



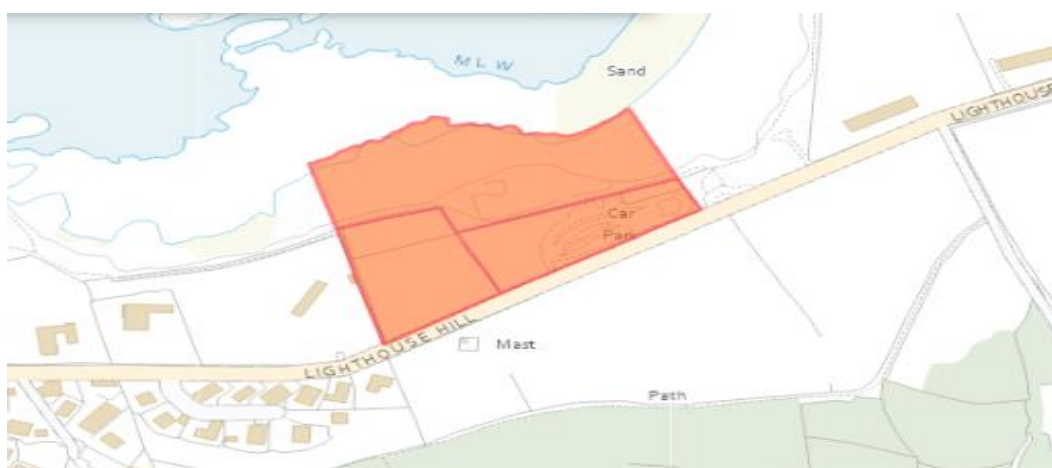
Lighthouse Hill Car Park & Amenity Space

Potential Adoption by Portreath Parish Council

Business Case

1.0 Introduction

The c.2.4 hectares parcel of land on Lighthouse highlighted in the map below currently belongs to Cornwall Council. Cornwall Council has identified this land as surplus to requirements.



A positive consultation with parishioners has been completed that supported the Parish Council adopting the land, subject to it being a transfer from Cornwall council at nil/minimal cost. Based on this an initial discussion with Cornwall council identified that they would likely be supportive for a transfer on a nil/minimal cost basis.

This business case will provide the background, costs, benefits and risks of the option to take on the parcel of land against the option of do nothing/leave as is. It will also describe the next steps if the option to take on the site is supported.

2.0 Consultation and Discussion with Cornwall Council

At the end of November 2023, once our formal Expression of Interest had been made to Cornwall Council. Cllr Webb spoke with the Portfolio Surveyor, in Cornwall Council. This informal discussion was to ascertain how much it would cost for the acquisition of the freehold of the land or a reduction in cost of the leasehold and/or if the land would be devolved to the parish council at a nominal fee.

The main outcomes were as follows:

- Cornwall Council see this land as commercial, therefore they are currently looking at either leasing it or selling it at market value. No financial costs were given.
- Portreath Parish Council were advised that they would need to make a case for devolution at a nominal value.
- Cornwall Council would look favourably on giving Portreath Parish Council an extension to the deadline (30th January), to properly consult with their parishioners.

- Portreath Parish council would need to provide a timeline for the consultation to Cornwall Council, in advance.

A working group was formed in November 2023 Portreath Parish Council meeting. Councillors on this working group met to discuss and put together the outline Business Case.

In Decembers meeting it was AGREED that the working group would expand its members and move forward to put together a timeline. The Working Group met on the 15 January 2024 and AGREED a timeline. The working group included Councillor Dave Crabtree and members of the public in addition to the PPC councillors.

The AGREED Timeline:

MONTH	CONSULTATION ACTIVITY	DEADLINE DATE
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design a digital questionnaire to out on social media – Facebook & Website - Recruit volunteers for door to door knocks to complete on-line/paper survey - Recruit local businesses/organisations to support the consultation. - Design a short paper survey to be put in local businesses & organisations - Create a QR Code to take people to website for survey 	By the END of February, we hope to have completed these activities.
MARCH	<p>MAIN COSULTATION PERIOD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteers to Door Knock – given specific streets to complete – Risk Assessed - Digital survey to go LIVE on FB - Paper Surveys to be delivered to participating businesses. - PUBLIC CONSULTATION AT MILLENIUM HALL - Land to be assessed in terms of risks and liabilities. Findings to be written up and reported to Portreath Parish Council in April. 	<p>Digital Surveys to go live – 1st Week in March.</p> <p>Door Knocking to run through whole of March – once survey is live.</p> <p>Public Event at Millenium Hall – To be booked but to run middle of March.</p> <p>Updates in Portreath Parish Council Meeting.</p>
APRIL	<p>DATA COLLECTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To collect ALL paper surveys from participating businesses - To process paper surveys onto digital survey - To process all Digital Survey results - To write up findings to report back to The Parish Council - Gain Parish Council agreement to Working Group proposal to be made to Cornwall Council. 	<p>Early findings to be reported in Portreath Parish Council meeting 13 April 2024.</p> <p>By 30th April, the data will have been collated and a case ready to be put forward to Portreath Parish Council to agree in Mays Annual Meeting – 13 May 2024.</p>

The Consultation Process:

The Timeline for the consultation, was agreed by the Lighthouse Hill Working Group and formally Adopted by Portreath Parish Council on the 05 February 2024.

The Survey Questions were agreed by the Working Group and an on-line survey was created. A 'Lighthouse Hill Brief' was also created for parishioners to read, so that they could make an informed decision – these two documents were termed as the 'Consultation Survey'.

The Working Group agreed that door knocking in the rural areas of the parish was essential and any person not in or answering that a consultation survey (Brief on one side & survey on the other), would be posted through the letterbox. The Working Group and volunteers also carried outdoor knocking within the village of Portreath, during March.

The Consultation Survey & Consultation Poster (with QR Code) were put up in local businesses, of which all supported the consultation. Two of the local pubs, The Portreath Arms and The Bridge Inn, were 'drop off' points, for anyone wishing to hand in completed paper copies. Consultation Posters were put up as widely as possible in the parish, including the PPC Noticeboards and bus stops. The Millenium Hall Poster, advertising the open events, were also advertised in the same way.

The Digital Survey went live in early March 2024. The survey was closed on the 25 April 2024. The survey was promoted through social media, on two Portreath Parish Council Facebook pages.

We held two open events at the Millenium Hall, which is a well-known venue in the parish. The open days were held on 15th & 16th March 2024 (4pm-7pm & 9am–12noon). These were manned by the Working Group volunteers. We displayed a slide show of photographs of the Lighthouse Hill area and had digital means to complete surveys, as well as paper copies.

All paper surveys were collected from the pub collection points and all surveys were entered digitally, so we were then able to look at the data.

Survey Outcomes:

Overall, 142 surveys were completed, with the majority of respondents using the area every now and again, for dog walking; as a beauty spot; accessing the footpath and for wildlife watching. The survey was completed by a range of ages, including in the 0-19 age group. The largest age group of respondents were aged between 19 - 64 year olds, closely followed by 65's and over. Most respondents live within the parish, those that were from outside, were a small number and if removed, would not have changed the overall outcome of the survey. Therefore, it was agreed by the Working Group, that these surveys are included.

Out of the 142 respondents, an overwhelming majority of 122 respondents are keen for Portreath Parish Council to ask Cornwall Council, if it can take ownership of Lighthouse Hill.

It is important to acknowledge feedback received during door knocking conversations and verbatim feedback on the surveys, that parishioners would not want to pay what has been currently proposed by Cornwall Council. Parishioners felt strongly that they would support this going forward if Cornwall Council either gifted the land or sold it for a nominal amount.

Parishioners were asked what they would like to see happen on this land, out of the options that were given allotments scored the lowest. The highest overall score was for a combination of the suggestions made: Re-wilding the land, and letting nature take its course (as it is at present); Picnic area or Allotments.

104 Respondents gave further suggestions of what could happen on the land, should the PPC take ownership. These suggestions included some that would require investment and/or

planning permission, which the PPC had already outlined were not within the scope or intention of the PPC (Lighthouse Hill Brief attached to Survey).

These suggestions were categorised, and the number for each recorded and turned into a percentage. The most popular suggestion was to turn the site back into a car park/Overflow/Park and Ride with 14.39%, followed by Affordable Housing at 11.51%; Not for Housing 10.07% and Skate Park/Exercise Area/Play Area 10.07%.

Updating Portreath Parish Council and Working Group:

Portreath Parish Council met on 15 April 2024, where an overview of the project and results so far were explained to councillors.

A proposal was made, to request that the Working Group, could begin discussions with Cornwall Council, based on the survey results and feedback received from parishioners during the consultation. This was AGREED.

The main reason for this proposal, rather than a general update, was because PPC asked The Working Group to first get an understanding from Cornwall Council, now we have consultation data, if they would now consider devolving the land to the PPC for a nominal amount or if they will persevere with finding 'Commercial Interests' in the land.

On 30 April 2024 the Working Group agreed that Cllr Simon Goodwin and Cllr Vicki Webb contact Cornwall Council and begin the discussions and negotiations regarding ownership of the Lighthouse Hill Car Park and Amenity Space.

Meeting with Cornwall Council - 23 May 2024:

The meeting was held virtually between Cllr Simon Goodwin(PPC), Cllr Dave Crabtree (CC), Cllr Vicki Webb (PPC), Tom Odling (CC) and Jon Mitchell (CC).

The consultation and results were explained to the Cornwall Council Officers. Overall, the consultation with Portreath Parishioners was well received and a high number of responses, for a small parish, were received. It was confirmed that Portreath Parish Council has been given a mandate from Parishioners to enter negotiations with Cornwall Council (CC), regarding taking ownership of Lighthouse Hill Car Park and Amenity space, as long as it didn't cost anything. Parishioners were keen for Portreath Parish Council to have it as a community asset, not for commercial use, but for a green space either left to nature (as it currently stands) and/or to have a picnic area or benches on the land. It was confirmed that neither Portreath Parish Council nor parishioners see this land as commercial and have no intention of turning it into a car park.

It was confirmed that Portreath Improvement Committee (PIC), have been involved in this consultation and have expressed that they no longer wish to take this forward - in terms of car parking. They [PIC] have taken ownership of the local shop building, and currently do not have the money or capacity for the Lighthouse Hill venture. Portreath Parish Council has the support from the PIC to take it forward.

Cornwall Council Officers advised that as Portreath Parish Council would be looking to keep the space as a Community Green Space, Cornwall Council would need to re-evaluate the land on this basis. It was likely this arrangement would fall into the 'Devolution' category, which is a priority for Cornwall Council (devolving land to a local level). For land to be legally devolved will take a number of years, due to the current waiting list. Cornwall Council could put in place an 'early access' agreement, where interim arrangements are agreed and Cornwall Council hand over liability for the land sooner, most likely on a freehold basis.

Risk and liability of the land was discussed, to ensure Portreath Parish Council and the local community are fully aware of costs and liabilities involved. Cornwall Councils Vulnerability Map shows the coast along this piece of land is highlighted as 'at risk' for natural erosion. A local volunteer, who is a surveyor by trade, has given Portreath Parish Council some advice and pointers, including getting in touch with Camborne School of Minds, to conduct a survey of the land. The current state of the land was acknowledged - it hasn't been maintained and is not fit for purpose.

The issue of 'no-man's land' was highlighted - rubbish and unauthorised encampments, which generates several annual complaints to both the Parish and Cornwall Council. This highlights potential vulnerabilities of the land up for discussion. There are concerns within Portreath Parish Council of being responsible for such fly tipping/travellers and general costs of the land. There is high probability that the Working Group would propose that the gate be removed, and a Cornish Wall built (potential community project), to mitigate these risks.

The position of Portreath Parish Council was reiterated, in terms of finance. There are no assets and no income, except for the precept - a third of which goes to maintaining the public toilets. Cornwall Council have advised that the cost of the land is very low and an Annual Risk Assessment is carried out on the land each year.

Overall, this was a positive discussion. This meeting has given the go-ahead for a 'Business Case' to be written.

It was **AGREED** that the DRAFT 'Business Case' would be put to the Working Group for comments/feedback and then to councillors at the September Portreath Parish Council Meeting.

3.0 Options

This section will describe and compare the two options to either take on the site or leave the site under the continued ownership of Cornwall Council.

3.1 Option 1 – Leave ownership with Cornwall Council

Description

This is the do-nothing or status quo option with Cornwall Council retaining ownership and responsibility of the site. There is the unexplored possibility of the Parish being permitted to make changes such as adding picnic benches under this option.

Costs

- One off costs – none to Portreath Parish Council
- Recurring costs – none to Portreath Parish Council

Benefits

- No cost to Portreath Parish Council
- No risk to Portreath Parish Council

Risks

- Not in line with the outcome of the consultation with parishioners
- Missed opportunity for the parish council and parishioners to deliver the potential uses identified in the consultation
- Risk of non-desirable use of land in the future

3.2 Option 2 – Transfer of land to Portreath Parish Council

Description

Under this option the Parish Council would enter into a process that would transfer ownership and responsibility for the Parish Council at zero up front cost. This would take possibly years to take place as there is an apparent backlog of what Cornwall Council describe as a devolution process. That said it has been indicated that ahead of a potential transfer there could be an interim agreement to start making changes on the site.

Costs

- One off costs
 - Legal cost of transfer – estimated at: £600+VAT for Land Transfer (+ Land Registry Registration Fees & any additional searches required)
 - Blocking vehicular access to reduce risk of trespass and cost of removal. This could be a community led project to build a new Cornish hedge across the entrance.

- Recurring costs
 - Maintenance costs (fences etc)
 - Grass cutting if needed
 - Dog and rubbish bin emptying if retained
 - Public liability insurance for site although initial enquiries indicate our current public liability insurance would cover this at no additional cost (as long as the land is risk assessed and we carry out our duties/responsibilities within the risk assessment).

Benefits

- In line with consultation outcome
- Can create a space rich in nature for parishioners and visitors to use over time
- Ensure the site is not developed in perpetuity
- Opportunity for parishioners and Parish Council to work positively together in delivering the outcome and uses of the site identified in the survey
- Potential spot for benches to be placed on land 'In memory'

Risks

- Cost of legal process to remove trespassers from the site should it occur
- Removal cost of vehicles or other large/fly tipped material if abandoned on the site
- Land erosion and subsidence

4.0 Summary, Recommendation and Next Steps

Due to other commitments over the summer period, the business case has not yet gone back to the working group for comment, but it is useful to get an early steer and decision in principle from the Parish Council on how to take this proposal forward.

As can be seen from the business case, there has been excellent engagement between the Parish Council and Parishioners in exploring this proposal. The outcome of this process is a clear desire by Parishioners for the Parish to take on the site from Cornwall Council as long as there is no cost of purchase.

On this basis option 2, to transfer the site to the Parish Council, is the preferred and recommended option, but with a key proviso. The proviso is that without strong and active leadership and participation from Parishioners to manage the site once transferred, the potential benefits of option 2 will not be achieved and will not outweigh the costs or risks of this option. In essence, without ongoing focus and energy from volunteers we will have a site that remains as is but with the risk and cost of site ownership transferring from Cornwall Council to the Parish Council.

It is therefore proposed to share progress to date and hold an event where we ask the working group and Parishioners more widely to show their willingness to take the preferred option forward and establish a community led 'Friends of Lighthouse Hill Group'. Put simply without committed and active volunteers willing to give time and effort to the preferred option forward, the Parish Council should be extremely cautious in taking option 2 forward.

On this basis the recommendation is for Portreath Parish Council to:

- support option 2 in principle, subject to being able to establish a 'Friends of Lighthouse Hill Group';
- share a summary of the business case and decision to support in principle with the working group and wider community;
- hold an event where we share and discuss the information above with parishioners and test the commitment needed to take this proposal forward;
- if the commitment is forthcoming, establish a 'Friends of Lighthouse Hill' group who will commit to taking forward the ongoing management and any changes to the site at minimal cost to Portreath Council and council taxpayers;
- for the 'Friends of Lighthouse Hill' to produce a high level 5-year plan for the site (supported by Parish Councillors if required) and come back to a future Parish Council meeting with that plan. This will underpin a decision by the Parish Council to formally adopt option 2 and start the process of site transfer.