
Land at former Cofflete Mill – a future community amenity space

Project Plan



Document version control

Version	Date	Created by	Reason
1	22 Nov 2018	Joe Parish	Initial draft for S106 funds
2	29 Jan 2019	Joe Parish	Revised costs excl VAT
3	16 Sept 2019	Joe Parish	Pre public meeting updates
4	09 March 2021	Joe Parish	Coronavirus pandemic update
5	13 Sept 2022	Joe Parish	Phase 1 review and updates

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Project Definition

Background

South Hams District Council (SHDC) own a 0.1 hectare (0.25 acres) parcel of land at head of Cofflete Creek on the site of the former Cofflete Mill. This parcel of land has been offered to Brixton Parish Council (BPC) for use as a community asset, so BPC commissioned a valuation to establish prospective acquisition purposes and identification of potential ownership risks.

The creek, a tributary of the River Yealm, is part of the Plymouth Sound and estuaries' Special area of Conservation. This designation means it is strictly protected under the EC habitats directive. It is designated for its extensive mudflats, attracting wading birds, but this particular section of the designated area is known to have the nationally scarce Tentacled Lagoon worm (*Alkmaria romijni*) source: Natural England

The land comprises a parcel of land which to its eastern side comprises a broad leafed wooded copse. To its western section at a lower level is an area of scrub vegetation abutting the flood plain of Cofflete Creek. The land is bounded to its western side by a natural stone retaining wall and a timber post and rail fence, with a timber panel fence to the southern boundary. The east site boundary is formed by a hedge.

This land has been increasingly neglected ever since the mill building became uninhabited in the mid 1900s giving over to natural vegetation, incorporating various species of mature deciduous trees together with young saplings and significant bramble and nettle ground cover. Other than erecting the timber post and rail fence in 2013 to prevent a traveller vehicle living part year round, the lack of management has led to its historical significance being hidden and forgotten. It also suffers from dog fouling and littering.

Following the publication of the valuation report in June 2018, BPC voted to progress the purchase of this land in line with the neighbourhood plan's approved and documented vision to:

1. Conserve and enhance the rural and historic environment of Brixton Parish with its beautiful landscape of woods, farmland and estuary.
2. Retain the identity and the independent character of Brixton village and its surrounding hamlets
3. Nurture thriving communities across the parish by providing improved facilities and taking opportunities to meet the needs and wishes of the community

This project will contribute to the following relevant parts of the Council's environment objectives:

1. To proactively conserve, protect and enhance landscape features of local significance including the River Yealm estuary
2. To promote the creation of new Local Green Spaces
3. To protect and encourage biodiversity within the Parish
4. To conserve and maintain historical features

As well as the following community objective, to encourage new facilities within the Parish and lastly the following sport & recreation objectives to encourage initiatives that will improve the health and wellbeing of parishioners.

Project Aim

The aim of this project is to create a community amenity space for the residents of Brixton Parish, through careful consideration of the significant historic and environmental value of this piece of land to the community.

Project Objectives

To achieve the aim, the project objectives are to create:

1. A space where members of the community and visitors can sit, relax and absorb the natural beauty of the area
2. A learning environment for Brixton St. Marys Primary School and visitors to discover the environmental significance and rich historic importance that Cofflete Creek has to offer
3. A space that demonstrates to the community, adjacent landowners and visitors to the creek just how important it is to respect the environment we live in. It is hoped that this will encourage visitors to not allow their dogs to foul and to take their litter home with them.
4. Good partnership working with the stakeholders such as the South Hams District Council and Devon Wildlife Trust.

Project Deliverables

1. To clear the site of the significant bramble and nettle ground cover from the ground and the stone walls and to remove any rubbish from the land;
2. To identify the saplings and trees for removal/pruning and which ones to leave as a valued feature of the amenity space;
3. Following the site clearance to conduct a walkover to be able to create a landscape plan, identifying specific areas for such things as:
 - a. any boundary delineation requirements
 - b. any structural improvements needed for access into, out of and through the land
 - c. areas for sitting/standing to relax and for observing the wildlife present in the creek
 - d. areas for an information and interpretation boards
4. Conduct a public safety risk assessment to identify any measures required to mitigate against the risk of injury to users of the space.

Project Outcome

A small, yet valuable community asset that Brixton Parish can be proud of through the creation of a space that can be enjoyed by all without detriment to quality of life of nearby residents of Brixton Torr.

Timescales and Milestones

Milestone	Milestone detail
1 – Structural survey of walls, legal advice on liability and Purchase of land	Brixton Parish Council secures purchase of land, following completion of surveys, and receives confirmation from South Hams District Council that there is no transfer of outstanding liabilities
MILESTONE 1 COMPLETE – JAN 2020	
2 – Ecological survey and tree felling	Ecologist survey by Peter Beale to identify ecological opportunities and trees for felling/pruning for ecological improvement and public safety
MILESTONE 2 COMPLETE – FEB 2020	
On 23 rd March 2020, UK government announced lockdown measures due to Coronavirus pandemic – urgent fencing required due to clearance work having taken place, exposing boundaries to adjacent fields and increased access to site exposing risks of falling from height	
3 – Perimeter wall rebuild	Commission dry stone wall contractor to rebuild collapsed sections of Old Mill garden walls. Work possible whilst adhering to government social distancing rules, done in 2 phases whilst BPC applied for road closure to keep stone mason safe from passing public.
MILESTONE 3 COMPLETE – MAY 2020	
During long periods of government restrictions on travelling and socialising, it was apparent that members of the public had been accessing the site for through access to the adjacent private. Concern raised over facilitating trespass and public safety	
4 – fencing and signage	In agreement with the adjacent landowner (Kitley estate, contact - Jonny Fraser and Rodney Bastard) the boundary line for the installation of stock proof fencing was installed and fencing contractor instructed. Signage installed on existing fence and top entrance access gate. Fence installed in July to secure boundary, but landowner was initially unhappy until a site meeting was arranged to resolve issues
MILESTONE 4 COMPLETE – SEPTEMBER 2020	
5 – Install entrance fence with pedestrian gate	Install fence and access gate adjacent to public highway to formalise entrance. Install small section of fence at rear of site to prevent access to higher site.
MILESTONE 5 COMPLETE – FEB 2022	
6 - Conduct a Public Safety Risk Assessment	To ensure the public do not come to harm upon accessing the site (unauthorised access before being open to the public and when officially open for community use), a public risk assessment is required for any risk mitigation measures e.g. fencing a signage.
MILESTONE 6 COMPLETE – DRAFT APRIL 2022; FINAL SEPT 2022	
7 – Lower site open to the public	Commissioning and installation of interpretation board. Public safety information/warning signs installed
MILESTONE 7 TARGET DATE – OCT 2022	
8 – Purchase bench	Needs to be sustainable, but resilient to damp and salt water ground conditions as well as theft and vandal proof
MILESTONE 8 TARGET DATE – OCT 2022	
9 – Progress high site (old Mill garden) – Landscape/ecological plan and PSRA	Decide on entrance point and can it be access for all abilities. Public safety risk assessment of higher site – commission any mitigation measures (fencing off vertical drops) identified. Design circular route through site. Purchase 1-2 benches and small site info/interpretation board

MILESTONE 9 TARGET DATE – MAY 2023	
10 – Connection to lower site	Identify opportunities to link the 2 sites
MILESTONE 10 – OCTOBER 2023	

Project Scope and Exclusions

This plan is for the small section of land being purchased by Brixton Parish Council. Although it is hoped that the surrounding areas of the adjacent land, the landmark twin arch bridge and the road (Mill Lane), will benefit in terms of preservation and protection from the creation of this community asset, they are mentioned for their proximity, but not included for funding improvements in this plan.

Constraints and Assumptions

Constraints

The following have been identified as constraints to the project:

1. Coronavirus pandemic – **update version 4**
2. Volunteer time
3. Funding
4. Improvements to boundary fence may not be negotiable and will detract from the aesthetics of the space – **update version 4 – this was removed in Winter 2019 when tenants left the site and BPC replaced with stock proof fence**
5. Creating a space enjoyable to all without encouraging over use and unsuitable use of the area as parking is limited for residents and visitors. The area at the bridge is used as a turning circle for residents now that the through road is impassable, so encouraging visitors to walk to this space is priority to limit visiting cars.
6. Visitors who do not respect the beauty of the natural environment and have no respect for the nearby residents. There is history of frequent littering, dog fouling and speeding traffic.

Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made:

1. South Hams District Council will sell the land to Brixton Parish Council – **version 4 - no longer applicable**
2. Following unanimous support at the Brixton Parish Council meeting on 18th April 2018, the residents will volunteer their time to the project either through physical work, project management or fund raising.
3. Brixton St. Marys Primary school will use the community asset, as they already visit the creek during the academic year.
4. The asset will boost visitor numbers who access the area on foot or by bike and may support future efforts to improve cycling connectivity from Otter Nurseries to Brixton village
5. Having a special Creekside area will encourage visitors to respect the area, the residents and other visitors.
6. This project will not impact on local pheasant shooting arrangements
7. This project will not increase risk to visitors of organised pheasant shoots, which occur on the creek and in the adjacent woods.

Users and Interested parties

Users

The following are likely users of the future community asset:

1. Residents of Brixton village, Brixton Torr, Spriddlestone, Fordbrook, Holehay, Coombe.
2. Residents of Elburton who have accessed via the Sustrans cycle network
3. Residents of Newton Ferrers, Noss Mayo and Wembury who access the creek on spring tide for water based activities.
4. Visitors staying at one of a number of holiday let properties in the nearby area
5. Brixton St. Marys school children

Interested parties

The following are likely parties interested in the project:

1. Residents of Brixton Torr
2. Adjacent landowners
3. Devon Wildlife Trust
4. South Hams District Council

Funding

Current funding

This project plan has been written for two main reasons:

1. For Brixton Parish Council to demonstrate to the community that it has well thought out and documented objectives to achieve a space for the community to benefit from and;
2. To demonstrate to prospective funders and funding sources how the project will achieve its objectives and identify where funding is required.

This project currently has s106 monies allocated as well as community together funds

Possible future funds required

The table below identifies the most likely costs to the project and it needs to be stated at this stage that much of this community project will be achieved by volunteers from the community:

Item	Cost (ex VAT)	Source of cost/quote	Source of funding (tbc)
Purchase of land	£10000	SHDC estates and verified by valuation report commissioned by BPC	S106 monies
Conveyancing costs	£5000	Conveyancer	S106 monies
Structural survey of stone wall adjacent road	£360	Maurice Parker structural engineers Ltd	S106 monies
Recommended work to wall	£450	Maurice Parker structural engineers Ltd	S106 monies
Tree work recommended from tree surgeon	£4650	Quote from	S106 monies
Picnic bench: Timber Recycled plastic	£455	Online Playgrounds.co.uk	Communities Together Funds
Bench: Timber Recycled plastic	£280	Sustainable Furniture UK Ltd	Communities Together Funds
2 No. Interpretation boards (1 re Mill history, 1 re creek importance)	£1600 (recycled plastic lectern)	Filcris Ltd	Communities Together Funds
Timber fencing (post and rail to rospa standards)	£2000 (est)	Estimate based on similar fence area of Brixstix play space and additional fencing requirements	S106 monies
Kissing gate access sets (2)	£430	Jacksons Fencing Ltd	Communities Together Funds /Lottery/ composters/Yealm energy
Sundries (Brushcutter fuel, brushcutter cable, nails, screws)	£30	N/A	Communities Together Funds /Lottery/ composters/Yealm energy
Estimated Total funds needed	£25255		
Total confirmed contributions	S106 monies - £23055 CTF – £4820.02		

An expenditure plan will be kept up to date in appendix b

Communication plan

The communication plan sets out the stakeholders and interested parties who the project team will engage with and inform of the project, its objectives and any requirements of them for the project to succeed. A separate communication plan will be kept up to date and as an appendices to this document:

Stakeholder	Method of communication	Reason for communication
Brixton Torr residents	Monthly Parish Council meeting Parish magazine Verbally from project team Email Public meetings	Support and request for volunteers
Adjacent landowners	In writing/verbally	Awareness and cooperation with any boundary issues
Brixton Parish community	Monthly Parish Council meeting Parish magazine	Project progress updates; BPC supported project
Brixton St. Marys school	Email Verbally from project team	Beneficiary of community asset
Tree specialist	Email/phone/verbally	Tree advice for any mature trees
SHDC	Email/phone/verbally	Planning advice/permission

Risk Management plan

The following risks have been identified and will be monitored in the risk register in appendix c:

1. Funding shortfalls
2. Not enough volunteers will slow project delivery
3. Unsupportive landowners may prevent some objectives/deliverables being achieve.
4. Vandalism to equipment and structures
5. Unforeseen issues on site following initial clearance

Future management of community asset

Having agreed to purchase the land from SHDC, Brixton Parish Council assumes full responsibility for the future management of the site from liabilities to successful delivery of the project. The community, especially the residents of Brixton Torr, who supported the purchasing of the land to protect and enhance the site are also assumed to take and inherit responsibility for the general upkeep of the land.

Appendices

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Appendix a – Photos

Appendix b – Communication plan

Stakeholder	Date	Reason	Result/comments	Action
SHDC - Estates	?	Initial discussion re purchasing land	Progress purchase	BPC to obtain community support
Community	June BPC meeting	Support to acquire land to protect from private market	Unanimous support to protect land and create a simple valuable space without impacting residents of Torr	BPC to commission land valuation
Community	17 th Sept 2019	Presentation of pros and cons should BPC acquire land to protect from private market		BPC to progress purchase of site for fair market value
Kitley estate (Rodney Bastard)	July 2020	Agree boundary line for stock proof fencing	Established clear boundary and allowed to encroach by 1.5m onto Kitley land for southern boundary	Commission fencing contractor for stock proof boundary fence
Kitley estate (Jonny Fraser and Rodney Bastard)	August 2020	Landowner unhappy with quality and position of fencing at NE boundary (adjacent gateway) and southern boundary.	Agreed to ask for several posts to be replaced – acknowledged groundworks plant driver knocked corner post.	NE boundary fence and gate needs to be moved to highway not access over corner of Kitley land as they will be moving the access gate
Community	5 March 2022	volunteer day	Positive day with many local residents giving up their time for vegetation clearance and path laying	None
Community	June 2022	Opinion on type and number of benches to install	Single bench with back rest	

Appendix c – Project costs tracker

Supplier	Type of expense	Date	Total Paid	Net	VAT	Funding
Stratton Creber	Conveyance	Jul-18	£672.00	£560.00	£112.00	s106 funding
Maurice Parker	Structural survey of wall	May-19	£360.00	£300.00	£60.00	s106 funding
Howard & Over	Conveyance	Aug/Sept 2018	£450.00	£450.00		s106 funding
Howard & Over	Conveyance	Jan-20	£8,181.42	£7,775.42	£406.00	s106 funding
C & H Tree Surgery	Tree felling and pruning	Feb-20	£4,650.00	£3,875.00	£775.00	s106 funding
B Battenson Dry Stone Walling	Wall repairs	May-20	£450.00	£450.00		s106 funding
West Plant Ltd	Boundary stock proof fence	Sep-20	£3,324.00	£2,770.00	£554.00	s106 funding
Totals			£18,087.42	£15,620.42	£1,795.00	

Note – any VAT paid is reclaimed

Appendix d – Risk register

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Appendix e – Public Safety Risk Assessment

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