Tracks & Trails Project 26/27

12-Month Pilot Monitoring and Management Programme

Project Aim

To establish a robust evidence base on the use, impacts and management of priority Unclassified County Roads (UCRs) through monitoring, stakeholder engagement, early maintenance and management scoping, and targeted interventions, while developing a wider programme for the Tracks & Trails network.

This delivers against the core objectives identified within the Tracks & Trails of the Lower Wye Valley Integrated Access Strategy:

1. Boosting Awareness
Improving understanding of route status, legal access rights and responsibilities, and responsible recreation through signage, communications and stakeholder engagement.

2. Robust Management
Trialling targeted management interventions on routes identified as requiring more active management, while bringing maintenance and repair options forward for early consideration.

3. Better Data & Insight
Collecting objective evidence on route use, user behaviour, route condition, reported incidents and intervention effectiveness.

4. Making it Happen
Developing practical solutions, costed options and partnership approaches that can be delivered in future phases and across the wider priority network.

Pilot Scope and Route Selection

The 12-month pilot focuses on Tintern Road and Horse Way/Grove Road. Concentrating monitoring and intervention on two priority routes allows the project to test approaches at a manageable scale, compare outcomes and refine methods before wider rollout. The routes have been identified as priority routes through existing Tracks & Trails evidence and Steering Group consideration.
The pilot does not mean that other priority routes will be left unaddressed. Existing evidence for the wider network will be reviewed during the pilot and a longer-term programme will be developed to set out the proposed approach for the remaining priority routes.

Phase 1: Baseline Monitoring and Early Management Scoping

Months 1–3 (Jul. – Sep. 2026)

Install AI Camera Monitoring

Install AI camera systems at entry and exit points of:

- Tintern Road UCR
- Horse Way/Grove Road UCR

The cameras will:

- Operate continuously.
- Record user movements.
- Categorise user types.
- Identify trends in route use.
- Generate objective datasets.

Deliverables

- Cameras installed and operational.
- Baseline monitoring established.
- Monitoring updates generated.

Review Existing Evidence and Scope Maintenance Options

Bring maintenance and management scoping forward so that existing evidence can inform the pilot from the outset rather than waiting until the final months.

- Review the existing consultant status report, route-condition information and previous Tracks & Trails evidence for the priority network.
- Record the rationale for selecting Tintern Road and Horse Way/Grove Road as the two intensive pilot routes.
- Review existing Natural Flood Management (NFM) water bars on Chapel Hill Road.
- Develop initial repair and maintenance options for Tintern Road and Horse Way/Grove Road, including indicative costs, permissions, responsibilities and funding requirements where available.
- Identify any urgent or quick-win works that could be progressed during the pilot without undermining the monitoring programme.

Where physical works take place during the monitoring period, their timing and nature will be recorded so that their effects can be distinguished from the effects of signage and other interventions.

Deliverables

- Early maintenance and management options note.
- Pilot route selection rationale documented.
- Initial list of deliverable works, constraints and funding requirements.

Phase 2: Signage Trial

Months 2–6 (Aug. – Dec. 2026)

Design and Install Signage Trial

Implement signage on both pilot routes.

Objectives

- Improve awareness of the legal status of the route and the rights and responsibilities that apply to users.
- Support appropriate Police enforcement by making route status and any applicable restrictions clearer to users.
- Promote responsible and considerate use in line with the Countryside Code.

Potential messages

- Respect • Protect • Enjoy.
- Shared route: respect other users and local communities.
- Use only routes, vehicles and activities that are legally permitted.
- Protect the route, surrounding environment and heritage.
- Report dangerous, illegal or anti-social behaviour through the appropriate reporting channel.

Final sign wording and locations will be agreed with the relevant Monmouthshire County Council officers and Gwent Police and will accurately reflect the legal status of each route and any restrictions that are in force. Signage will support awareness and enforcement; it will not in itself create a new legal restriction.

Deliverables

- Signage package agreed and installed.
- Before-and-after monitoring programme established.
- Sign schedule recording wording, locations and installation dates.

Phase 3: Monitoring Behavioural and Route Change

Months 4–9 (Oct. 2026 – Mar. 2027)

Evaluate Impact of Signage and Other Interventions

Use AI monitoring data, route-condition information and incident reports to assess:

- Changes in traffic volume and user mix.
- Seasonal variations.
- User behaviour trends.
- Route-specific patterns.
- Route-condition changes.
- Changes in the number and type of reported incidents, where data quality allows.

The project will compare the baseline period with the post-signage period. Any maintenance works, weather events or other interventions that could affect the results will be logged and considered when interpreting changes.

Deliverables

- Quarterly monitoring updates.
- Interim behavioural and route-condition assessment.

Phase 4: Communications, Engagement and Feedback

Throughout Year

Responsible Recreation Campaign

Develop a coordinated communications programme aligned with the Strategy's "Boosting Awareness" objective and the Countryside Code principles of Respect, Protect and Enjoy.

Key themes

- Route status, legal rights and responsibilities.
- Countryside Code and responsible recreation.
- Respect for local communities and other users.
- Protecting nature, heritage and the physical condition of routes.
- How and where to report dangerous, illegal or anti-social behaviour.

Any locally developed "Wye Valley etiquette" or code of conduct will be checked to ensure that it is consistent with applicable Welsh law and, where material is intended for cross-border use, applicable English law.

Communication Channels

Use a mix of channels so that information is visible both to route users and local communities. Channels may include:

- The online UCR Hub/project webpage.
- Wye Valley National Landscape and Monmouthshire County Council digital channels.
- Community council and local stakeholder networks.
- User-group newsletters and mailing lists.
- On-route signage and QR links where appropriate.
- Local media or community updates at key project milestones where appropriate.

Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement will be structured by stakeholder category rather than presenting any one user group as the lead audience.

Statutory, delivery and governance partners

- Monmouthshire County Council, including relevant Public Rights of Way and highways officers.
- Gwent Police.
- Natural Resources Wales.
- Wye Valley National Landscape.
- Local Access Forum / Tracks & Trails Steering Group.

Local communities and land interests

- Community councils.
- Residents.
- Landowners and occupiers.

Recreational user representatives

- Ramblers and other walking groups.
- British Horse Society and equestrian representatives.
- Cycling groups.
- Motorised user representatives, including the Trail Riders Fellowship, Green Lane Association and Tread Lightly.

Purpose

- Explain project objectives and the rationale for the pilot approach.
- Share monitoring findings and proposed interventions.
- Encourage responsible use.
- Seek and record feedback, concerns and practical suggestions.
- Explain how feedback has been considered in subsequent project decisions.
- Build trust in evidence gathering and future management recommendations.

An early Local Access Forum subgroup / Steering Group session will review the 12-month pilot alongside the development of the wider Tracks & Trails programme, including visible actions and next steps for routes outside the two intensive pilot routes.

Deliverables

- Minimum four stakeholder engagement events or structured engagement sessions.
- Engagement records.
- Feedback and action log showing how substantive comments have been considered.
- Public-facing progress summaries at appropriate milestones.

Incident Reporting Campaign

Publish the online “UCR Hub”, including a clear decision-tree on legal use and when/how to report illegal, dangerous or inappropriate activity. The UCR Hub will support the public in reporting:

- Dangerous riding or driving.
- Suspected illegal use.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Environmental damage and/or damage to property.

The Hub will direct users to the appropriate reporting channel, including Gwent Police for suspected criminal, illegal or dangerous activity and the relevant authority or organisation for highway defects and other non-police matters.

Phase 5: Wider Tracks & Trails Programme Development

Months 5–9 (Nov. 2026 – Mar. 2027)

Develop a less detailed, longer-term programme alongside the intensive two-route pilot so that communities and partners can see how the wider priority network will be addressed.

- Review the status and existing evidence for the remaining priority routes identified through previous Tracks & Trails work.
- Set out transparent prioritisation criteria, including route condition, safety, user conflict, environmental impact, community concerns, deliverability, cost and funding opportunities.
- Identify proposed next steps for the two other high-priority routes that are not part of the intensive pilot.
- Prepare an indicative 2–3 year programme of monitoring, maintenance, engagement and management work, subject to resources and approvals.

Deliverables

- Draft wider Tracks & Trails programme.
- Priority route schedule with indicative next steps.
- Outline resource and funding requirements.

Phase 6: Evidence Review and Recommendations

Months 10–12 (Apr. – Jun. 2027)

Analyse 12 Months of Monitoring and Engagement Evidence

Review:

- Vehicle and other user movements.
- Seasonal patterns.
- Route-condition changes.
- Signage effectiveness.
- Incident-reporting data.
- Stakeholder and community feedback.
- Maintenance and management work undertaken during the pilot.

Deliverables

- 12-month monitoring and evaluation report.
- Data dashboard or equivalent summary dataset.
- Route-specific findings.
- Summary of stakeholder feedback and how it informed the recommendations.

Refine Maintenance and Management Options

- Update and cost repair and maintenance options for Tintern Road and Horse Way/Grove Road in light of the monitoring evidence.
- Confirm the condition and maintenance requirements of relevant NFM measures, including the Chapel Hill Road water bars.
- Identify funding, permissions, responsibilities and delivery timescales for recommended works.

Produce Recommendations

Recommendations may include:

Option 1

- Maintain existing management arrangements where evidence shows they are adequate.

Option 2

- Expand or amend the signage programme.

Option 3

- Introduce additional education, communications and awareness measures.

Option 4

- Undertake targeted maintenance or infrastructure improvements.

Option 5

- Investigate statutory or other management controls, including Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), where the evidence demonstrates a clear need and the relevant legal tests, consultation requirements and traffic authority processes can be met.

No management outcome is predetermined. Recommendations will be based on the evidence gathered through monitoring, route-condition assessment, incident data, stakeholder feedback and the feasibility of available management options.

Key Outputs by Month 12

Output	Target
AI cameras installed	2 pilot routes
Continuous monitoring	12 months
Pilot route selection rationale documented	Months 1–3
Early maintenance and management scoping	Months 1–3
Signage trial completed	2 pilot routes
Quarterly monitoring updates produced	4
Stakeholder engagement sessions	Minimum 4
Feedback and action log	Ongoing
UCR Hub and reporting guidance	Published during pilot
Draft wider Tracks & Trails programme	By Month 9
12-month monitoring and evaluation report	Month 12
Refined maintenance / management options	2 pilot routes
Recommendations for future management	Month 12

Long-Term Outcome

This pilot will establish an evidence-led approach to managing the Tracks & Trails network, providing a defensible basis for future investment, enforcement support, maintenance, management interventions and funding bids. By combining intensive testing on two pilot routes with a wider forward programme, it will also demonstrate how other priority routes will be progressed rather than treating the pilot routes in isolation. This supports the Tracks & Trails of the Lower Wye Valley Integrated Access Strategy objectives of increasing awareness, improving management, strengthening evidence and delivering practical solutions.