

Marhamchurch Parish Council Hele Valley Trail Business Plan July 2025

Capital Cost of Project

The sales particulars state the asking price to be £190,000.

<https://static2.carterjonas.co.uk/land/for-sale/marhamchurch/tru230017>

The Parish Councils independent RICS Valuation put the rounded down valuation at £190,000. Survey can be viewed on our website: https://www.marhamchurch-pc.co.uk/uploads/1/2/6/1/126112123/kivells_survey_8.7.24.pdf

Other than the acquisition cost, no other capital costs have been identified.

The capital project is being managed by Marhamchurch Parish Council with the assistance of groups and individuals in the community who will provide practical help especially with crowdfunding.

The PC is actively exploring other grant funding possibilities; details listed below in more detail.

Financial Breakdown of Project

The total project cost is £190,000. There is no irrecoverable VAT.

The capital funding request from the Community Ownership Fund is £152,000 or 80% of the capital requirement. The total amount of match funding required is £38,000.

The PC has approval from parishioners to use up to £10,000 from parish funds towards the project.

84% of respondents to the PC's survey indicated they will consider contributing to a PC crowdfunding effort to raise the required match funding.

Marhamchurch PC launched a Crowdfunding campaign in April 2025 and have received £17,477 as at 13:21 on 15/7/25, which includes a conditional grant from Cornwall Climate & Nature Fund. Conditional that the PC meets its crowdfunding target. 208 supporters have contributed to the Crowdfunder at the time of writing.

The Parish Council has made contact with local holiday accommodation providers to promote the amenity value of the Hele Valley Trail to visitors and to promote the crowdfunding efforts.

Bude Stratton Town Council resolved at its meeting of 5th December 2024 to give their full support to Marhamchurch Parish Councils grant funding applications. https://www.marhamchurch-pc.co.uk/uploads/1/2/6/1/126112123/bstc_support.pdf and have since approved a grant for £2500 to support the project.

The Parish Council have submitted an application to PrimeFoundation for £8300. Pending outcome.

The Parish Council plans to submit an application to Marhamchurch Village Shop Community Fund.

The Parish Council unanimously resolved to commit the remaining Community Infrastructure Levy funds of £2768.02 to the Hele Valley Trail Project. Reference: Jan Mins 25/10vi.

Finally, the Parish Council made an agreement in principle to formally apply to Public Works Loan Board Loan to borrow £20,000 over a 15-year term. The repayments for this would be included in the Precept and would mean an annual increase of £5.82 per household 7.45%. An online survey has been launched to gauge Parishioner feedback.

Parishioner Survey Feedback – 121 responses so far. 91.7% Resident of Marhamchurch Parish. 93.4% In favour of MPC proceeding with purchase of the HVT. 82.6% in favour of MPC proceeding with purchase of the HVT if it includes a council tax precept increase of 7.45%.

Future Use and Management

MPC has no plans to make changes to the way this long-established community used asset operates.

MPC's sole objective is to bring the asset into public ownership to ensure unrestricted public access in perpetuity.

In the event of the PC purchasing the site, the vendor has agreed to continue the twice-yearly grass cutting which has been operating for the last twenty years, at no additional cost to the Parish Council.

Regular users including Bude Scouts, given the importance of the site to their activities, are very keen to provide assistance with maintenance, which is consistent with their own youth activity programs.

As evidenced by a request for volunteers to clear obstructions to paths as a result of storms earlier this year, at short notice a group assembled to complete the clearance. Another group of volunteers attended the Hele Trail to clear trees fallen after another storm just before Christmas. While fallen trees and branches will be cleared from paths, they will not be removed from the site being left there to enhance the ecological approach to management.

Once funds are secured to purchase the land the Parish Council will engage with Bude Friends of the Earth to take up their offer of support with management of the natural heritage of the area, and advise on the environmental aspects of managing the site.

Westcountry Rivers Trust have offered practical support to the Parish Council advising in their letter of support that they are happy to work with the community to make the most of the river. This includes monitoring through their citizen science scheme and running educational activities with local groups and schools.

The Parish Council also intends to establish a Friends of the Hele Valley Trail group which is intended to be made up of volunteers prepared to assist with the clearing of any of the paths that will inevitably become obstructed by fallen trees & branches from time to time, as well as a group who can organise and run educational sessions, walking groups, rewilding specific areas, in consultation with the Parish Council.

While the annual management costs are expected to be low, MPC will annually include a contingency provision in its budget for unexpected maintenance which if unused will be rolled over to the succeeding financial year. Based on estimate received from current land owner of grass cutting costs, MPC believes a set up contingency fund of £5000 (which is 2.5 times current estimate costs) would be an appropriate figure. This would add approximately £12.48 per annum to a Band D property, in the annual Precept figures. Future budgets would be reviewed annual and adjusted accordingly. The Parish Council have allocated £1500 in the budget for Parish Contingency Fund. Please see **Purchase Impact Statement** for detailed information about anticipated ongoing maintenance costs.

There is no planned revenue generation at the site, however MPC will encourage users & visitors to contribute to maintenance costs on a discretionary basis. Signs will be erected advertising how donations can be made to the council's maintenance fund.

Capital Risks

MPC has not identified any capital risks.

Based on the independent valuation, MPC is confident that the value of the site will not depreciate over time.

Governance

Governance and finances will be managed solely by Marhamchurch Parish Council in accordance with our Financial Regulations, which is available on our website:

https://www.marhamchurch-pc.co.uk/uploads/1/2/6/1/126112123/financial_regulations_2021.pdf

Membership of the Council is subject to four yearly democratic elections in accordance with local government legislation.

MPC employs one part-time professional Parish Clerk, who is also the Responsible Financial Officer, who receives regular training appropriate to his/her role which will ensure appropriate management.

Marhamchurch Parish Council will appoint a Councillor to take responsibility for ensuring the appropriate management of the site, in collaboration with the Clerk/RFO.

Professional advice is also available from clerk support bodies.

Business Plan unanimously approved at Marhamchurch Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting 08/04/2024