities to our communities	<p>Review completed and action plan devised on existing or new courses offered</p> <p>Number of additional venues offering community learning courses to extend offer to communities</p>	<a href="#"><u>Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Library Strategy 2025-2030</u></a>	MCC Community Learning Services	August 2026
5	Create a funding database that encourages organisations to work together and coordinate applications to avoid duplication where possible	Create a funding database that developed and made widely available for cultural activity	<a href="#"><u>Monmouthshire Economic and Employment Strategy</u></a>	MCC Economy and Employment service	December 2026

Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
6	To design and deliver a Creative Alliance across Monmouthshire that will create peer support and shared resources for those involved in events and activity planning.	Establish a Monmouthshire wide Creative Alliance in 2026  Create a database of resources available to local events and activities  Number of events and activities supported through the Creative Alliance  Establish cost benefit of shared resources to local events and activities	<a href="#"><u>The National Events Strategy for Wales 2022 to 2030</u></a>	Cultural Partnership Forum	December 2026
<b>Theme</b>		<b>People</b>			
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
7	Establish baseline data of those currently engaging in cultural activity	Baseline data established ready to engage wider audiences	<a href="#"><u>Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Destination management - Visit Monmouthshire</u></a>	MCC	December 2026
8	To bring together high-quality opportunities for cultural volunteering with a particular emphasis on increasing the diversity of volunteers.	Collate and analyse volunteering data from cultural, arts and leisure organisations  Identify key areas for improving volunteering based on data and stakeholder consultation	<a href="#"><u>Volunteering - Monlife Vision for Volunteering sets out 10-year plan for volunteer work - Museums Association</u></a>	MCC / GAVO and WCVA and volunteering partners	February 2027

Theme	Place				
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
9	Develop and deliver public art exhibitions in locations which are underrepresented in the county and which will increase footfall to the area.	<p>Establish a Public Arts Policy and Guidance for Monmouthshire</p> <p>Identify and support locations for art exhibitions</p> <p>Procure and invite an identified cohort of artists to exhibit</p>	<a href="#"><u>Community and Corporate Plan - Version 3.0_Council.pdf</u></a>	MCC Cultural Partnership Forum	March 2027
10	To ensure that consideration is given to the infrastructure for events and activities to enable participants to attend safely	All new public realm initiatives have considered appropriate lighting, accessibility and safety to increase cultural opportunities across our county	Placemaking	Cultural Partnership	March 2027

All Themes					
Action Number	Action we will take	Measuring progress of key milestones	Links to other strategies/plans	Lead Organisation	When by?
11	Continue to implement our:  Annual Culture, Heritage and Arts Delivery Plans.  Heritage Strategy	Appointment of Cultural Forum and Chair  Agreed existing workplan for first 12 months  First review/revision of action plan – January 2027  Developing and agree a 3-year action plan from April 2027 – March 2030		MCC and partners	Ongoing
12	Review this Action Plan annually, maintaining a three-year detailed forward plan	First review of Action Plan January 2027 and additional action plan written and publicised		Cultural Partnership Forum	January 2027