

Project updates for the LAG meeting on 17th October 2018

Theme 1 – Cultural and Natural Heritage – Tourism

Our View Social Media Campaign – £27,840

The project is continuing with the next meeting in November giving the opportunity for DM to meet the group and look at the way forward. There may be an opportunity to re-set the agenda for the group as they have already indicated some interesting ideas to take the project forward.

The next meeting will give the volunteers the opportunity to see West Usk Lighthouse as they have agreed to let us use the facility (despite being in private ownership). It will also be an opportunity to give some training to the group and Ruth Waycott is looking at options now.



Mountain Bike Guides Training – £9,009

Courses for 2018 have been extended to include Mountain Bike Guides and Cycling Club volunteers and all of the funds have now been allocated.



Visitor Information Project - £49,150

The Visitor Information Study is complete; the report identifies best practice visitor information provision in the UK and overseas, and contains a number of recommendations for developing a more sustainable service. Proposed recommendations from the report will be implemented at Chepstow TIC over the coming months.

The report can be found on our www.monmouthhire.biz website.

Since the last report, the project has moved forward and discount vouchers have been developed with businesses in Chepstow – these are given to coach visitors as part of the meet and greet service.

Sue (The Manager) is currently working with the tourism forum in Caerleon to develop similar offers and incentives for businesses there.

In progress is the implementation of some of the recommendations of the visitor information review at Chepstow TIC – a coffee / tea lounge (providing free coffee and tea to drivers) and piloting an iPad (locked onto VisitMonmouthshire.com) inside a security cradle to provide inspiration / an alternative information source during busy times.

In addition, there are current discussions with MCC Highways department regarding design and installation of signage required to achieve Coach Friendly status for Chepstow.

WEBSITE.

There are ongoing improvements to the website and to the information for businesses who welcome groups.

Abergavenny.

Unfortunately the project has not progressed into Abergavenny because of the fundamental changes at Tithe Barn i.e. loss of café, lease to Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, limited access to tapestry and exhibition and loss of manager to organise group visits and tours of St Mary's. The drastically reduced footfall and change of purpose of the building have made it impossible to welcome coaches and groups there unfortunately.

Despite the challenges, Sue has been working with businesses in Abergavenny to develop offers, which we have promoted on the www.visitmonmouthshire.com website, the coach buddy website and the coach drivers forum as well as at Chepstow TIC.



Living Levels Accommodation Study/Pilot - £25,000

The consultants are completing their contact with accommodation providers in the area. They have also met with the Planning Officers at Monmouthshire and Newport to discuss development in and/or near the Gwent Levels.



A draft report is available and much work has been completed. Once this phase is completed, they will be looking at best practice and developing a pilot scheme * note that a place has been identified in the Monmouthshire area to take forward a pilot plan. (No other information available as yet).

St Mary's Priory Project – £7,640

Chris Jones and Peter Cole, appointed to support St Mary's Priory with a business plan, have noted the completion of the plan that has been signed off and is available to view on the www.monmouthshire.biz website.

Notified in the last update was the development of a training course for volunteers. This is being undertaken by Chris Jones and Owen Wilce and will be directly for Heritage based groups. Fifty-four responses to the survey indicated the type of training requirements and this will be facilitated shortly.

Other options for development. DM is meeting with the core group shortly for an open debate on other options to take forward the recommendations and look at options for support via RDP.

Discussion continues and one event is being organised in partnership with Made in Monmouthshire for Christmas craft/producers event.

St Marys Courtyard 1st December – for those wishing to attend.



Tintern Abbey Trail - £16,000

A walking trail from Tintern Abbey to the village and surrounding area with iBeacon interpretation (free download from Tintern Abbey shop or prior to visit) is being developed by Wye Valley AONB with CADW. It is hoped that Tintern village will further benefit from the large numbers that visit the Abbey.

The project has been on hold but will recommence shortly. Both Cadw and AONB are now ready to move forward. DM will continue dialogue and development. Nothing further to report at this time.



Theme 2

Venison Study

The study is now complete and available to view on the Monmouthshire.biz website. It is now translated into Welsh and the project closed. In terms of recommendations the AONB were not successful in gaining further funding to take forward the recommendations. Having failed in the major bid AONB note that there was a small amount of funding through Natural England which allows them to deliver a couple of training days aimed at butchers and restauranteurs. They are working with the Deer Initiative and hope to deliver these in the next few months. Beyond that, there is a need to seek additional funding to take recommendations forward. Any thoughts?

Nature Isn't Neat

The project has now commenced with Monmouth Town Council and partners. The newly formed delivery group has met and the work programme is being developed. The project benefits from a steering group made up of colleagues from various agencies. The training element to the project will commence beginning of November with colleagues in ground maintenance being informed and directed towards good practice in the management of open spaces and verges.



Co-Working Study

Final report has been received and is now available to view on the RDP website. Cardiff University has approached the authority to attach this study and work with Monmouthshire on the City Region projects. Notably central Urban Areas have already undergone a mapping exercise and the University is offering to extend its support to Monmouthshire to help develop outcomes. A meeting has been requested to explore options. We are looking at other options to take forward the recommendations.

There is no update on Cardiff University but the Authority continues to pick up the issue of co-working space and is working on a number of areas for development.



Future Economies Study

Baseline economic data has been collected and presented to Monmouthshire CC, on the process of finalising a base line property report, baseline report and projections report. Currently in the process of being finalised – expecting a strategic report from the consultant shortly.

Euro cook

This project is completed with the culmination in an event with attendees being parents /teachers/LAG members and politicians. The whole project has been hailed as a success and a number of schools are looking into the use of the tools and lessons learned.

A number of schools have been keen to be involved and there is an option for taking the project forward in Caerleon – using the Welsh Language.



Theme 3

Creative Communities toolkit

The project is at a bit of a hiatus, following staffing problems. Sara Middleton left her project officer post in September. Following a productive meeting with Mon CC LEADER partners on 28th September, GAVO is drafting a project proposal for delivery over the final six months of the project.

Partnership working and links with the Severn Wye Partnership will be key moving forward. GAVO intend to add value to the project by strengthening links internally. The project proposal will be considered shortly and brought back to the LAG at the January 2019 meeting.



Be. Community Leadership Programme

Following on from the success of the Be. Community Event in July we have continued to address the needs identified. We have been planning two subsequent events with GAVO colleagues in Monmouth and Chepstow (Winter 2018) where both town councils have ambitions of bringing volunteers and community groups together for support, collaboration and engagement. There are also early discussions with RDP colleagues regarding a similar but focussed event in rural Newport wards, we look forward to this and strengthening our Newport links. The events give us the evidence and data to inform the delivery of the Be. Community programme based on need as with all the courses delivered under the project.

Working with Chris Jones Regeneration, we have been carrying out a skills analysis with Heritage groups in Abergavenny. Emerging themes we will address are marketing, project management, event management and organisation.

We have also been working with a volunteer in the south of the county who has been helping us develop an individual development needs process. We are currently looking at a leadership and management qualification for the individual.



Rural Transport

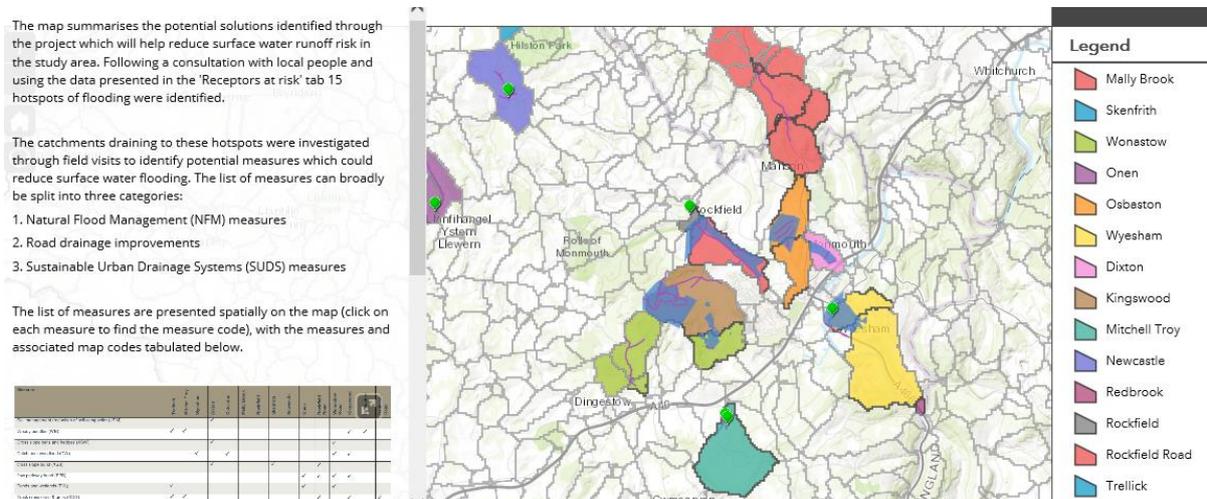
The final report is available on the RDP website. An application has been made through the Community Transport Association to fund two members of staff who will work specifically on developing solutions. Other initiatives are underway with CCRC and Transport for Wales.



Theme 4

Monmouth RECS (Renewable Energy Community Schemes)

The stakeholder group established under this project will be meeting on 23rd October to discuss a pilot Natural Flood Management project in Kingswood.



Fully Charged (Electric Vehicle Charging Points)

This one year pilot project is approaching its conclusion. Overall it has proved very successful although the research has highlighted mixed usage across the 20 installations. The recent readings show that the situation has not changed in that the same sites are getting plenty of usage. Those not doing much in the way of promotion have had only occasional use. One thing that seems to be emerging is that there are seven different "markets" for chargers each with different needs and locations. This is covered in the recent report provided by Gwent Energy and is available to download from the project page of the website.



Village Hall Energy Make Over

The five village halls being supported under the project have been provided with an Energy Performance Certificate. They have recently accepted an offer to have installed a properly designed LED lighting scheme. Unfortunately the RCDF application to secure capital funds to implement the full range of energy efficiency measures has been declined. The intention is to resubmit a revised application based on feedback received when a new window opens. Efforts are being made to access other sources of funding.

Theme 5.

Llanover digital halls project

Capital works are almost complete through the successful RCDF application. The LEADER project is underway. LEADER is supporting the monthly Broadband subscription for the halls along with room hire and stationery items.

Communication First

The project is progressing well. There are some new referrals who will be seen over the next few weeks. There has been discussions with Social Services and a weekly session in Abergavenny is in the process of being set up where a small number of beneficiaries will get together to use communication software and leisure apps. For example, two are keen to play the drums and piano together using available software.

Two beneficiaries have been supported to visit places of interest, and using an iPad ask relevant staff questions. For example H visited the Fire Station and was able to activate his prepared questions to the Fire Officers.

A brief report covering the first year of the project is available on the website.

IoT and Independent Living

The project was approved by internet voting. A visit was made to Digital Catapult London to explore opportunities with LPWAN deployment.

Cooperation

BEES

The BEES project continues well with a successful network of help and advice between the cluster groups. The project commences its monthly meeting this October with guest speakers being nominated from the groups. Earlier in the year hygiene training was undertaken and proved a really useful tool.

The Education element for VoU is now being offered to Gwent Bee Keeper's as the original contractor was unable to fulfil the visits to schools within Monmouthshire and rural wards within Newport. The project has attracted new members and is offering taster sessions and training to those interested in the project. A celebration of the BEES project was held on July 17th in the Incredible Edible garden at Usk. It was open to the public and was attended by locally based groups and those from the partner areas. The project carries on establishing networks, skill sharing and providing education.

We are currently looking at the process of sustainability as we look towards the end of the project in 2019.



Food hubs International Project

The funding application has been submitted to the Belgian LAG and we await the outcomes of the funding application for the food hub. It is likely that funding (if successful) will move forward the recommendations. The date for response is Nov 15th.

The new Abergavenny Food Forum had its first meeting in July and Second last month. They continue to move forward with the recommendations of the Agri-Urban Action Plan. This will relate directly to the development of the Food Hub Projects. Information on this has been passed to the Abergavenny Food Forum (formerly the Agri Urban ULG). They have requested to be part of any interview and appointment of a post holder – if successful.

A final visit under the Agri Urban programme will be attended by Pamela Mason and Deserie Mansfield in October with a programme of events developed to support the food hub development, education and business development in the food sector.

The study visit will include:

- **Gallecs and its strategic location (natural viewpoint).** Territorial context: links between the rural and urban areas.
- Vegetables supply to public canteens.
- Local producers, members of the Agroecological Association of Gallecs presentation.

Gallecs agro-shop and workshop: the cooperative of local producers.

- The creation of the association and the SAT.
- The brand.
- Gallecs produce and Future project: "espai de tas.

