



Service Report 21/22



www.monlife.co.uk



monmouthshire
sir fynwy



MonLife



Mission:

To promote healthier lives and inspirational experiences, and promote the vibrancy of Monmouthshire as a great place to be.



Vision:

Enriching people's lives and creating vibrant places.



Aims:

- Enrich people's lives through participation and activity
- Build strong communities in Monmouthshire
- Developing leadership skills for our future generations



Values:

- Openness
- Fairness
- Kindness
- Flexibility
- Teamwork

Glossary



Active 60+ Programme

Offers support for people aged 60 and over to become more physically active through in-person or online classes: including yoga, pilates, tai-chi, gentle exercise and even virtual coffee catch-ups.

Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) Consultation

This consultation requires all local authorities in Wales to continuously improve their Active Travel routes.

Engage to Change (E2C)

Engage to Change (E2C) is Monmouthshire's Youth Council. The aim of these sessions is to ensure that the voice of young people in Monmouthshire's needs continue to be heard and supported.

'Food and Fun' School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)

A school-based education programme that provides food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children during the school summer holidays.

Learn to Swim Programme

Is a framework used by organisations in order to help both children and adults to learn how to swim.

National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS)

A Welsh Government funded scheme which aims to standardise exercise referral opportunities across all Local Authorities and Local Health Boards.

Re-engage program

Provides weekly health and fitness activity groups on Zoom, tailored for older people. Includes 45 minutes of gentle exercise, plus time to socialise in a friendly setting.

TOTs Sessions

Activity sessions run by MonLife Active for young children and toddlers aged below 5 years.

The Duke of Edinburgh Awards

The Award is a developmental framework used by organisations who work with young people (aged 14-24) in order to help them learn new skills and build life-long belief in themselves.

The Monmouthshire Games (TMG)

A summer holiday activities provision provided by MonLife. TMG is based on learning new skills, developing confidence, meeting new people and most importantly having fun through sport.

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Ar gyfer meddwl, corff ac enaid ein cymuned
For the mind, body and soul of our community

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MonLife

Key Headlines from 21/22

This report covers the most challenging period of our lives with COVID and other significant world developments impacting us all. We are very proud of the outcomes delivered as a result of the various programmes and activities across Monmouthshire during this period. MonLife, similar to other departments, played it's part in assisting many Council objectives: from improving well-being, leisure, youth engagement, outdoors, learning, community cohesion, tourism, culture and heritage for all. The progress made in delivering the priorities of improving health and well-being, responding to the climate and nature challenge, enjoying our destination and our rich countryside offer, active travel, play and supporting the most vulnerable in society are all highlighted in this snapshot.



Ian Saunders
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



+1.8 million

was invested into MonLife Active Leisure Centres between 21-22



2,359

children, in total, are now learning to swim with MonLife Active



8,500

children received lifesaving water safety sessions on a variety of programmes



7,240

meals were served to children over Summer 2021 through SHEP



432

inclusive & disability specific sport & physical activity sessions were delivered



1,421

young people attended open access play sessions

MonLife

Key Headlines from 21/22



+£350K

funds granted to look after our ancient monuments and historic sites



119,619

people visited MonLife Heritage attractions between 21/22



+£170k

invested in upgrading and improving MonLife heritage sites



711

young people are currently enrolled on the 'Duke of Edinburgh Awards'



+8 million

in funding was secured for MonLife Outdoor projects between 21/22



£131,714

invested in Monmouthshire's outdoor infrastructures

2,782

new users downloaded our app between 21/22



54.995

social media followers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & LinkedIn



157,227

website visitors between 21/22 (up by 90% YOY)



<https://www.monlife.co.uk>

Volunteers

Key Headlines from 21/22



OVER 200

volunteers actively engaged with MonLife in 21/22



29

opportunities for volunteers across MonLife service areas



4,765

volunteer hours in total across 21/22



100%

of volunteers kept in touch with us throughout lock down



90%

retention rate of MonLife volunteers



100%

of services in MonLife have active volunteers



2

volunteers retired after 50+ years of volunteering



Alan and Stephanie Poulter started volunteering soon after they came to live in Trellech in 1972. When asked what they enjoyed most about volunteering, they said, "Everything, but especially meeting and talking to people."

Although they are now taking a step back from MonLife countryside volunteering, they will no doubt still be busy. We wish them all the best in the future and want to say a HUGE THANK YOU for your service.

<https://www.monlife.co.uk/connect/volunteering>

Destination Management

Key Headlines from 21/22

The focus of Visit Monmouthshire's marketing activity has changed during COVID to target residents with shop local campaigns, walks and other wellbeing activities, and to host online media webinars to generate press coverage and post-pandemic visits to Monmouthshire. We also worked collaboratively with other South East Wales local authorities to develop a Group Travel Toolkit, undertake travel trade research and organise group buyer familiarization trips to help businesses attract more group visits when restrictions eased to aid recovery.



424,303

unique visitors to the 'Visit Monmouthshire' website



66,635

website referrals to local businesses in Monmouthshire



30

Blog posts published on the 'Visit Monmouthshire' website



32

Covid-update newsletters sent to visitor economy businesses



10

non-Covid related newsletters sent visitor economy businesses



6

newsletters sent to over 5,630 (average open rate - 33%)



19,740

emails sent out customers via our database



470

visitor economy businesses now added to our database

Destination Management

Key Headlines from 21/22



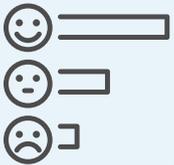
18,505

social media followers on
Facebook, Instagram & Twitter



7.1 million+

people reached via 5 featured
travel articles



293

respondend to Monmouthshire's
'Destination Survey'



1,569

Tickets sold for more than 41
MonLife events



100

'shop local' banners received
maintenance to maintain
there vibrancy



500

copies of our 2021 'Visitor
Guide' distributed to key
businesses and attractions



52

independent businesses featured
across 5 Monmouthshire towns
in a collaborated campaign with
@thewelshrarebit



682

experiences including different
accommodations, attractions
and activities promoted on
Visit Monmouthshire

<https://www.monlife.co.uk/connect/volunteering>



MonLife Active

Key Headlines from 21/22

MonLife Active

Key Headlines from 21/22

The services provided by our Leisure Centres will be even more important as we move towards recovery and supporting communities to return to improved fitness, activity, and mental health. Therefore, elected members of MCC have reaffirmed a commitment to investing in and developing leisure facilities to support the health and wellbeing of current and future generations.

The past 12 months has seen a lot of investment go into our leisure facilities and provisions. Such investment has included a 1.8m refurbishment of leisure facilities in Abergavenny and Chepstow; further development of our Fitness Class via the provisions of Les Mills Sprint, Body pump, Body Balance, Body Combat and Virtual Classes; and investing in our staff through fitness qualifications and further upskilling.



1.7 million

invested into Abergavenny Leisure Centre



£100k

invested into Chepstow Leisure Centre pool



4,677

children attended TMG throughout 21/22



6,065

live memberships at the end of 2022



140

participants engaged in the new 'Active 60+' programme



59

vulnerable children were funded to access TMG



150

children accessed our free 'TOTs' sessions (provided via grant funding)

NERS

National Exercise Referral Scheme



655

referrals were received from the NERS



68%

of participants lowered 'Diastolic Blood Pressure'



64%

of participants lowered BMI and lost weight



70%

of participants increased their overall fitness



64%

of participants increased their overall function



187

indoor sessions took place (1345 attended)



894

live virtual sessions took place (1983 attended)



28,365

have viewed our exercise and home programmes



100%

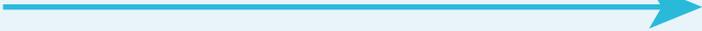
said that their experience of being on the programme was positive



100%

said that the staff they came into contact with made them feel welcome

Swimming



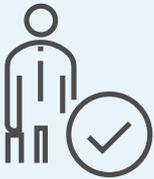
1,690

children joined the MonLife 'Learn to Swim' programme



2,359

children, in total, are now learning to swim with MonLife Active



52

colleagues developed and upskilled through training courses (worth £17,615)



782

children booked onto MonLife's swimming skill sessions



1,900

children engaged through MonLife's primary school swimming programme'



8,500

children received lifesaving water safety sessions on a variety of programmes



RE-LAUNCH

of MonLife's early years 'Learn to Swim' programme 'Bubbles and Splash'



LAUNCHED

MonLife's pathway 'Learn to Swim' programme: Wave 8 Water Polo & Rookie Saving

www.monlife.co.uk/Active



Heritage Strategy

- ✓ We have created a Heritage Strategy that will guide our work, with clear outcomes, aims and objectives.
- ✓ We have created a special storybook which will help our staff talk about all of Monmouthshire's history, rather than just that at their own site.
- ✓ We have created an evaluation framework which will help us get to know our visitors needs so we can continually improve our heritage attractions.
- ✓ We have now installed interpretation at Clydach Ironworks as well as Old Station Tintern.



www.monlife.co.uk/Heritage

Attractions



119,619

people visited our attractions



£50k

invested at Caldicot Castle and Country Park (CCCP)



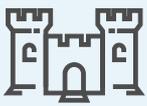
4

filming opportunities at CCCP for ITV & S4C productions



130

family activity packs sold at CCCP



105

people attended guided tours at Caldicot Castle



100%

plastic free at Old Station Tintern (OST)



29,690

cups of coffee sold at OST Tearooms (biodegradable)



£120k

invested in upgrading and improving OST



100%

free access to all MonLife attraction sites for locals and visitors



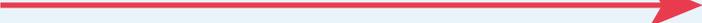
100%

welsh or local products sold in our Tourist Information Centre between 21/22



Greenflag awards for both OST and CCCP

Museums



+£350K

funds granted to look after
our Ancient Monuments
and historic sites

As part of the Winter of Wellbeing initiative we asked four young people to consult with others and visit our sites to suggest ways to improve the museum service for young people. We are now working to implement these recommendations.

In 2022, our Museums completed the 'Collection Review Project 2020-2022'. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project has given our Museums the opportunity to discover more about the objects and their connections to Monmouthshire's story. Throughout this project, staff have been able to develop a more sustainable way of caring for our collections by creating much needed physical space. This space will allow us to collect contemporary objects telling the story of events, people, and communities in today's Monmouthshire. This process is already having a positive impact on MonLife's museums work.

- ➔ **107** non Monmouthshire related objects were transferred to **19** museums across England, Scotland and Wales as collection or educational material.
- ➔ **2,564** records relating to Admiral Lord Nelson were added to our digital database in order to make the collection more accessible.
- ➔ **91%** of the Nelson Collection is now on our online database. Including **182** photo records.
- ➔ **18** volunteers worked with us to uncover the names and lives of **63** women who volunteered at Gwy House Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital and to share their stories.

www.monlife.co.uk/Heritage



Sport Development

The last 12 months have presented a range of new challenges for the 'Sports Development' team with the ongoing pandemic. In response, the team have created opportunities to assist with the return of activities and support the well-being of residents of Monmouthshire.

These include bespoke fundamental skills sessions to support children and young people who have missed out on early experiences, such as; swimming lessons, multi sports and other sport specific sessions. Creating opportunities for children to build a strong foundation of fundamental skills to create a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity. In addition, targeted holiday activity support via the Food & Fun provision and supporting vulnerable children with funded spaces to TMG.

Additionally, our bespoke targeted fitness provisions for the over 60s population through MonLife's Active 60 programme has seen new sessions such as dance and multi sports. These sessions have provided opportunities for socialising and avoiding isolation through targeted intervention. Support has also been extended to local community clubs to help with their return.

The resulting impact from the team has meant that residents of Monmouthshire have had access to opportunities that wouldn't necessarily have been available pre-Covid times through a more flexible and targeted approach. The team still strives to develop a future generation of Healthy and Confident young people, who feel Safe in their community and Empowered to make a positive difference.



35
volunteers were supported into paid employment



OVER 100
new job opportunities were created within Monmouthshire



7,240
meals were served to children over Summer 2021 through SHEP



£195k
of additional grant funding received via our partners



OVER 100
families participated in open access play opportunities



140
participants engaged in the new Active 60+ Programme

Inclusion Projects

Positive Futures and Disability Sport

MonLife Positive Futures is a sport & physical activity based social inclusion programme delivered in partnership by the Youth & Community team and leisure services. The programme uses sport and physical activity as a tool to engage young people predominantly aged 10-19 years, within our communities in local community facilities. The Positive Futures programme is funded by the Gwent Police Crime Commissioners Office (OPCC), Sport Wales and local authorities contributing funds through services/programmes of funding where they need support to engage young people and inspire them to achieve and improve their lives (e.g. preventions, resilient communities, youth services, social services, and education). We are currently pursuing insport Development Gold accreditation.



283

young people accessed 'Positive Futures' diversionary activities



1,198

attendances at 'Positive Futures' diversionary activities



82

'Positive Futures' diversionary sessions have been delivered



£59,053

of additional grant funding was received from MCC services



213

disabled participants accessed sport & physical activities



24

Virtual inclusive &/or Disability sport sessions were delivered



432

inclusive &/or disability specific sport & physical activity sessions were delivered



22

inclusive &/or Disability specific sport & physical activity clubs were delivered

Youth Service

Between 2021 and 2022, our youth centres and clubs have continued to provide Monmouthshire's young people with a place to go; thus developing a sense of both belonging, ownership and safe relationships with other young people, professionals and trusted adults. Those who have engaged with our Youth Services have been supported and empowered to develop holistically, through a wide range of activities and opportunities. They have also been supported, through informal education, to develop personally, socially and academically.



34

volunteers supported MonLife's Youth Services between 21/22



30

young people accessed the service through Welsh- language provisions



407

contacts were made during E2C meetings online (Monmouthshire's youth council)



30

young people were supported during Covid via 'Digital Contact Forms'

- ➔ **100%** of secondary schools in Monmouthshire engaged with the Shift project, with **93%** of 11-18 year olds who were referred through the Early Help Panel engaging with the Shift project.
- ➔ **86%** of those young people engaged in the Shift project perceived an improvement in their mental health / emotional well-being.
- ➔ **453** Year 6 pupils, across **47%** of Monmouthshire primary schools (14) took part in the Year 6 Transition programme.
- ➔ **2,780** completed the Monmouthshire-specific ballot, with the priorities being 'support our mental health' (national) and 'sex education explained' (local)
- ➔ **2,976** 11-18 year olds completed the annual British Youth Councils Make Your Mark survey



MonLife Outdoor

Key Headlines from 21/22

Active Travel

Active Travel has seen continued increase in funding through competitive bidding for ATF funding from the Welsh Government. In Monmouthshire, there are three package schemes, involving fifteen individual routes. One route in Monmouth has been constructed, alongside a new play park, allowing for safer travel from Kingswood Gate to Overmonnow and beyond into Monmouth, in addition to improving school cycle storage. One scheme is all ready for construction (pending funding) and at least two more will be constructed in 2022/23.

Further work has been conducted to improve Active Travel infrastructure, with eleven primary schools seeing investment. These new facilities will provide safe cycle and scooter storage, allowing for easier AT journeys to schools, part of our strategic focus.

Active Travel has had wide reaching public engagement through the statutory ATNM process, which seeks to develop a network of maps to identify routes for development. Over 2,300 children and young people and 100% of schools were engaged in this process – seen as sector leading on a national level. Also, through specific scheme proposal consultations, public feedback has reached well over 2,000 members of the public.

This work helps promote the Active Travel agenda; reducing short everyday car journeys, in favour of walking and cycling. Two strategic schemes have been developed and are ready for construction this financial year, eleven further are currently in development. The continued focus on Active Travel plays a key part in MCC's response to the climate emergency and contributes to the health and well-being of all residents across Monmouthshire, through the creation of a cohesive and integrated network fit for our future generations.

 **Continues Next Page**



Active Travel



1
NEW 'Active Travel' route
built between 21/22



1
'Active Travel' planned &
ready to build for 22/23



15
existing active travel
routes improved



3 million
in funding was secured (2.8
million currently spent)



100%
of schools engaged with
ATNM consultation events



2,300
children engaged with the
ATNM consultation



299
new 'Active Travel' routes
identified for the future



PLAY AREA
being developed via
Active Travel' funding



11
primary schools received
improved 'Active Travel'
infrastructure



1,500+
public responses across 6
scheme consultations and
600 ATNM contributions

Outdoor Adventure



Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 and numerous lockdowns, Gilwern Outdoor Adventure Centre was closed for 18 months. Despite this closure, the outdoor team worked hard to offer a range of exciting adventure activities which included the Duke of Edinburgh awards, outdoor learning, the 'Re-engage' program and outreach provision in local secondary schools.

**711**

young people are currently enrolled on the 'Duke of Edinburgh Awards'

**11**

days of outdoor learning accessed by elected home educated young people

**5**

pupils being supported back into education through the 'Re-engage' program

**62**

young people with disabilities were provided with access to outdoor learning

**11**

days of outdoor learning was accessed by elected home educated young people

**10**

disability specific outdoor education sessions took place

**5**

local primary schools engaged in a pilot scheme to support teachers transition from the classroom to outdoor learning

www.monlife.co.uk/Outdoors

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure and Nature recovery have continued to work through a challenging year to actively provide a range of services and activities supporting place making and protecting and enhancing our unique landscape, working with communities, volunteers and schools to support understanding and education whilst delivering nature based green infrastructure solutions that respond to climate change, planning and policy. Our Green Infrastructure Strategy and Biodiversity and Resilience Forward Plan provide strategic guidance in the development of our planning policy and project development, with partnership and collaboration enabling us to continue to access significant funding from sources such as Welsh Government, NRW and Heritage Lottery to help us deliver these outcomes.



- ✓ WILDFLOWER VERGES
- ✓ BEEHIVES
- ✓ MULTIFUNCTIONAL FARMING
- ✓ REED BEDS
- ✓ BIODIVERSITY-RICH BUSINESS PARKS
- ✓ FISH LADDERS
- ✓ WILDLIFE OVERPASS
- ✓ GREEN ROOFS
- ✓ HEDGEROW
- ✓ GREEN WALLS

Green Infrastructure



£1,735,705

of funding was secured in to deliver Biodiversity, 'Green Infrastructure' (GI) and 'Active Travel' projects for 2021.



£1,029,071

in grant funded projects were delivered for GI Biodiversity and 'Active Travel' improvements and opportunities.



500

planning applications were completed alongside the development of policy advice for biodiversity.



11

additional sites of nature conservation were designated, contributing to a total of 740 in MCC.



We supported our protected landscapes, Wye Valley AONB and Blaenavon Industrial World Heritage Site through partnerships, projects and community grants schemes.



Provided guidance on management of our grasslands, verges and public open spaces for pollinators working with our grounds maintenance team on projects in order to deliver management of our grasslands, school grounds.

Green Infrastructure

Projects

Community Nature Spaces:



11
community nature spaces
delivered in Monmouth



9
wild play opportunities
provided in Monmouth

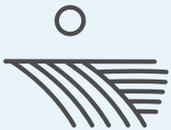


60 Trees

996 Shrubs

2600m² Area of grassland managed for pollinators

Transforming Towns:



£29,000
invested in 'GI'
enhancements



1
public consultation took
place



1110m²
of grasslands supporting
carbon sequestration



640m²
of wildflower turf and
management of 1110m²



4
nesting bird boxes
set-up



8
semi-mature trees and
planters

Green Infrastructure

Partnerships

Green Gwent Grid Partnership (GGGP):

£2.3m



funding secured for the delivery of Green Infrastructure projects across Gwent led by MCC working with 5 Gwent local authorities, NRW, Forest Research and Severn Wye Energy as well as a range of NGO's and communities and stakeholders.

5



workstreams delivering : Regional Green Spatial Framework, Regional GI Access Strategy and forum, I tree Eco Project in Severnside and Chepstow, Green Infrastructure Projects and Pollinator Friendly Gwent – cut and collect scheme.

6



new grant funded posts appointed in MCC , with a further 6 collaborative posts across Gwent .

1



new regional partnership established.

Living Levels Partnership



Supported the partnership and help deliver a range of projects across the levels. Including, pollinator projects information hubs, route signs, artwork and sculptures and continue to support a transition through the Gwent Levels working Group.

Green Infrastructure

Partnerships

A Resilient Greater Gwent:



1 biodiversity guidance for householders and small developments



3 well being walks across Monmouthshire



3 new education resources tools



300 leaflets & digital resources supporting the 'State of Nature Report' for MCC



70 pollinator packs for pre-school/ early years/ care homes/ sheltering housing

Monmouthshire & Newport Local Nature Partnership:



67 members have now joined the scheme



527 followers on Social Media



7 nature projects including: development of a community wildflower nursery, walking trail, outdoor classroom, nature leaflet, nest boxes and bat monitoring equipment and woodland planting



Countryside Access



1,810

enforcement issues on public rights of way resolved



96.58%

of cropping issues resolved on public rights of way



7,303

maintenance issues on public rights of way resolved



74.88%

of all gate issues resolved (640+)



3000+

clearance issues were resolved



540+

bridge issues were resolved



4,409

Strava users took 11,840 steps via countryside access



4

online meetings held via our new forum



£102,714

spent on 'Countryside Access' improvements with Welsh government grants



200+

more land charge searches responded to in 11 months, than in 2021

Countryside Access



22

legal orders were processed



35 bird & **9** bat

boxes erected on Castle Meadows in Abergavenny



750_{ms}

of surface improvements carried out at Rogiet Countryside Park



£305

raised for 'Children In Need' by the 'Countryside Access' teams 'Walk and Talk' event



750+

trees have been planted on MonLife 'Countryside Access' sites by volunteers in 2021



96%

of Wales' coast path visitors said that they enjoyed the path



88%

of Wales Coast Path visitors agree that using the path had contributed to their appreciation of Wales and its culture



45%

of Wales Coast Path visitors cited the ability to be able to relax and unwind while on the path was a motivation for walking



12 volunteer walk leaders have taken **60** people on **7** walks to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 'Offa's Dyke Path National Trail'



MonLife Creative

Key Headlines from 21/22

In 21/22, MonLife Creative continued to inspire learning experiences for schools, families and adults. Such learning was provided via a close partnership with MonLife Heritage and included the delivery of numerous workshops, craft sessions, activities.

**3**

well-being walks for MonLife's museums and attractions

**7**

mindful colouring sheets based on our Heritage Collections were created

**415**

children took part in our creative school holiday activities

**615**

children took part in our workshops and were loaned artefacts

**4**

collection films created for care home residents and people living with Dementia

**77**

craft sessions delivered to older people and people living with Dementia

**OVER 1,800**

Spring activity packs were created and distributed to EVERY year 3 and 4 child in Monmouthshire

Thank you

To find out more about MonLife's achievements and services, scan the following QR code



Service Report 21/22