

MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

September 2026

Countryside Access Service Delivery Update

Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Improvement Plan 2020-2030 (CAIP) sets out shared objectives for the county's rights of way network, countryside sites and wider public access. The plan is based on detailed research, analysis and extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders. It is ambitious and realistic about the challenges faced, but contributes to making Monmouthshire a healthier, more prosperous and enjoyable place in which to live and visit. The delivery of the plan is monitored by Monmouthshire Local Access Forum and this delivery update is produced to help with this on-going task.

Staff News – Morag Sinton Volunteer Co-ordinator has been on a sabbatical for the past year. She has decided not to return and officially left on 1st September 2026. Morag helped establish Pathcare and the Pathcare walking Group. David Holtham has been her replacement and will continue to fulfil the role until the end of this financial year.

Well Maintained

- **Green flags** were awarded for Castle Meadows and Rogiet CP.
- **Thirty bridges** have been installed around the county and these are currently being visited to check they are installed correctly and to fit any gates or ramps required. This should be completed by the end of September.
- **Crossways Bridleway bridge** and surfacing have been completed.
- **Stile Monitoring** – Work has started to enable us to create a quarterly report to monitor furniture changes and track removal of stiles.
- We will be looking at providing **bridge inspection training** for volunteers in the spring. Further information will be provided nearer the time.
- Cutting contracts took place in August for Usk Valley Walk and Wye Valley Walk
- A second **pro-active clearance scheme** is currently underway.
- **Devil's Bridge, Clydach**. – Tenders have been received and contract for bridge works awarded. Inception meeting to be held shortly.
- **Inglis Bridge Re-opens**.

Inglis Bridge reopened to pedestrians at the end July, following the completion of major refurbishment works. Currently the bridge has block stone in place to prevent vehicular access and in September these are being placed with bollards.



Ribbon-cutting ceremony (left to right): Catherine Jones, Head of Osbaston Primary School, with two pupils, Catherine Fookes MP for Monmouthshire, Leader of Monmouthshire County Council, Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Cllr Rob Barrell, Mayor of Monmouth, Lt Col. Steve Little, Royal Monmouth Royal Engineers Monmouthshire (Militia), Cllr Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism for Monmouthshire County Council.

The reopening marked an important milestone for the Monmouth community, restoring a valued pedestrian link that has been closed since September 2024 after safety concerns were identified. The bridge is an important route for residents, schoolchildren, and visitors, connecting communities across the River Monnow.

To celebrate the work coming to an end, an event was held at the site, which included pupils and staff from Osbaston Primary School. They were joined at the event by the local Member of Parliament, Catherine Fookes MP, and the Mayor of Monmouth, Cllr Rob Barrell, Monmouthshire County Council's Leader, Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Cllr Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism, and Ministry of Defence contractors whose work has helped make the bridge crossing open once again.

Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader of Monmouthshire County Council, said: "We know how important Inglis Bridge is to the people of Monmouth and understand how much residents have missed this vital link. We are delighted that the bridge is now reopened and would like to thank the Ministry of Defence, the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales, contractors and all partners who have worked together to reach this point."



Above: Monmouth Town Councillors and County Councillors gather with Monmouth Mayor Cllr Rob Barrell, Catherine Fookes MP, Monmouthshire County Council Leader Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, and Cabinet Members Cllr Ian Chandler, Cllr Catrin Maby, Cllr Angela Sandles and Cllr Sara Burch, with Lt Col Steve Little of the Royal Monmouth Royal Engineers Monmouthshire (Militia).

Cllr Rob Barrell, Mayor of Monmouth said: "Monmouth Town Council is delighted to see the refurbishment of Inglis Bridge coming to an end. As the only remaining bridge of its kind still in public use, it is both a unique part of Monmouth's heritage and a vital link for residents, schoolchildren and walkers. I would like to thank the MOD for providing the funding that made this project possible. I was also impressed by the care taken to protect the River Monnow during the works, with the bridge removed to a nearby location for refurbishment to avoid any risk of contamination."

Owned by the Ministry of Defence, Inglis Bridge is a unique and historic structure that has long served as an important pedestrian crossing for the local community. Monmouthshire County Council has worked closely with the Ministry of Defence, the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales and other stakeholders throughout the project to support progress towards reopening the bridge safely.

Community Involvement and Partnership Development

Countryside Site Consultations



A walk and Talk was held on Saturday 5th September at Clydach Gorge. Participants heard about the history of the site and future plans. Walks and talks were held at 10.30am and 2.30pm.

Throughout September, we're inviting local residents and visitors to Clydach Ironworks to share their views on the historic site and most importantly what ideas there are for improvements.

We want to consider accessibility, signage, how the site is managed, used and what improvements are required. Short and long term project ideas are being sought. Ideas and suggestions will help ensure any plans for the site reflect what visitors feel would benefit the site and its place in the local landscape.

If you go to [Let's Talk Clydach Ironworks](#) | [Let's Talk Monmouthshire](#) you can find out more about proposals for the site and participate in the survey.

The survey runs from Tuesday 1 September, until midnight on Wednesday 30 September 2026.

Protecting and Enhancing Goytre Hall Wood

Goytre Hall Wood covers around 3.5 hectares and is a restored ancient woodland providing valuable habitat for wildlife and a peaceful place to enjoy nature and is a short walk from the canal. The site



is managed by the Countryside Service. It faces a number of challenges from tree diseases, invasive species, changing environmental conditions. We are looking to carry out targeted management and restoration to improve the woodlands resilience and ensure the site flourishes in years to come.

Grant funding has been found to conduct a range of projects including improving paths, seating and interpretation. Advice from Bethany Handley a former LAF representative has been included in the project, such as providing a disabled parking bay.

For further information and to complete the short consultation on what matters most to you at the woods go to [Goytre Hall Wood Restoration](#) | [Let's Talk Monmouthshire](#)

Throughout the project there will be activities and opportunities to be involved in the project. We would like to create a volunteer group for the site. If you are interested in volunteering opportunities at this site, please contact: GarethJohn@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Community Link Volunteers

- The Community Links Officers and Volunteer groups have been busy with various projects. One notable project at Dingestow will connect four farms. Films are being produced to showcase the work being undertaken, promote accessible routes and the doorstep opportunities being provided. Filming took place in mid-August with Chepstow volunteers and Grosmont volunteers at the end of August. Pontypool volunteers are being filmed in September with other groups now being scheduled in.
- Llanbadoc Volunteers have surveyed and began clearance on changed Pathcare route 14.
- Grosmont Group have conducted lots of clearance on promoted routes and install three metal fingerposts on Three Castle Walk.
- Friends of Castle Meadows: - clearance and tidying
- Llanishen: - 2 gates installed, small bridge and path vegetation cleared in day two of the Dufryn project.
- Pontypool Ramblers: - replaced four bad stiles with four pedestrian gates and other improvements on Dingestow route.
- Llangybi Volunteer Group have been replaced two stiles at Llangybi Castle Farm.
- Whitecastle Volunteer Group – Installed earth steps and undertaken clearance. Identified an alternative path, to bypass the currently closed Tal-y-coed bridge, connecting the village to the local pub/restaurant. 2 stiles were replaced for gates, and permission was obtained from landowner to use permissive path.
- A new Volunteer group at Tregare Community has been identified.
- Several task days were cancelled in the fifth heatwave.
- Self-supervised task days continued whilst the Community Links Officers were on leave in August.
- Ongoing work continuing re potential for Living Levels Grant in 2027, which would enable a walking festival and more volunteers to be established.
- Tuesday volunteer maintenance group continues to expand, and a new team (affectionally known as team “Bravo”) has been receiving training.
- Two new CAMS volunteers have come forward. Training is occurring in September.

Knowing What's Out There.

- Current MCC website version of Section 53B Register has been updated. [Definitive Map Modification Orders Register - Monmouthshire](#)
- CAMS work to install new public registers is nearing completion. Testing will be held in late September for a launch in the Autumn.

Wales Coast Path - Record your journey on the path



The official Wales Coast Path app has a map showing where the path goes and where you are on the path. Record your walks whilst on the path or add them into the app later - handy if you are too tired after a long day walking.

The app will help prevent getting lost on the path and tracks your progress - showing how much of each region you have completed and of the entire path - handy to know where else you need to tick off! [More details about the app](#) (available on iOS and Android).

Are you a business on the path?

Read the [latest business bulletin](#) (Autumn) dedicated to helping to maximise business opportunities on the path. Access free, easy to use and downloadable partner marketing materials to generate more footfall and be seen by more customers from the path.

[Subscribe to business bulletins](#) with your email address and go to "Projects" and tick the box for Wales Coast Path. Business e-bulletins are open to all sectors with an interest in the path.



Chepstow Autumn Walking Festival 23-25 October



Discover the best of Monmouthshire, with walks exploring local produce, trig points, geology, wildlife and much more. There are also Festival Fring Events.

Visit the website for more information and booking.

[Chepstow Autumn Walking Festival - Walking Event in Chepstow, Chepstow - Visit Monmouthshire](#)

[Chepstow Walking Festival 2025](#)



Wales Coast Path Collaboration & Visit - Newfoundland, Canada

- Our friends in Newfoundland, Canada are building their own coast path and visited the Wales Coast Path and our partners who make it happen.

Here is a [write up of their visit](#) to see "how Wales did it". There was lots of learning from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean!

Other News

Mapping Litter: - The University of Gloucestershire are developing a project to map litter across the UK. The Wye Valley AONB and MCC Countryside Access think it is a good idea and will encouraging our volunteers to get involved. Let us know if you are interested.

<https://fast-litter.org/>

[Active Travel England Rural Design Guide](#) This Rural Design Guide, produced by Active Travel England (ATE), provides technical guidance on planning and designing walking, wheeling and cycling routes and facilities in rural areas. This guidance is intended primarily for local authorities but can be used by anyone with an interest in making active travel an attractive option in rural areas. This could include local people making short trips to reach everyday destinations such as work, school or the shops, as well as people visiting the countryside for recreation.

Connecting people to local spaces - Ramblers Cymru

From Community Development Officer, Wales/Rebecca Brough, Policy and Advocacy Manager.

Here is an overview of two Ramblers Cymru community projects: the Carmarthenshire Pathways partnership and the Walks for Women project in North Wales.

The Carmarthenshire Pathways project aimed to train volunteers to survey lower-priority paths and provide Carmarthenshire County Council with baseline network data. Members heard that 149 volunteers were trained, more than eighty volunteers conducted at least one survey, around 920 kilometres of paths were surveyed, 149 issues were resolved, and thirty-five stiles were replaced with gates. Heather explained that the project had moved into a third year focused on an "adopt a path" model, with targets including twenty path adoptions, engagement with fifty new volunteers, monthly "snipping strolls", ranger days and volunteer thank-you events.

The Walks for Women project, initially funded through an Active North Wales Innovation Grant and aimed at increasing activity among young women aged 18 to 25 in Holyhead, Rhyl and Wrexham.

Heather explained that the project had learned that partnership working was more effective than general advertising to individuals.

The project had worked particularly well with the Barod project and had now been extended to September 2027. In its second phase, the project remains women-only but has widened the age range to women aged eighteen and over. The strongest current partnership is with the North Wales Women's Centre in Rhyl, where forty women had engaged since March and a regular weekly group had developed. The project is considering sustainability, including walk leader training, and is continuing to explore opportunities in Wrexham and Holyhead.

Useful information

Public Rights of Way Working Map [Public Rights of Way - Public Rights of Way Map](#)

[Countryside Access Improvement Plan](#)

[Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide](#)

[Public Consultations including Public Path Orders](#)

[Read more about the Countryside Code](#) - watch out for changes coming shortly!

Be adventure SMART [Read how to be more prepared before heading out onto the path](#)

[Monmouthshire PROW Biodiversity Action Plan](#)

[Visit Monmouthshire](#) details the walks, rides and events that are available, along with accommodation and other attractions.

To report a problem, use our interactive working map link above. Alternatively, you can email countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk or write to

Countryside Access, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall. The Rhaydr, Usk
NP161GA

Urgent issues such as a broken bridge can be reported on 01633 644850.