

# Marhamchurch Parish Council

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025

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The meeting of Marhamchurch Parish Council was held on the above date at 7:30pm, in Marhamchurch Sunday School Rooms.

## **Councillors Present:**

Chairman Cllr Perry, Vice-Chair Cllr Edwards, Cllr Biddick-Bray, Cllr Hunter, Cllr O’Sullivan.

**Also in attendance:** Clerk E Hawkins & Cllr Nicky Chopak.

10 members of the public were present for the meeting. Cllr Perry opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

## **Record and Approve Apologies.**

**25/148**

None.

## **Confirm Minutes from the 16 June 2025 Meeting & 30 June 2025 Extraordinary Meeting and ratify all decisions taken therein.**

**25/149**

It was resolved to approve the minutes and ratify all decisions made at the meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Proposed Cllr Hunter. Seconded Cllr Perry. 4 in favour. 1 abstained.

It was resolved to approve the minutes and ratify all decisions made at the meeting held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Proposed Cllr Hunter. Seconded Cllr Perry. 4 in favour. 1 abstained.

## **Declarations of Interest.**

**25/150**

- (i) Cllr Perry declared longstanding interest in Agenda item 9c: Playpark.
- (ii) Cllr Biddick-Bray declared an interest in Agenda item 15: Proposed Revised layout for Consented Anaerobic Digestion Plan at East Helscott Farm, Marhamchurch.
- (iii) No other declarations.

## **Dispensations.**

**25/151**

- a) To note approved dispensations relevant to items on the agenda:
  - (i) Dispensation noted for Cllr Perry re Agenda item 9c: Playpark.
- b) To review new dispensations requests.
  - (i) No new dispensation requests.

## **Matters Arising.**

**25/152**

None.

## **Public Open Session.**

(To receive statements, questions, and answers from the public on an agenda item)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman. /2025

## **25/153**

A member of the public congratulated everyone for all the positive work done so far on the Hele Valley Trail. While she is aware that not everyone supports the Hele Valley Trail project as it is not used by everyone, it is worth noting that not everyone uses the Playpark yet the PC still maintain and invest money into it. She implored the Council to explore every opportunity for grants to secure the funds to purchase the Hele Valley Trail.

## **Correspondence.**

### **25/154**

Circulated via email.

## **Planning.**

### **25/155**

a) **Decision Notices/Updates:**

(i) **None.**

b) **Planning Applications/Appeals:**

*Any late planning applications received will be discussed but not decided under this section.*

(i) **None**

## **To receive oral or written reports and authorise any action**

### **25/156**

a) Chairman.

The last month has seen a lot of activity with The Hele Valley Trail both on the ground and online, following the launch of the video, which has had a positive impact on the crowdfunding campaign. The Crowdfunder has nearly reached £17500.

Some of you may know that when the opportunity to purchase this piece of land came up, I was not totally in favour of it being a Parish Council led project, due to concerns around increased workload and at the time I felt it was more a project for the people of the Parish. After a couple of public meetings, and for whatever reasons, things didn't really get off the ground so eventually the Parish Council took on the project.

Cllr O'Sullivan was appointed Lead Cllr on this this, and along with the help of the Clerk, was able to secure funding of £152,000 the Community Ownership Fund.

The Crowdfunder campaign was launched in early April, after reaching £6000 mark donations seemed to slow down.

Cllr O'Sullivan stepped down at Lead Cllr of HVT at the June meeting.

A video was published, kindly made by a local family, to support the Hele Valley Trail project. This was circulated on social media pages and we saw another boost to the Crowdfunder campaign.

It was agreed that social media would be helpful to promote the Parish Councils aim, but it was very disappointing to see negative comments made on Marhamchurch Matters about myself, County Cllr Chopak and even our MP Ben Maguire. Detrimental comments on people's efforts are not needed or necessary. Having just one person controlling what gets published on Marhamchurch Matters is worrying, this should not be one person's decision. This is not what I would call open, honest or transparent. There is a new Facebook page called Marhamchurch Newsletter Group, which I am member of.

Thank you to all that have donated so far. Thank you to MP Ben Maguire, County Cllr Nicky Chopak & County Cllr Faye Emery for their recent visit to the Hele Valley Trail, and their support and encouragement. Thank you to Cllr Biddick-Bray and Mr Shadrack for promptly installing the new signs.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman. /2025

Please continue to share all matters relating to the Hele Valley Trail on your social pages, to continue to promote the project.

A member of the public requested to speak, the Chairman permitted it.

The member of public flagged unethical concerns regarding access and control around Marhamchurch Matters Facebook page. It seems very unfair that one person can control what is posted on the page, whether it be a video to promote the Hele Valley Trail, or business promotion. It seems very unfair that someone with a political interest can control something so important and valued by so many in the community.

b) Cornwall Councillor.

20 mph consultation is imminent. To look out for signage in the village. Maps pending. Any concerns re consultation please comment via contact details listed on the notices.

New Council administration sees many new ideas on how to make positive changes. Plans for the ANPR carparks has been shelved, as has the planned sale of Newquay Airport. Lots of discussion and plans going on in the background.

Clinical Waste concerns have been raised; low grade waste has to now go into fortnightly bin collections. This is being investigated.

Appointed as Chair of Community Area Partnership (CAP) which covers 23 parishes. Next meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept which will be addressing the issues around Water. South West Water representative will be attending.

Also appointed as Chair of Adult Health & Social Care, and will be ensuring that the needs of those in North Cornwall are better understood. Also looking at GP surgery & Minor Injuries Unit at Stratton.

With all the increased responsibility there may be a longer reply timeframe to emails, but please do make contact should you need to.

c) Playpark.

Huge thanks to Rosie's for the donated benches. 2 are in place after some repairs and repainting.

d) The Clerk.

- Code of Conduct – Cllr Hunter confirmed she had completed at end of June. All Cllrs have now completed Code of Conduct Training.
- Minutes on website problematic – Clerk to look into.
- CALC has confirmed it is a new requirement that councils need to have migrated to a council owned domain for emails. So MPC @gmail account needs replacing with .org.uk or [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). in order to comply with new regulations which, go live as of the 2025/26 AGAR process. It is recommended that councils switch to [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), but it is not compulsory – as it could switch to .org or [.org.uk](https://www.org.uk) for example. Confirmed with Web designer that this is something she can assist with. Pending further feedback.
- Annual Leave requests w/c 11/5 & w/c 18/5. Will take 5 hours annual leave for remaining weeks of summer holidays w/c 28/7, w/c 4/5, w/c 25/5 & w/c 1/9. Clerk will still be working 10 hours per week.
- Clerk removed herself as a member of Marhamchurch Matters Facebook page. Any issues of concerns re Parish Council need to be raised to the Clerk via email or phone or Chairman.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman. /2025

## **Updated Draft Business Plan July 2025.**

### **25/157**

Clerk circulated copies of the Draft Plan ahead of the meeting, and circulated hard copies at the meeting. Cllr O'Sullivan pleased that so many parishioners in support of this project, despite negativity towards him. Discussions held regarding £5000 contingency provision.

Cllr Biddick-Bray updated that following a site visit with Facilities Manager at Bude Stratton TC, along with Deputy Clerk and Marhamchurch Clerk, that an annual tree inspection will need to be conducted.

A quote from Jason Bellenger, Tree Surveyor stated an initial Annual Woodland Walkover Tree Safety Survey of the Hele Valley Trail would be between £1000.00 - £1500.00 no vat charged. Subsequent inspection costs may reduce, but initial inspection to map all the trees and inspect will be more in-depth.

In addition to this, there may be trees which will need removal, Ash die-back and Dutch Elm are a concern but information regarding this is unknown. Landowner confirmed that they have never had tree inspections on site.

Cllr O'Sullivan made a proposal to amend the penultimate paragraph of **Future Use and Management** to remove the £5000 contingency fund. There was no seconder. Proposal was not passed.

Cllr O'Sullivan proposed to include the following wording in the last paragraph of **Future Use and Management**: 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. This was seconded by Cllr Perry. 4 in favour. 1 abstained. Motion passed. Clerk to amend and was directed to publish on PC website.

It was resolved to adopt the Updated Business Plan with 1 amendment and to publish on the Parish Council website. Proposed Cllr Edwards. Seconded Cllr Perry. 3 in favour. 1 against. 1 abstained.

## **Hele Valley Trail Purchase Impact Statement 2025.**

### **25/158**

A big thank you to Cllr Biddick-Bray for the time she spent on this. It was hugely appreciated.

It was resolved to adopt the Purchase Impact Statement and add to Parish Council website. Proposed Cllr Edwards. Seconded Cllr Biddick-Bray. 3 in favour. 1 against. 1 abstained.

## **The Hele Valley Trail.**

### **25/159**

#### (i) Funding Updates

£5000 secured from Climate & Nature Fund – conditional to reaching crowdfunder target.

£50 from Bude Women's Institute. – with thanks.

Cllr Edwards said he will submit a request to Sustrans for some funding.

Cllr O'Sullivan asked Cllr Chopak if there were any updates re: funding from Cornwall Council. No updates at this time.

(ii) To formally note the £190,000 asking price and discuss implications if a lower offer was made. Independent valuation has been carried out, confirming asking price of £190,000 is considered reasonable. Cllr Perry and Cllr O'Sullivan both approached owner on separate occasions to discuss asking price. They both fed back to Council that the owner is not willing to negotiate on the asking price.

Implications of reducing the asking price will in turn reduce the offer from COF and subsequent match funding requirements, but only minimally. For example: £170,000 = £136,000 COF Grant = £34,000 match funding.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman. /2025

- (iii) To discuss possibility of reducing the target amount on Crowdfunder.  
Deferred.
- (iv) Transfer CIL money (£2768) into HVT account.  
Clerk to arrange transfer ahead of next meeting.
- (v) To receive Report to the Council inc. Business Plan and Hele Valley Trail Purchase Impact Statement.

Received and noted by Cllrs.

- (vi) To resolve to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £20,000 over the borrowing term of 15 years for the purpose of purchasing Lot 1 of The Hele Valley Trail, Marhamchurch. The annual loan repayments will come to around £2330.32. It is also intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 7.45% which is the equivalent of an additional £5.82 a year. This will be subject to a precept increase consultation. Proposed Cllr Perry. Seconded Cllr Edwards. 4 in favour. 1 abstained.

### **Marhamchurch Village Shop.**

#### **25/160**

A member raised concerns about recent comments posted on social media relating to the Village Shop. It was noted that the Parish Council have fostered a positive working relationship with Marhamchurch Village Shop, and hopes that this would continue.

- (i) Community Funding Application.

It was agreed to request £15,000 from the Marhamchurch Village Shop Community Fund. To include in the application, that should MPC secure additional funds from elsewhere (eg Prime Foundation) that MPC would adjust their request accordingly. Proposed Cllr Edwards Seconded Cllr Biddick-Bray. 4 in favour. 1 abstained. Clerk to action.

- (ii) To discuss a possible renegotiation of the annual grant to MVSL for the upkeep of the public toilet & use of the grant for the repayment of a PWLB loan instead.

Chairman deferred this to a future meeting.

### **Land at the top of Pinch Hill adjacent to Old Canal Close, Marhamchurch**

#### **Questions received from resident, who wished to have responses minuted in the meeting:**

#### **25/161**

#### **The Clerk read out the following questions:**

- (i) Is a committee going to be set up with regards to the use of land formerly referred to as 'The Allotments'. What are the plans for this committee?
- (ii) Are there any plans to engage with the community with regards to the land?

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman. /2025

- (iii) Will the council confirm that all due diligence has been or will be carried out prior to any clearing work, such as the felling of trees, to ensure all laws and legal issues have / will be/ have been adhered to?
- (iv) In the March Parish Council meeting it was decided that 'No plans to do anything on the site. To be reviewed again in September'. As there are concerns with regards to the presence of wildlife and their habitats, including snakes, hedgehogs, and bats, will the council use the time between now and September to have independent wildlife surveys carried out?
- (v) When the title transfer is being conducted, will the council commit to having a covenant placed on the title barring it from it being developed into housing? This is to ensure it will always be enjoyed as a community asset.

**The Clerk then read out the Proposed Statement re Land at the top of Pinch Hill, adjacent to Old Canal Close, Marhamchurch.**

**Proposed Statement re Land at the top of Pinch Hill, adjacent to Old Canal Close, Marhamchurch.**

**25/162**

As many residents know, Cornwall Council offered a piece of land to Marhamchurch Parish Council, at the top of Pinch Hill adjacent to Old Canal Close, that was originally allocated for housing.

Cornwall Housing decided it was not viable for development and offered it to Marhamchurch PC for £1 (and associated legal costs) about 4 years ago.

Since then, there has been ongoing discussions with both the Parish Council, Cornwall Council and adjacent neighbours.

However, the Parish Council were hoping to carry out some interim site clearance to see what was entailed as a management license was issued by Cornwall Council to enable this to take place. This was sadly met with some opposition.

The Parish Council have decided to delay any works, any associated inspections or to commit to any costs relating to this land until the boundary disputes are resolved.

Should the land transfer not be resolved, then Cornwall Housing will remain owners and potentially choose to sell it on the open market.

Hopefully this clarifies the current position, and residents are encouraged to attend future Parish Council meetings to discuss the land or contact the clerk: [clerk.marhamchurchpc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.marhamchurchpc@gmail.com)

It was resolved to adopt the Statement and to publish on the Parish Council website. Proposed Cllr Biddick-Bray. Seconded Cllr Edwards. 4 in favour. 1 abstained.

**Proposed Revised layout for Consented Anaerobic Digestion Plan at East Helscott Farm, Marhamchurch.**

**25/163**

**\*\*CLLR BIDDICK-BRAY LEFT THE MEETING\*\***

Pegasus Group advised that a planning application for the revised scheme has been submitted to Cornwall Council. They asked for the opportunity to present the proposed changes at the next Parish Council meeting, to inform the Parish Council about the proposed development and to answer any questions the Councillors, or members of public, may have. The Council agreed to wait until the planning application was received Proposed Cllr Edwards. Seconded Cllr Perry. Unanimous.

**\*\*CLLR BIDDICK-BRAY RETURNED TO THE MEETING\*\***

**To consider appointing a councillor as an unpaid officer.**

**25/164**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman. /2025

Cllr O’Sullivan flagged that there may be urgent correspondence or issues that will need to be addressed as a priority, while the Clerk is on annual leave regarding The Hele Valley Trail. As Poundstock Clerk will no doubt confirm, the Assistant Clerk role at Poundstock is proving to be successful.

It was decided that appointing a Councillor as an unpaid Officer was not necessary. The Clerk is taking 2 weeks annual leave over the summer holidays. She will be working 10 hours per week for the remaining weeks. As has historically been the case, the Clerk will put an Out Of Office on her email account, advising that she is on Annual Leave, and to contact the Chairman or Vice Chairman. Clerk will leave the work mobile with the Chairman. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will circulate any urgent HVT matters to all Cllrs.

**Portfolio Review.**

**25/165**

Cllr Perry to take on Tree Warden Portfolio. Cllr Hunter to take on Defibrillator Portfolio. Clerk update website.

**Finance & Legislation.**

**25/166**

- a) Approval of payments as per schedule (£2492.69) and consider payment of urgent accounts presented by the date of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Hunter. Seconded Cllr O’Sullivan. Unanimous.
- b) To note Income & Bank Balances as per the schedule. Noted.
- c) To note Bank reconciliations. Noted.

**Parish Matters – Agree action and authorise associated expenditure.**

**25/167**

None.

**Urgent Matters raised with the Chairman since the Agenda was published.**

**25/168**

None.

**Date of next meeting and note items from Councillors for the Agenda.**

**25/169**

Extraordinary Meeting for HVT urgent matters: 29 July 2025. Clerk to book meeting room.

Sept Meeting: Remembrance Sunday.

**Meeting closed at: 9:15pm**

**PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) Act 1960 S1(2) & S1(6)**

During the meeting it may arise that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential or special nature of the business to be transacted and the press and public will be instructed to withdraw.

When this arises, the Chair will recommend to consider passing the following resolution: “to resolve that in view of the confidential or special nature of the business to be discussed, the public are excluded and instructed to withdraw.”

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman. /2025