

Monmouth Town Council Annual Report 2022-23



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1. ABOUT MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Background

Monmouth Town Council is the tier of local government closest to the community and represents the views and interests of the people of Monmouth to other authorities including Monmouthshire County Council, the Police, the Welsh Government and others. In 2022-23, the number of elected Councillors for Monmouth was increased from 16 to 19 and these cover the 5 wards of Monmouth; Drybridge, Overmonnow, Osbaston, Wyesham and Town. A full list of Councillors can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

The Councillors serve a population of 10,508 (2011 census).

The Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected each year by the council at the annual meeting, usually held in May.

Election Year

2022-23 saw the commencement of a new Council period following the local elections initially held on 5th May 2022. Monmouth Town Council had 5 people stand in May 2022 which, unfortunately, was not the required number of Councillors to allow the Council to function (inquire) and so an additional election was required. During the period the Council was inquire, the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer had delegated authority to continue making the necessary payments and decisions for the benefit of the Council and the town.

A further election notice was approved by Monmouthshire County Council and on 26th May, an additional 9 Councillors were elected without contest. With these additions, the Council had the requisite number of Councillors to form and an Annual Meeting was called and held on 13th June 2022.

Following the uncontested election of 14 Councillors, a number of co-options took place due to vacancies and resignations, with the current 19 Councillors being in place since 27th March 2023.

Committees

All Councils conduct their business through meetings which are formal, agenda-led events with a clear purpose of making democratic decisions for the benefit of the town. As well as Full Council, which includes all elected members, the Council has 3 committees that meet on a regular basis. These are:

- Finance and Policy, which meets 4 times a year.
- People and Places, which meets once a month.
- Planning, which meets twice a month.

All meetings are open to the public and normally take place at the Shire Hall, Agincourt Square, Monmouth as well as being available via Zoom Conferencing. Planning, however, takes place at Bridges Community Centre and is also available on Zoom.

Every agenda provides members of the public with an opportunity to address the committee or Council during a designated “Public Participation” item. This ensures there is opportunity for members of the community to be involved in the decision-making process. Meetings sometimes include invited guests to speak on particular agenda items, too.

Councillors have a duty to attend all meetings and must provide a reason for absence which is acceptable to Council if they are unable to attend. A record of attendance at meetings for all Councillors can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

Responsibilities

Monmouth Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council are completely separate authorities with different responsibilities, however, both authorities work closely together on matters affecting Monmouth and its residents.

Monmouth Town Council has a number of assets in the town including the war memorial in St James Square, the public toilets at Agincourt Street, over 40 dog waste bins, Drybridge Play Park, the Town Field and a number of planters located both within the town and in residential areas. The Town Council also has the responsibility of the maintenance of the wooden planters in Monnow Street introduced as part of the COVID-19 measures installed by Monmouthshire County Council.

Monmouth Town Council also provides the Christmas trees, street decorations such as Christmas lights and bunting and the history banners displayed on Monnow Street.

In addition, Monmouth Town Council contributes to a number of services provided by Monmouthshire County Council such as CCTV, the cleaning and maintenance of Blestium Street public toilets, street cleaning and summer playschemes for local children to attend.

As part of our responsibilities, the Town Council hosts and/ or financially supports public events in the town such as Freedom Parades for the military, the Monmouth Carnival and the Christmas Lantern Parade to name just some.

The Town Council also financially supports a number of local organisations that provide benefit to the local community through grant funding or partnership agreements.

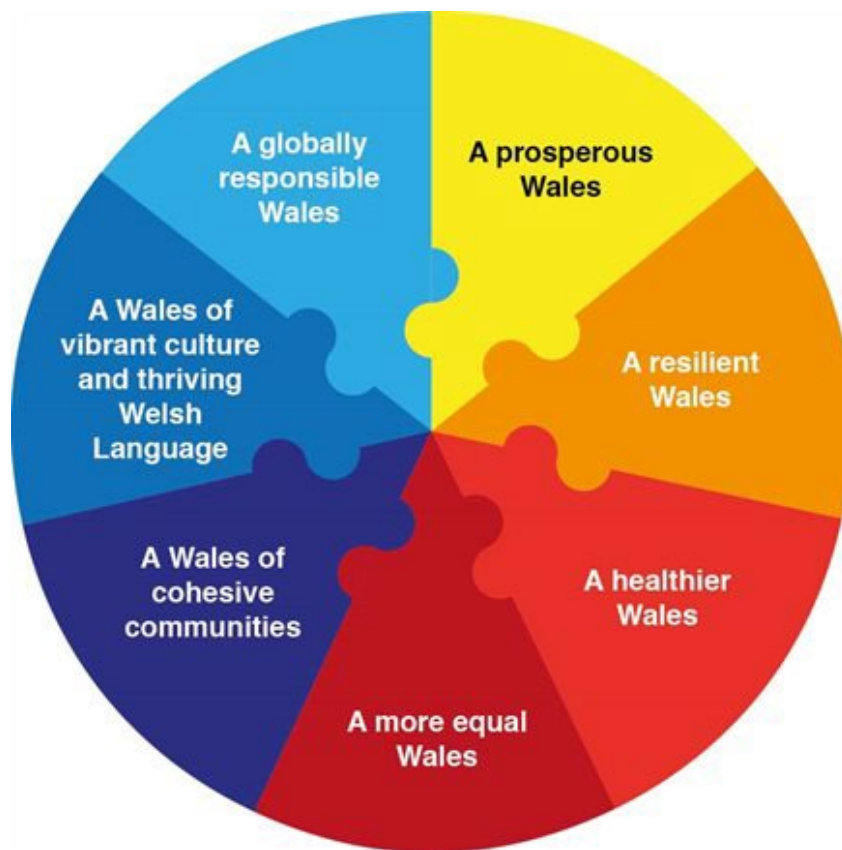
Finance

The Town Council is required to set an annual budget each year. The budget for 2023-24 is £588,030. From this, MTC determines how much to request from Monmouthshire County Council which collects the funds via Council Tax. This is known as a precept demand. Council agreed to fund £59,000 of the budget using money allocated for specific matters (Ear Marked Reserve) not currently required. Using these funds reduced the precept request and as a result, the precept for 2023-24 is £529,030 which represents an increase of £100,524 from 2022-23.

A financial statement for the year end is included at Appendix 3

2. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

“The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.” (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales) Monmouth Town Council is one of the public bodies that is governed by this legislation. The legislation sets out 7 wellbeing goals that we should strive to achieve which are shown below.



It is imperative that, as a council, all decisions have consideration of the wellbeing goals for the benefit of the future generations of Monmouth but also the Wellbeing Plan that Monmouthshire County Council set for the whole County as a result of the 2015 Act.

The Wellbeing Plan for Monmouthshire has the following 4 objectives:

1. Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life.
2. Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.
3. Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
4. Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

3. WHAT MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL HAS BEEN DOING IN 2022-23

This year has been an unusual year with it being the first time the Town Council started the year inquorate. In addition, the majority of the Councillors are new to the Council and so 2022-23 saw a great focus on training Councillors and building an understanding of Council matters. With that being said, the Council were still able to organise and host the Mayoral Civic Service, a Freedom of Monmouth Parade for the Royal Monmouthshire Engineers and a Remembrance Sunday parade and service.

Some of the key achievements for the Council are as follows:

a. Partnerships

This year saw the Town Council continue to support the partnership agreements established in previous years including Monmouth Carnival, The Savoy Cinema Kids Club and ACE Monmouth.

During 2022-23, the initial partnership agreement with Mind Monmouthshire came to an end. At the Full Council meeting in January 2023, the Council agreed to extend the partnership agreement for a further 3 years (2023-26) with the sum of £15,000 allocated to Mind Monmouthshire for each year of the partnership. Continuing the partnership ensures that the services of Mind Monmouthshire can remain in Monmouth and support the residents.

National Wellbeing Goals Achieved:

A Wales of Cohesive Communities

A Prosperous Wales

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Local Wellbeing Objectives:

1. Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
2. Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
3. Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change

b. Community Events

Monmouth Town Council was able to support and/ or host the following events in 2022-23:

➤ Queen's Jubilee Grants

In June 2022, Monmouth celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of HRH The Queen. Instead of a central event being organised, residents were encouraged to hold street parties



and celebrations within their local area or within their community group.



These events were facilitated by a Queen Jubilee Grant Scheme launched by the Town Council. Some of these events included a "Party on the Green", a "Big Lunch" in Wyesham Community Woods and a Royal Variety Show at 1 of the local primary schools. It also saw 2 trees planted to commemorate the occasion; 1 in Kings Wood Gate and 1 in St Mary's Church grounds and a felled Cedar tree carved into a wooden sculpture at Bridges Community Centre. Over £11,000 was awarded through the scheme and it ensured the residents were able to enjoy the celebrations across all 5 wards of Monmouth. (photo credit C. Layne-Thomas and J. Duke)

➤ Christmas Lantern Parade 2022

The new Councillors ensured that the Christmas Lantern Parade returned in 2022 with a number of the new Members taking lead parts of the organisation along with the community members that have always been a key part of the event. The theme this year was "Monmouth's History" which was supported brilliantly by the local residents with their lanterns. The working group arranged and held free workshops that allowed residents to make



Drabble c/o Christmas Lantern Parade Facebook)

their lanterns with materials provided by the Town Council.

This year also saw the creation of a large group lantern that led the parade. This came in the form of Gwen the Bee Keeper who now resides in the Shire Hall. (photo credit: E.



➤ Freedom of Monmouth Parade

The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers have the Freedom of Monmouth and they asked the Town Council to host a Freedom Parade in September 2022. Following the death of HRH the Queen, this parade was postponed until March 2023. The parade took place in front of a full crowd of Monmouth residents and guests including HRH The Duke of Gloucester and the Lord Lieutenant of Gwent. The Mayor, Cllr Alice Fletcher joined HRH The Duke of Gloucester on the dais and received the salute from the parade as it marched past the Shire Hall.



(photo credit: Monmouthshire Beacon)

National Wellbeing Goals Achieved:

- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A Globally Responsible Wales
- A Prosperous Wales

Local Wellbeing Objectives Achieved:

1. Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
2. Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
3. Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

c. Community Grants

2022-23 saw Monmouth Town Council commit over £17,500.00 to local community projects that will benefit residents of Monmouth. Community grants were approved for:

<u>Community Group</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Amount of Grant</u>
Monmouth Rotary Community Champions	Installation of Water Fountain in Agincourt Square	£995.00

Monmouth Girl Guides	Funds towards the groups travel to Switzerland.	£2500.00
Make Monmouth	To purchase equipment for the group.	£500.00
Monmouth Sports Association	To carry out groundworks and to install matting to facilitate Park Run coming to Monmouth.	£1500.00
Monmouth Parkinson's Support Group	To fund room hire and the provision of exercise sessions for members.	£250.00
Monmouth Tennis Club	For the provision of floodlights for the tennis courts.	£1000.00
Monmouth Town AFC	For the provision of 2 hand dryers in the club house.	£612.00
Monmouth Community Choir	To purchase a new keyboard and hire a larger venue for rehearsal.	£800.00
Monmouth Rock Up and Run	To fund membership training to become leaders and coaches.	£1870.00
1 st Wyesham Scouts	For essential maintenance work on the Scout Hut.	£2070.00
Rockfield Park Community Centre	For the development and improvement of the community garden.	£7247.00
Wye River Festival	To create and develop resources and promote training for local community safe spaces for young people who identify as LGBTQ + in conjunction with The Attik.	£1500.00

As part of the Community Grant process, applicants are asked to set out how the project adheres to the Wellbeing Goals imposed by the 2015 Act. As part of the analysis of the applications received, the projects' ability to satisfy some or all of the goals is considered and is a strong determining factor.

For more information on the Council's grant funding scheme, please visit www.monmouth.gov.uk.

National Wellbeing Goals Achieved:



A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

A Globally Responsible Wales

Local Wellbeing Objectives Achieved:

1. Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
2. Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
3. Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change
4. Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

d. ACE Monmouth Action Plan

One of the deliverables of the ACE Monmouth Partnership was for ACE Monmouth to prepare an action plan that could be adopted by the Town Council. The Action Plan was to provide the Council with a framework of projects, audits and processes that could be put in place to reduce the impact of the nature emergencies in Monmouth.

This Action Plan was presented to Full Council initially in September and later adopted, in principle, by the Town Council in October 2022. In December 2022, the Council set up an Action Plan Working Group that were tasked with investigating the proposals made by ACE Monmouth and looking to put the suggestions in action. This project continues with the support of ACE Monmouth members, Officers of MCC and led by the Town Councillors.

An example of the Action Plan is as follows:

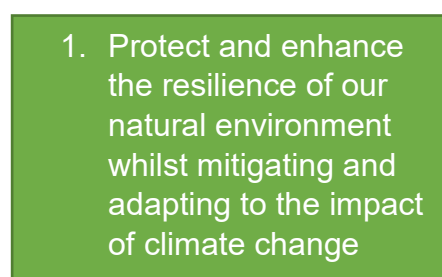
<p>1. Transport (infrastructure, journies, multi-errand, cycle, walk)</p>	<p>A) MTC should use its links and membership of other bodies to establish an anti-idling campaign in the town, reducing vehicle emissions, particularly at sensitive sites such as schools, but also at idling hotspots such as Wonastow Industrial Estate and Monnow Street.</p> <p>B) MTC should develop an appropriate car free initiative. One proposal is a Car Free day / morning / hour , possibly on a</p>
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	Sunday making the centre of Monmouth pedestrian. As part of this, the high street could host a farmers' market with local suppliers, or hold some other ACE related event.
2. Buying (green choices)	<p>A) MTC's Finance and Policy Committee (F&PC) to review the council's existing approach to procurement and tendering in its sustainable procurement policy where weighting is given to local suppliers, and those performing well on a circular economy and low deforestation status.</p> <p>B) The F&PC should also produce a sustainable investment policy.</p>
3. Nature (gardens, allotments & green space)	<p>A) MTC F&PC should review with ACE the council's existing published plans around biodiversity, pollinators and wellbeing to ensure all opportunities have been considered.</p> <p>B) MTC should review the current management of the Town Field and adjacent hardstanding area formerly used as a skate park. This review should consider the potential for any additional planting of trees and widening of hedgerows in the field in order to improve wildlife corridors and connectivity.</p>

National Wellbeing Goals Achieved:



Local Wellbeing Objectives Achieved:



e. Asset Acquisition

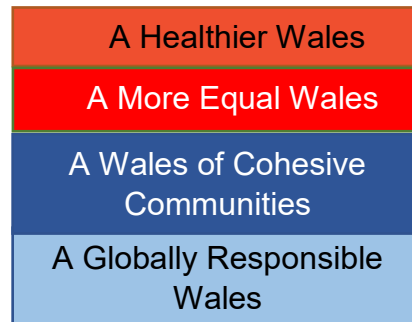
➤ Cemetery

In 2022-23, the Council made progress with having the Monmouth Cemetery re-opened despite it being closed for over 15 years. The Council agreed to support the reopening by funding a new pathway and also committing to funding the ongoing maintenance of new graves. As the cemetery is managed by Monmouthshire County Council, the decision needs to be presented to Cabinet which is anticipated to happen in July 2023.

➤ Allotments

In addition to the cemetery, progress was made with the Town Council taking over management of the Monmouth allotments situated near the Two Rivers Meadow. The Council has agreed to manage the allotments by working collaboratively with the already established Allotment Association. The site is currently managed by Monmouthshire County Council but it is hoped that by having the Town Council take control, the relationship between the Allotment Association, its members and the Council can be strengthened for the benefit of the town and its residents.

National Wellbeing Goals Achieved:



Local Wellbeing Objectives Achieved:

1. Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
2. Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change
3. Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

f. New Working Groups

➤ Community Engagement Strategy

The Council recognise the significant importance of engaging with the residents of Monmouth to establish what it is that they want from the Council and their town. With this in mind, the Council set up a new working group to establish an engagement strategy to include a survey that will hopefully be circulated to all residences in Monmouth.

➤ Tourism Strategy

It is understood by the Town Council that the town relies heavily on tourists for the benefit of its economy. With this in mind, the Council hope to investigate ways of improving tourism in Monmouth and have set up a strategy group for this purpose. The group is considering possible coach parking ideas, marketing suggestions and establishing links to tourist businesses to ensure the tourism market remains in Monmouth.

➤ **Cost of Living Crisis**

When the cost of living crisis was declared in 2022, the Council felt it was important to provide support to the residents who could be impacted by it. This resulted in the Cost of Living Crisis working group being established from which organisations and charities were invited to meet to discuss what could be offered in Monmouth. From these discussions, warm spaces were created for each day of the week in churches, community halls and the library. These warm spaces would offer food, drink and company for anyone who wished to use them. These spaces continued throughout the winter and into spring. The working group continues to offer support through the partnership with Monmouthshire County Council who are offering similar support systems.

National Wellbeing Goals Achieved:

A Prosperous Wales
A More Equal Wales
A Wales of Cohesive Communities
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
A Globally Responsible Wales

Local Wellbeing Objectives Achieved:

1. Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
2. Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
3. Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change
4. Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

g. Whole Office Review

Following the Whole Office Review undertaken in 2021-22 the following areas were identified for future improvement:

1. The introduction of an Investment Strategy, and more secure placement of MTC's funds.
2. The move over to MTC councillor email addresses.
3. The investigation of the BACS process to enable payments to be made on a monthly basis with one push of a button.

In 2022-23, the Council were able to achieve the transfer of a significant proportion of our General Reserves to the Churches, Charities and Local Authority Fund that provide specific investment for public and third sector organisations. The Council continues to hold accounts with Monmouthshire Building Society and Lloyds Bank but are reassured that the investment strategy has now been achieved.

In addition, all Councillors were given an MTC specific email address when elected to the Council in 2022. This increases the security of Council emails as well as ensuring that all emails are held on a central server.

The only outstanding consideration, is the investigation into BACS payments, but this will continue into next year as the current banking process remains effective and secure.

National Wellbeing Goals Achieved:

A Prosperous Wales

Local Wellbeing Objectives Achieved:

1. Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
2. Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

National Wellbeing Goal	Local Activity
<p>Prosperous: An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the Global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately, and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouth Town Council is committed to working actively with partners to encourage and promote the town. • Monmouth Town Council continues to develop the website and increase use of our Facebook page. The website provides key contact information and responsibilities of the Council. Both the website and our social media are used to inform and communicate with residents, publicising meeting information, events and signposting to other service providers. • The continued use of Modern.Gov and incorporating the same with our website, reduces the workload of Officers and ensures that correct and accurate information is distributed efficiently and effectively to all Councillors, stakeholders and members of the public. • The Town Council financially supports a number of events and activities within Monmouth through the grants process and as part of the agreed budget, which include Christmas Lighting, the Carnival, MCC Playscheme, Civic Ceremony, and Remembrance Sunday parade. • The Town Council is committed to development of young people in the area and supports the local library by providing funding for the free newspapers and reading competitions as well as working closely with local schools for civic events. • Town Council grants are available for local groups and organisations.
<p>Resilient: A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouth Town Council is committed to ensuring that the town and its historical sites remain a pleasant clean and safe environment. The Town Council is not responsible for any highways or street cleaning, however, has developed excellent working relationships with the responsible authority, Monmouthshire County Council and supports them by funding the street cleaner position and cleaning of the toilet blocks. • Monmouth Town Council provides 42 dog waste bins and funds the emptying of a number of litter bins in and around the town that promotes the ongoing care that is necessary with our wider environment. • The Council contributes to street cleaning and CCTV in the town. • The Town Council acts as consultee on planning matters and recommendations are made to the Local Planning Authority which includes any issues which are determined to be a detriment to the town.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership with ACE Monmouth (Action on Climate Emergency) will ensure that the Council and the residents of Monmouth will be able to make educated and sound decisions regarding the Climate and Nature Emergencies in Monmouth which will maintain and enhance our local biodiversity in and around the town. This will be further enhanced by the outcome-led Action Plan.
<p>Healthier: A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council actively promotes a society in which health is key by supporting mental health services in Monmouth such as Mind Monmouth and Citizen's Advice as well as providing funding to support groups through the Community Grants process. • The Town Council supports the Sports Association and its associated clubs through the Community Grants scheme. • The mental wellbeing of children is supported through the Monmouth summer playscheme that is part-funded by the Town Council.
<p>More Equal: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council uses hybrid meetings via Zoom Video Conferencing which enables all elected members and members of public to attend the meeting either in person or remotely. • Monmouth Town Council supports the summer playscheme for children in Monmouth, which includes those who receive free school meals as well as a playscheme for children who are neuro-diverse or have physical disabilities. • The community grant scheme in 2022-23 supported groups across a wide spectrum, ensuring that activities, services and opportunities remain available to all residents of Monmouth.
<p>Cohesive Communities: Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouth Town Council is responsible for the delivery of a number of services and amenities. • Through devolution of services, the Town Council now manage the public toilets, taken on from Monmouthshire County Council, over 40 dog waste bins, street decorations and local planters. • The Town Council support services, operated by Monmouthshire County Council, which include provision of CCTV, street cleaning and local parks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouth Town Council is committed to working with partners and community groups to create an attractive, viable, safe and well-connected community. • Monmouth Town Council continues to support the improvements to Monnow Street including the maintenance of the planters and the provision of additional seating areas that can be used by residents and visitors to the town. • The Planning Committee consider the impact of any development on the community and local businesses to ensure that a cohesive community is encouraged. • The Council engages with the Monmouth Chamber of Commerce as well as Monmouthshire County Council to support an attractive and viable high street that remains available to residents, tourists and business owners.
<p>Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language: where we have lots of opportunities to do different things and where lots of people can speak Welsh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council organises or supports a number of cultural events including the Christmas Lantern Parade, the River Festival and Monmouth Raft Race. • Monmouth Town Council continues to fund the cleaning of the Old Monnow Bridge and its pathways which removes the bird waste, debris and foliage that was damaging a historic site. • The Town Council tries to ensure that publicity of events is done bilingually. • The Town Council funded new historical town banners that are on display on Monnow Street. These banners are bilingual.
<p>Globally Responsible: where we look after the Environment and think about other people around the World</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouth Town Council's partnership with ACE Monmouth continues to ensure that events that focus on the Climate and Nature Emergencies can continue, including BeicTown, the Bee Festival and the Wye July Festival. • 2022 marked the 2nd anniversary of Monmouth being declared a Bee Friendly Town which has seen the planting of perennial plants in the local planters, reduced mowing and more natural environments in the town. • The Town Council continues to support the Nature Isn't Neat initiative. • The Planning Committee includes the sustainability and ecological impact a development may have on the area when considering applications. • The Council has liaised and consulted with Monmouthshire County Council on their Active Travel routes for Williamsfield Land, Kings Wood Gate and Wyesham.

- The Litter Working Group has been working closely with Monmouth Comprehensive School students to promote their campaign “Love Monmouth, Hate Litter”. This campaign has included litter picks in Monmouth as well as in school competitions that deter students from creating litter and taking responsibility for their waste.

Local Wellbeing Objectives	Local Action
<p>Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors appointed as Governors on all 3 primary schools in Monmouth as well as Haberdashers Schools for Girls and Boys. • The continuation of support for Monmouth Comprehensive School through the “School Council Liaison Working Group”. • Working with Monmouth Comprehensive School to promote their anti-litter campaign “Love Monmouth, Hate Litter”. • Financial support of the Summer Playscheme provided by Monmouthshire County Council. • Continuing the Kids Club Cinema scheme in partnership with the Monmouth Savoy Theatre. • The Mayor’s Charities this year include Building Bridges, a local charity that supports children with disabilities.
<p>Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing a working partnership with Mind Monmouthshire to ensure the long term provision of mental health support for Monmouth residents including the provision of a “Wellbeing Officer”. • Responding as a consultee to Monmouthshire County Council consultations on Monnow Street and Active Travel routes. • Supporting local groups that focus on reducing loneliness and isolation and encouraging community engagement through the community grant scheme. • Supporting the Citizens Advice which in turn provides support to the community on a range of issues. • Working with local police officers to ensure an understanding of how demographic change has an impact on crime in Monmouth.
<p>Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing the project work required for Nature Isn’t Neat. • Supporting Monmouth as a Bee Town initiative by maintaining the planting scheme in all local planters and flower beds to perennial, bee-friendly plants. • Supporting the “No Mow May” initiative and wildflower planting in open spaces around the town. • Continuation of the project work undertaken by ACE Monmouth including the implementation of an Action Plan against the climate and nature emergencies. • Continuation of support for the Plastic Free Working Group, Active Travel Working Group and the Litter Working Group which all focus on the protection of our natural environment. • Consideration is given to reduce the use of single use plastic in all civic events and organised events

	for the town including the Christmas Lantern Parade.
Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to support the partnerships established in 2020-2022. • Supporting the Monnow Street improvements to encourage tourism and local shoppers to the area. • Financially supporting community-based projects through the community grant scheme. • The Christmas lights and associated Christmas events bring the community out to enjoy all the town has to offer and encourages support of the local economy. • The Planning Committee has been keen to encourage new businesses to Monmouth approving many changes of use for buildings and approving advertisement consent when applicable.

g. Biodiversity in Monmouth (S6 Environment Act 2016 (Wales))

Monmouth Town Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Monmouth for the benefit of its residents and tourists to the area. The Town Council has ownership of only 2 open spaces in the town- the “Town Field” and a play park. The “Town Field” is an open field of trust along the banks of the River Wye and is predominantly used for dog walkers. The field is used for the annual fireworks display, rowing club regatta and the annual raft race organised by the Rotary. The Town Council also manages the planters and flower beds that are found in Monmouth high street and around the 5 wards of Monmouth. In total there are 66 planters and 9 raised beds.

As a result of the reduced amount of outside space that the Council has management of, we rely on working with other projects to enhance and encourage the biodiversity within the town. This report will highlight the number of initiatives and partnerships that the Town Council are a part with the hope that the biodiversity in the town remains.

What we have done

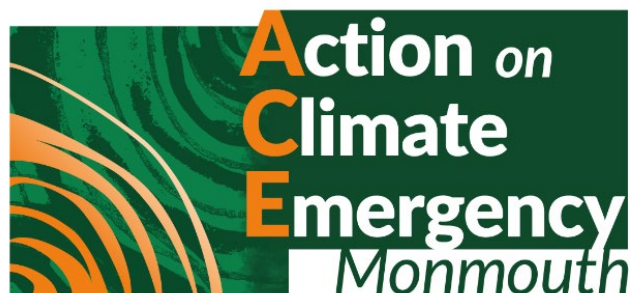
We work in partnership with Monmouthshire County Council to ensure a ‘no spray’ policy is practiced in our Town Field. We protect and encourage wildlife by being part of the **Nature Isn't Neat** project, which supports the re-wilding of green spaces and planting pollinator-friendly plants to encourage bees and other pollinators.



In 2020, Monmouth was named the **first Bee Town in the UK** and also awarded the **Caru Gwenyn (Bee Friendly) award**. This was a joint venture between the Town Council and community groups such as Bees for Development. The Council has continued its support of the Bee Town Status in 2022-23 through the continued planting of pollinator-friendly plants and use of peat-free compost in all the planters in and around the town. This has even been recognised by visitors to the town...

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/ChrJYFmqCTK/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY>

ACE Monmouth has now become a self-constituted group that will be supported by the Town Council through a Partnership Agreement which will ensure that the efforts of the group continue to thrive. As part of the Partnership Agreement, members of the ACE group have prepared an **Action Plan** for Monmouth Town Council which has been adopted in principle. This plan gives areas for the council to focus on in their efforts to combat climate emergency and improve biodiversity. These areas include procurement, energy, transport and nature. A number of mini projects and missions have been set from this action plan that will ensure continued biodiversity in the town.



Monmouth Town Council also supports the **Plastic Free Monmouth** scheme which sets out to reduce the usage of single-use plastic that is washing up in our rivers and can be found increasingly in the countryside. By contributing funds to the drinking water fountains in the town we hope to reduce plastic waste even further and there are now 3 drinking fountains in Monmouth with a 4th due to be installed imminently. With our support and funding of Plastic Free Monmouth, the community-led steering group was able to obtain Surfers Against Sewage accreditation for the town and have encouraged local businesses to reduce their use of single-use plastic and apply for Plastic Free Status.



The Council has also established a relationship with the **Friends of the Lower River Wye group** that are investigating the significant and damaging changes to the River Wye that has seen the demise of the biodiversity in the river. This group has been able to hold a “Wye July” event which highlighted the concerns regarding the River Wye.

We help to deliver a cleaner, greener Monmouth with the provision of **dog waste bins** and the ‘**Give Dog Fouling the Red Card**’ campaign and also support our very active **litter group** (run in partnership with the local authority and a team of dedicated community volunteers).

Our **Active Travel working group** work diligently with the Local Authority to encourage the development of suitable routes for cyclists and walkers to reduce the use of vehicles and to consider such impacts when considering local planning applications. Provision for additional cycle parking in Monmouth was secured by the Active Travel group in 2022 with a covered shelter now sited near the Blesitum Street toilet block. The Town Council and the Active Travel group have also continued to be consultees for the development of an active travel route from Kingswood Gate and Williamsfield Lane, working with Sustrans and Monmouthshire County Council.

As a Town Council we also **grant aid to local community groups for environmental projects** such as the improvement of the Rockfield Community

Garden. Consideration has also been given to improving the availability of local allotments and community gardens in Monmouth. It is thought that that will not only increase the biodiversity in the area but will also provide easier access to fresh, locally grown food.

4. Conclusion

Despite the unconventional start to the new Council term in 2022-23, it is clear that the new Councillors have taken to their roles with ambition, drive and determination. This has resulted in progress with ongoing projects, new projects commencing and relationships with the community being maintained.

Councillors were able to take the time in 2022-23 to establish a knowledge and understanding of the Council that has formed the foundation of a progressive and community-focused Council with a sense of unity and collaboration.

It is hopeful that 2023 will see an increase in community engagement, a focus on improving tourism in the town and the continued efforts of the 19 Councillors for the benefit of the residents with events being planned to highlight the bountiful history of Monmouth.

Monmouth Town Council

Shire Hall

Agincourt Square

Monmouth

NP25 3DY

APPENDIX 1- YOUR COUNCILLORS

Osbaston Ward

Emily Fairman

Independent

Roger Hoggins

Independent

Mike James

Conservative

Jane Lucas

Conservative

Wyesham Ward

Rob Barrell

Independent

David Evans

Welsh Labour

Alice Fletcher

Welsh Labour

Rachel Jupp

Independent

Drybridge Ward

Martin Ford

Independent

Martin Sweeney

Independent

Steve Wadley

Independent

Fiona Wilcock

Independent

Town Ward

Jackie Atkin

Independent

Gail Brehany

Independent

Sian Damon

Independent

Andy North

Independent

Overmonnow Ward

Steven Garratt

Welsh Labour

Jem Jenkins-Jones

Independent

Tom Kirton

Welsh Labour

APPENDIX 2: COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE 2022-23

Name	Full Council	Finance & Policy Committee	People and Places Committee	Planning Committee	Staffing Sub Committee
Abigail Katsande (resigned)	4	1	2	0	0
Alice Fletcher	7	3	6	0	0
Andy North	3	1	2	4	0
David Evans	12	6	10	1	2
Emily Fairman	7	2	7	0	0
Fiona Wilcock	3	0	2	4	0
Gail Brehany	2	0	2	3	0
Jackie Atkin	9	0	7	7	1
Jamie Treharne (resigned)	3	1	0	4	0
Jane Lucas	7	5	6	0	2
Jem Jenkins-Jones	5	3	6	0	0
John Major (resigned)	1	0	0	1	0
Martin Sweeney	10	6	8	0	0
Martyn Ford	8	4	0	3	0
Mike James	8	1	8	8	2
Patrick Harkness (resigned)	5	2	3	1	0
Rachel Jupp	7	0	6	0	0
Rob Barrell	10	1	8	15	0
Roger Hoggins	8	5	5	0	0
Sian Damon	11	0	7	12	0
Simon Jones (resigned)	5	1	0	9	0
Stephen Rist (resigned)	5	1	0	4	0
Steve Wadley	3	0	2	4	0
Steven Garratt	12	4	9	1	0
Tom Kirton	12	5	6	13	0

APPENDIX 3 – FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

2022-23

Working Detail for ANNUAL RETURN

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2023

	Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
1	343,831	170,260	310		General Reserve
1	10,000	18,000	322		EMR Cemetery
1	45,000	45,000	325		EMR Public Realm Contribution
1	0	6,000	326		EMR Elections
1	-1,653	7,836	329		EMR Staff Absence Contingency
1	1,000	1,000	330		EMR Chapter 8 Training
1	4,830	4,830	331		EMR Welsh Language
1	0	10,000	332		EMR Agincourt St Toilets Repai
1	-240	2,000	333		EMR CILCA/ILCA Course Costs
1	1,345	573	334		EMR Cycling Promotion
1	10,000	12,059	338		EMR Office Mangt (was QMS)
1	800	1,300	339		EMR Newbridgepaving/Wye Bridge
1	928	10,929	341		EMR CCTV
1	1,600	2,000	342		EMR Noticeboards
1	1,308	0	343		EMR Emergency Grant Funding
1	5,000	5,000	345		EMR Power Supply Costs Christm
1	652	3,518	346		EMR Drinking Water Fountains
1	1,000	0	347		EMR Air Quality Monitors
1	350	0	348		EMR Highfield Rd-cut through p
1	694	688	349		EMR IT upgrade
1	3,262	3,134	350		EMR 19/20 4th Qtr Office Equip
1	10,000	10,000	351		EMR Community Engt.& Resid. Su
1	300	0	352		EMR ACE Mon Green spaces -tool
1	29,650	18,286	353		EMR MTC Covid-19 Recovery Fund
1	11,795	6,000	354		EMR Active Travel/Bike Shelter
1	0	2,388	355		EMR Staff Training
1	0	4,269	357		EMR Future Events
1	0	1,000	358		EMR Communications
1	0	1,792	360		EMR Army Covenant Grant
1	0	6,143	363		EMR C/F from previou year
1	0	6,298	364		EMR War Mem Repairs
1	0	49,644	366		EMR Toilet Upgrade
1	0	3,000	367		EMR Playground Replace
1	0	200	368		EMR Replace Dog Bins
1	0	400	370		EMR Litter Bins
1	0	3,014	371		EMR Street Furniture
1	0	2,000	372		EMR Xmas Lights Contingency
1	0	500	373		EMR Planter Replacement
1	0	500	374		EMR Monnow Bridge Clean
1	0	19,000	375		EMR Allotments
1	0	6,739	376		EMR Upgrade IT software
1	0	1,919	377		EMR Member Training
1	0	15,000	378		EMR Queens Jubilee Grants

1	Balances	481,452	462,218	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in	
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	Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
brought forward					the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of the previous year.
2	383,261	428,506	1176	101	Precept Received
2 (+) Income from local taxation/levy	383,261	428,506	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.		
3	3,966	647	1050	101	Miscellaneous Income
3	1,181	5,539	1190	101	Interest Received
3 (+) Total other receipts	5,147	6,186	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus the amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.		
4	45,469	56,603	4000	101	Salaries
4	34,171	39,752	4001	101	Tax/NI and Pensions
4 (-) Staff costs	79,640	96,355	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and related expenses e.g. termination costs.		
5 (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on external borrowing (if any).		
6	240	240	4005	101	Payroll Contract
6	0	22	4007	101	Officer & Member Travel
6	812	142	4009	101	Staff training & Subsistence
6	80	573	4011	101	Member Training
6	146	1,024	4021	101	Stationery & Office Supplies
6	6	54	4022	101	Postage
6	349	284	4023	101	Copying
6	416	339	4024	101	Copier Consumables
6	1,916	2,266	4025	101	Insurance
6	3,986	238	4027	101	Subscriptions
6	216	346	4030	101	Website
6	75	562	4031	101	Publicity
6	1,231	1,740	4057	101	Audit
6	2,627	740	4060	101	IT Contract
6	3,071	14,801	4062	101	IT Software, Subs & Finance Sys
6	1,620	6,536	4070	101	Office Equipment
6	5,892	7,458	4071	101	Shire Hall SLA annual payment
6	2,978	3,757	4081	101	Specialist advice services
6	13,720	13,720	4093	201	CCTV
6	60	22	4095	101	Clerks Contngency Fund
6	2,893	3,000	4100	102	Mayor's civic expenses
6	1,187	4,968	4105	102	Civic Expenses
6	1,309	1,217	4107	102	Meetings Costs
6	350	0	4108	102	Professional Fees
6	600	600	4110	102	Mace Bearers
6	4,944	8,871	4120	102	Members' payments allowances &
6	54	81	4200	101	Section 137
6	8,000	8,500	4203	201	Community Contributions
6	17,832	36,161	4204	201	Community Grants combined

	Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
6	31,359	67,064	4206	201	Partnership Agreements
6	6,044	5,869	4216	201	Christmas Festival/Monlight
6	1,128	2,969	4221	201	Events
6	-1,792	1,792	4222	201	Armed Forces Covenant Funding
6	17,765	34,479	4307	301	Agincourt St. Toilets
6	27,595	28,285	4308	301	MCC Street Sweep
6	12,481	14,392	4309	301	Dog waste bins
6	4,140	4,767	4310	301	Town Maintenance Contract & Ex
6	2,303	9,817	4317	301	Decorations & Town Centre Enha
6	14,356	14,356	4321	301	Blestium St. Toilets
6	1,533	0	4324	301	Climate Change Emergency
6	2,650	4,479	4350	301	Litter Bins
6	1,280	1,707	4351	301	Street Furniture
6	23,426	24,545	4352	301	Christmas Lights & Trees
6	1,134	4,000	4353	301	Fountains
6	10,013	30,100	4354	301	Floral Contract
6	830	1,913	4600	401	Plg extra meeting costs
6	772	0	9009	901	EMR Cycling PromotionDNU
6	8,458	0	9014	901	EMR Staff Absence ContDNU
6	10,936	0	9020	901	EMR Office Man (was QMS)DNU
6	350	0	9031	901	EMRHighfield Rd-cut throughDNU
6	1,320	0	9032	901	EMR IT upgradeDNU
6	128	0	9033	901	EMR 19/20 4thQtrOfficeEquipDNU
6	14,156	0	9035	901	EMR MTC Covid-19 Rec Fund DNU
6	5,795	0	9036	901	EMR Active Travel Act DNU
6	2,641	0	9038	901	EMR Future EventsDNU
6	35,940	0	9041	901	EMR C/F from previous yrDNU
6	10,000	0	9042	901	EMR Chippenham Play ParkDNU
6	4,650	0	9044	901	EMR AllotmentsDNU
6	(-) Total other payments	328,002	368,794	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).	
7	(=) Balances carried forward	462,218	431,760	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).	
8	152	0	101	Debtors	
8	13,771	18,404	105	Vat Due	
8	5,189	8,299	110	Prepayments	
8	(+) Debtors	19,113	26,703	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end.	
9	301,712	15,648	201	Lloyds TSB Combined	
9	156,615	86,921	204	Monmouthshire Building Society	
9	0	324,723	205	CCLA	
9	24	77	210	Petty Cash	
9	(+) Total cash and investments	458,351	427,369	All accounts: The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held at 31 March. This must agree with the reconciled cashbook balance as per the bank reconciliation.	

	Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
10	1,916	0	500		Creditors P/L
10	119	9,455	501		Creditors
10	13,211	12,857	510		Accruals
10 (-) Creditors	15,246	22,312	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.		
11 (=) Balances carried forward	462,218	431,760	Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10).		
12	300,034	303,978	Total Fixed Assets		
12 Total fixed assets and long-term assets	300,034	303,978	The asset and investment register value of all fixed assets and any other long-term assets held as at 31 March.		
13 Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balances as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).		