



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Monmouthshire Brown & White Tourism Signs Policy

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This policy defines the procedure that is used to determine which applications qualify for tourism signposting, summarises the application process and highlights the financial implications to applicants.

1. Introduction

Brown and White Tourism Signposting in Monmouthshire is dealt with by Monmouthshire County Council (MCC).

Although it may seem a simple matter to have a sign put up near your business, please remember there are road safety, quality and 'sign pollution' issues to take into account when considering applications. There is an application process, and your application will be judged against a range of eligibility criteria (*see Appendix I*), as well as against road safety and traffic management factors. All matters relating to tourism signs are at the discretion of the Council.

There is a cost involved – applicants pay a £100 application fee (currently non VATable), and then if successful are responsible for the cost of design, construction and installation of the signs. Although the signs remain the property of Monmouthshire County Council, the cost of any maintenance or replacement for the signs after erection will also be the responsibility of the applicant.

Too many signposts spoil the look and feel of an area, and can make it confusing and distracting for the driver. It is important that the impact of new and additional signposting is taken into consideration when each application is assessed. Monmouthshire is a rural county of great charm and there is a risk that a proliferation of signs will destroy part of that appeal, as well as creating a distraction for road users. To protect against this, MCC reserve the right to refuse even eligible applications for the wider benefit of the local population and visitors. **In some cases applicants will be encouraged to take up shared tourism signposting with other local facilities on the same route.**

It is suggested that you contact the Tourism Section (01633 644865 tourism@monmouthshire.gov.uk) in the first instance to obtain some informal advice before submitting an official application. If, on receipt of the application, it is considered that you meet the criteria, it will then be assessed by the Traffic Section on visual impact, road safety and traffic management grounds.

2. Who is eligible?

An eligible tourism facility is defined, for this purpose, as:

‘a permanently established destination or facility that attracts and is used by visitors to an area, is open to the public without prior booking during normal opening hours and is officially recognised by Visit Wales or relevant body. It should be open a minimum of 100 days each year and four hours a day and show evidence of promotion to the tourism market. The definition is intended to encompass accommodation establishments as well as visitor attractions’.

Applicants will be judged against the eligibility criteria listed in *Appendix 1*, and evidence must be provided to support each application. If the tourism facilities are located on a trunk road or motorway, or require signs from them, your application will also have to meet additional Highways Agency/Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) Highways criteria. In such cases MCC will liaise with WAG in order to coordinate an appropriate signing scheme.

In the case of new and emerging attractions, a business plan, showing how the business intends to attract over 4,000 visitors will be required. Businesses will also be considered should they attract sufficient visitors so that in the opinion of, and at the discretion of the Council, they make a valuable contribution to the tourist economy of the County. The decision of the authority will be taken by the appropriate Cabinet member who may wish to consult with a select committee.

Eligibility does not automatically guarantee entitlement to tourism signs. All applications will be judged on considerations of visual impact, road safety and traffic management needs, in addition to the appropriateness and quality of the facilities.

3. How many signs can I have, what can they say and where can I put them?

Although you will probably have your own ideas, let the Traffic Section work with you to advise you on the number of signs you can have and where those signs should be. They will help determine the number and size of signs allowed, if and when your application is approved.

4. How much do Tourism Signs cost?

There are four main areas of cost to consider when applying for tourism signs:

- i. Application fee – currently £100
- ii. Design, construction and installation of signs
- iii. Removal of existing off-site advertising signs
- iv. Maintenance of tourism signs

4a. To establish whether your application is eligible for tourism signs it is necessary for us to carry out an initial assessment. The application fee is £100 (payable to Monmouthshire County Council).

The application fee is not refundable if the application is unsuccessful. Therefore, we encourage you to seek informal advice from Monmouthshire Tourism before you submit your application. We will offer as much help and advice as possible to help you determine whether your application will be eligible before it is submitted. In order to assist tourism in the county grant funding may be available on occasions for approved signs.

4b. The cost of the actual signs should also be taken into account.

We hope the following examples will help give you some idea of the likely costs of signs (design and installation costs will be charged in addition to the figures shown below which could be significant in certain circumstances).

Pedestrian Sign

Approximate Size: 20cm x 75cm

Likely Construction Cost: £150 + VAT

Standard Road Sign

Approximate Size: 30cm x 120cm

Likely Construction Cost: £200 + VAT

4c. The applicant will be responsible for the cost of removing any unauthorised off-site advertising signs at or near the location of the proposed tourism signs. This is to avoid over proliferation of signs. Persistent use of unauthorised advertising signs at or near the location of the tourism signs once in place may result in the removal of the Brown and White Tourism signs.

You should allow 3 – 4 months for signing from start to finish.

5. What if my facilities or signs are located outside Monmouthshire or I require signs on a Trunk Road?

If an applicant requires signing on routes in a neighbouring authority and/or a Trunk Road, the Council will consult with the relevant authorities on the applicant's behalf.

6. If my application is approved, what happens next?

Once your application is approved the supply and erection of signs covering the whole scheme may only be carried out by the Highways Authority following receipt of full payment by the applicant(s).

7. Aftercare and review of Tourism Signs

The signs will remain in the ownership of the County Council or Highways Agency as appropriate.

You will be responsible for the cost of any maintenance to tourism signs erected on your behalf, including cleaning and replacement. This work should only be undertaken on the highway by properly trained personnel through the Highways Section.

If the facility becomes ineligible for any reason, MCC may remove the signs at the expense of the operator.

Appendix 1: Eligibility Criteria

This appendix lists the eligibility criteria and necessary supporting information required. For further information about these please see *Appendix 3 'Filling in The Application Form'*.

1. All Applicants:

Category	Eligibility Criteria	Additional Supporting Evidence required
<p>ALL APPLICANTS</p> <p><i>Note: there is a presumption in favour of pedestrian tourism signing unless there is overriding evidence of a need for highway tourism signs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate on-site parking must normally be available. Where off-site parking is provided this must be within a reasonable distance of the facility. • Must not erect any advertising signs at/near the location of the proposed Brown and White Tourism Signs, and must remove any existing off-site signing (<i>the applicant will be responsible for the cost of removing any advertising signs</i>). • Facilities must be adequately advertised, including location, opening times, facilities, etc. • Location of facilities with clear directions, and where appropriate public transport access, must be adequately advertised. • Must have necessary Planning Permission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the car park is not owned by the applicant, written confirmation from the owner of the car park that this is acceptable is required. • Details of target markets, evidence of publicity and details of distribution, e.g. copies of leaflets, adverts, website promotion, etc. • Evidence on above promotional materials. • Proof of Planning Permission (<i>only required if facilities have been established for less than 10 years</i>).

2. Visitor Attractions:

Category	Eligibility Criteria	Additional Supporting Evidence Required
	As for ALL applicants. In addition:	As for ALL applicants. In addition:
<p>Including historic houses, museums, gardens and arboreta, craft and wildlife centres, etc.</p> <p>Note: <i>CADW and National Trust properties are already eligible for tourism signs and are therefore exempt from the need for recognition as a bona fide tourist attraction.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must attract a minimum of 4,000 visitors per year or attract sufficient visitors so that in the opinion of, and at the discretion of the County Council, makes a valuable contribution to the tourist economy of the County. • Must be able to demonstrate that a substantial proportion of visitors are attracted from outside the local area. • Must be open for a minimum of 100 days each year and 4 hours per day. • Must sign up to the Visit Wales Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS). More details are available from Visit Wales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of annual visitor numbers. • Evidence of the source of visitors. In the absence of visitor research or even a visitor's book it can be hard to demonstrate this. In these circumstances Monmouthshire Tourism will take a view on this, bearing in mind the information supplied in the rest of the Application. • Details of annual opening times. • Evidence that the attraction has signed up to VAQAS through Visit Wales.

3. Serviced Accommodation:

Category	Eligibility Criteria	Additional Supporting Evidence Required
	As for ALL applicants. In addition:	As for ALL applicants. In addition:
<p>Note: <i>Serviced accommodation catering for long term residents which are therefore in effect hostel type houses in multiple occupation are NOT eligible.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be registered with a nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme i.e. Visit Wales, AA. • Must comply with the Food Safety (<i>General Food Hygiene</i>) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990. • Must provide a minimum of 3 letting bedrooms available on a regular basis for a minimum of 240 days per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written evidence of an up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading. • Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of Council Environmental Health Inspection. • Evidence that the accommodation provides 3 letting bedrooms.

4. Rural Facilities:

Category	Eligibility Criteria	Additional Supporting Evidence Required
	As for ALL applicants. In addition:	As for ALL applicants. In addition:
<p>4a. Rural Public Houses.</p> <p><i>Note: Public Houses not offering either food or/and serviced accommodation are NOT eligible.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be of either recognised historical importance or culinary significance. • A selection of hot meals must be served both at lunchtimes and in the evening to both pre-booked and casual visitors. • Must comply with the Food safety (<i>General Food Hygiene</i>) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990. • If offering overnight accommodation, must meet Serviced Accommodation eligibility criteria listed on page 14. • Must be willing to accommodate children indoors, and have appropriate facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that it is of recognised historical importance, or culinary significance such as an up-to-date culinary award (<i>e.g. Michelin Star</i>) or special recommendation (<i>e.g. entry in Good Pub Guide</i>). • Details of opening times, times food is served and sample menus. • Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. Council Environmental Health certificate. • If offering accommodation, written evidence of an up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading.
<p>4b. Rural Restaurants and Cafes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening hours should be at least 6 hours a day, 6 days a week, for 6 months a year. • Should be open to both pre-booked and casual visitors. • Must comply with the Food Safety (<i>General Food Hygiene</i>) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990. • Must be of either recognised historical importance or culinary significance. • Must be willing to accommodate children indoors, and have appropriate facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of opening times and sample menus. • Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. Confirmation of Council Environmental Health Inspection. • Evidence it is of either recognised historical importance, or culinary significance such as an up-to-date culinary award (<i>e.g. Michelin Star</i>) or special recommendation (<i>e.g. entry in Good Pub Guide</i>).

4. Rural Facilities continued:

Category	Eligibility Criteria	Additional Supporting Evidence Required
	As for ALL applicants. In addition:	As for ALL applicants. In addition:
<p>4c. Retail Establishments</p> <p><i>Note: The following retail establishments are NOT eligible for tourism signing: Retail Parks, Shopping Centres, Garden Centres, and out of town Supermarkets and Superstores.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be of particular interest to the tourism market and have facilities and features that are specifically aimed at tourists. • Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate. • Should offer at least one of the following: Tours of facilities or demonstrations. Interpretative displays for tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the facilities' special interest to tourists and publicity aimed at visitors from outside of the local area. <p><i>Note: the final decision as to whether the facilities are of particular interest to the tourism market will be made by MCC.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of tours/demonstrations if appropriate.
<p>4d. Rural Recreational Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be open for at least 100 days per year, and for at least 4 hours per day. • Should be open to non-members within normal opening hours and where necessary equipment should be available for hire. • Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of opening times.
<p>4e. Rural Sports Centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be open for at least 100 days per year for at least 4 hours per day. • Should be open to non-members within normal opening hours and where necessary equipment should be available for hire. • Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of opening times.

5. Camping & Caravan Sites:

These signs are provided for the benefit of touring caravan users and campers from outside the local area, who wish to make casual overnight or short stays.

Eligibility Criteria	Additional Supporting Evidence Required
As for ALL applicants, In addition:	As for ALL applicants, In addition:
<p>Must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either participate in a nationally approved Quality Assurance Scheme i.e. Visit Wales, AA. • Or be under the membership of the Caravan Club or Camping and Caravanning Club. • Should have at least 20 pitches for casual overnight use by touring caravans. • Must be open to non-members without the need to pre-book. • Must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and/or the Public Health Act 1936. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading or membership of the Caravan Club/Camping and Caravanning Club. • Details of facilities offered on-site, including number of pitches. • Evidence of up-to-date licensing.

7. Youth Hostels:

Eligibility Criteria	Additional Supporting Evidence Required
As for ALL applicants. In addition:	As for ALL applicants. In addition:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be open without the need for prior booking during normal opening hours. • Hostels managed by the Youth Hostel Association may be granted tourism signs with the YHA symbol. Other hostels may be signed, but not with the YHA symbol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that it is managed by the YHA, if appropriate.