

PENRITH MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM SUPPORT A BETTER BASE

Penrith Mountain Rescue Team (MRT) needs a Better Base if it is to continue as an effective voluntary rescue service for its community and for visitors to the Team's extensive operational area.

The Team and its supporters have already put this project on a strong footing with significant funds raised to buy a plot of land.

Everyone involved is now working to secure the £1.4 million required to build and equip a Better Base for Penrith MRT.

NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP



SUPPORT FROM OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR PARTNERS

"This new base is a much-needed development that will make a real difference. Having a secure hub for Penrith MRT means faster responses and better coordination for all involved in rescue operations. As someone who has spent decades in the mountains, I know just how vital these teams are. Supporting them with a fit-for-purpose base isn't just sensible – it's essential. I fully support this project. It's an investment in safety and in the future of mountain rescue in northeast Cumbria."

Alan Hinkes OBE, mountaineer



"We are proud to extend our support to Penrith MRT in its ambition to build a new base for the team, vehicles and equipment. We recognise the vital role Mountain Rescue plays in emergency response across the Lake District and beyond. This new facility will undoubtedly benefit the entire community and further strengthen our collective ability to provide critical, life-saving services."

David Allen, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Cumbria
Paul Hancock, Chief Fire Officer, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service



"From the perspective of the ambulance service, the work of Penrith MRT is of exceptional value. Their trained volunteers operate in environments and terrains that are beyond the reach of conventional ambulance resources: steep fells, remote valleys, woodland etc. Their ability to provide rapid, skilled assistance in these challenging locations directly supports our work in saving lives, reducing suffering, and ensuring public safety. The proposed new base represents not only an investment in the future of the team but also in the wider emergency response infrastructure and resilience across Cumbria. I therefore give my endorsement to a project that will benefit communities and visitors alike."

Salman Desai, Chief Executive, Northwest Ambulance Service NHS Trust



"We were ice climbing on Blea Water Crag at Mardale Head on 11th December 2017. E (my climbing partner) was leading a pitch on the main icefall when he fell, sustaining major injuries including broken ribs, scapular and vertebra damage. I made him safe and called the emergency services. To see Penrith MRT volunteers arrive was a huge relief. It was a technical rescue in very difficult circumstances, with a long carry out to the roadhead. Getting E off the icefall on my own would have been impossible. We're both deeply grateful for the level of care and expertise the volunteers brought."

Graham Uney, Bampton



"I enjoyed a lower-level walk with my dogs around Knipe Scar on 2nd November 2025. Close to home, I slipped on muddy ground. The loud snap I heard wasn't great. Lucky to have a signal, I called for help. A friend was able to keep me warm, dry and upbeat until the Team arrived. Everyone was professional, super friendly and caring. It was clear I was in the care of highly-trained individuals. I had a snapped tibia, fractured fibular and multi-fractured, dislocated ankle. The whole experience was positive and gave me a glimpse into the amazing work Mountain Rescue does."

Jude Green, Knipe





THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN PENRITH MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

Our voluntary service is available 24/7 to walkers and climbers in danger or injured on local fells as well as to members of our local communities, such as those living or working in remote locations, mountain bikers and dog walkers. We are also available for swift water and flood rescue in our communities. We are proud to serve those in need or in danger outdoors and proud to be part of a valued Mountain Rescue Team based in Penrith.

The Team's current base on Tynefield Drive, Penrith is no longer fit for purpose in terms of security, space and sustainability.

WE NEED TO BUILD A BETTER BASE FOR THE FUTURE.

The impact of the planned building and facilities will create significant improvements. It will greatly improve the capacity of the Team to respond to emergency call outs, and to undertake the ongoing training required to operate to the high standard

expected of us by you, by our communities and by those we rescue. It will also enable us to play an active and effective part in broader emergency readiness and resilience across the county.

Like the other Mountain Rescue teams in Cumbria, we are reliant on donations, fundraising and grants to enable and equip our search and rescue work. That continues and makes major investments, such as the building and equipping of a Better Base, a huge challenge for us.

We hope that, with your funding support, we can create a Better Base that will enable us to serve our community and visitors effectively – and save lives – for many years to come.

Your help in any way to reach our targets and build our Better Base could make a huge difference.

We've aimed to answer key questions in the following pages, but if you need to know more or would like to set up a meeting or call, please get in touch via betterbase@penrithmrt.org.uk



Retired search dog Morag

Friends of Penrith MRT



A BETTER BASE WILL MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE — FOR US AND FOR THOSE WE SERVE

Once completed, the Better Base will have a garage for four vehicles, with space for a water trailer and a kit-drying and storage area. Upstairs, there will be two rooms for training and meetings, and a command and communications hub. Not only will this support effective Team operations, but it could also provide space to accommodate wider operations support during major incidents.

With an increased size, we will also be able to provide appropriate welfare facilities including a kitchen, three toilets (including one for disabled visitors), a shower and adequate storage for Team members' gear.

*"In 1990 we built a new base that we thought would last at least 25 years. Now, increased requests from the Police for help in finding missing vulnerable persons, flood rescue (such as Storm Desmond), assisting hard-pushed neighbouring Teams such as Patterdale and Keswick and modern requirements such as drone searching have made what was a leading-edge base, inadequate. **We need your help if we are to provide the professional modern search and rescue capability that we now need to offer.**"*

Alasdair Brock, Team member since 1995 and Project Lead on the Better Base build.

We need SPACE

- **Space for vehicles and equipment** – not only four vehicles, a trailer and water rescue equipment, but also ropes, stretchers, medicines, maps, climbing gear (rock and ice), fundraising supplies, display equipment, emergency shelters, and much, much more.
- **Space for gear storage and drying** – to keep everything in order and maintained for long life.
- **Space for people** – not only meetings and training, but also the basics of welfare for Team members.



*"When our current Base opened in 1990, the Team had just two vehicles, a smaller number of volunteers, and no capability, or equipment, for water rescue. As we have increased in numbers of volunteers, types of callouts, and the equipment and vehicles needed to run the team, we are now bursting at the seams. **Our meeting room is now also our drying room, storage space and training facility and sadly it does none of these things well. It is time to upgrade.**"*

Sharon Kennedy, Team Leader

DID YOU KNOW?

As well as visitors to the area, incidents also involve the Team helping people in our own community: outdoor workers, farmers, the vulnerable as well as those out walking or mountain biking. **Around 50% of our 2024 and 2025 call outs were to local people.**

We need SECURITY

- **Security for valuable vehicles, equipment and gear** – locked inside purpose-built garage and storage spaces, everything in its place, accessible and ready for call outs.
- **Security for the technology and equipment essential for modern search and rescue** – computers, screens, networks and facilities that connect with the paid emergency services, enabling effective communications with partners and with Team volunteers on the ground.
- **Security for members' vehicles and contents, personal gear and property while parked near Base** – no longer parked in a residential area or on open ground but within a compound on a non-residential site.

We need SUSTAINABILITY

- **Room to grow 1** – the Team's current base was purpose-built in 1990, but we have outgrown it. New housing has been built around us; a less than ideal situation for all concerned. More space will make operations more sustainable.
- **Room to grow 2** – the Team has around 40 operational members plus a thriving Friends of Penrith MRT group. Add to that one search dog! A Better Base will incorporate scope for future expansion, in Team size and/or vehicles and equipment.
- **Sustainable energy** – our plans for a Better Base include renewable energy generation. With four vehicles to fuel, meeting rooms to heat and post-incident kit to dry, our energy bills place a constant demand on resources.



But we also need the MONEY

Our fundraising target for the complete build and fit out is £1.4 million including contingency and other expenses at today's prices.

We know that this is an accurate cost estimate and feasible fundraising target based on our project design work to date, and because another Lake District team, Duddon & Furness MRT, has recently opened a very similar new Base, equipped to a similar level.

The land purchase cost was £340,000 and this was raised, ring fenced and then used to buy a plot on Eden Business Park at the end of 2022.

To date we have secured £620,000. We now need the rest of the money – or donations in kind of construction materials, plant hire, professional services or other items – to complete the project. For this **we need help from you, the community that we serve.**



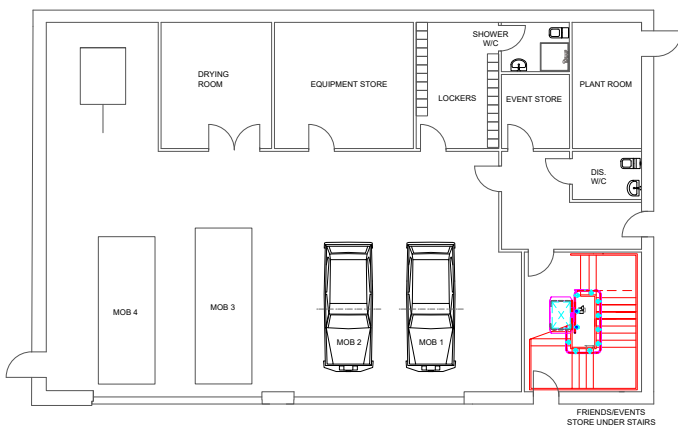
So far, we've covered most of the What, the Why and the Who – as well as indicating the How much – but now we need to explain the When and the How.

WHEN – KEY MILESTONES

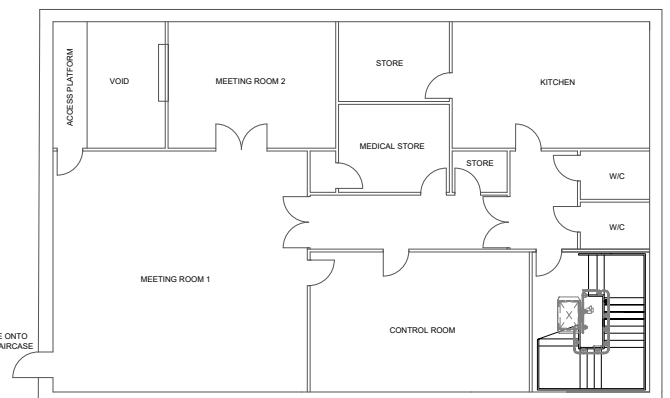


These timeframes are for outline only and will be refined and defined by fundraising progress and the capacity of our volunteers to make progress and maintain momentum.

Please note: Although estimated proceeds are included in the secured funding figure, sale of the current Base cannot be instigated until the key elements of the Better Base are completed, sometime in 2028 if we are on schedule. At that stage, proceeds of the sale should contribute a significant amount to the final fit out.



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

DID YOU KNOW?

We assist other Lake District teams, particularly neighbouring Keswick and Patterdale, in responding to incidents in their areas. These accounted for around a third of Penrith's call outs in 2024 and 2025.

HOW – THE FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE

To reach our total, fundraising needs to include

- our existing partners and supporters within Mountain Rescue,
- grant funding from within and beyond Cumbria,
- corporate and individual gifts, including goods and services in kind.

Through this broad spread of potential support, we aim to generate the funds as quickly as possible, before costs increase too much. £1.4 million is a huge target amount but, at the same time, every little helps and we appreciate whatever you are able to give.



1. Donations of money – We have established ring-fenced funds to collect donations towards the Better Base.

Individual online donations can be made to Penrith Mountain Rescue Team via our bank account [sort code: 30-16-28, account number: 00714730], online at www.penrithmrt.org.uk/donate or through Just Giving, CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) and PayPal. Please include a reference indicating the donation is towards the 'Penrith MRT Better Base', or email treasurer@penrithmrt.org.uk. Cheques should be made payable to Penrith Mountain Rescue Team.

Wherever possible, please Gift Aid donations to maximise the amount we receive.

If you are considering making a larger donation as an individual, business or organisation, we would love to discuss that with you. Contact Alasdair Brock, Project Lead on 07464 954596. Although payments can be made to the above bank account, please let us know via betterbase@penrithmrt.org.uk so that we can acknowledge and thank you (and your staff) for your donation.

- 2. Grants and trusts** – If you are involved in a grant-giving body and think our project might meet your criteria, please get in touch at betterbase@penrithmrt.org.uk to arrange a discussion.
- 3. Gifts in kind** – Material costs for the building and fit out, as well as professional services, are going to be a large part of the overall costs. If you are in a position to make a gift in kind of materials or expertise or equipment or furniture and fittings, please contact Alisdair Brock, Project Lead via betterbase@penrithmrt.org.uk to discuss how this would be most useful.
- 4. Fundraising** – If you have an idea for raising money for the Better Base Build, please get in touch. We have an online shop of branded goods that may be useful and we'd also be keen to publicise your fundraising on our social media channels or connect your challenge to our Just Giving page. And, of course, we're fundraising too. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for events.

Up-to-date fundraising figures are on our website at: www.penrithmrt.org.uk/about/better-base

FRIENDS OF PENRITH MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

The Team has an energetic, highly active supporters' group – the Friends – numbering around 30.

In 2025, Friends organised over 30 fundraising events and raised some £15,000 towards the Team's operational costs.

You'll find Friends at a range of events including street collections, supermarket bag packs, evening lectures at venues like Rheged, the Penrith Droving and Christmas Sparkle events, country shows and farmers' markets. Friends also run the online shop and act as mock casualties for Team training exercises.

If you would like to join or find out more about the Friends, please visit us at a fundraising event or email friends@penrithmrt.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

Penrith MRT consistently engages with its community. In 2024 and 2025, this included sessions at six schools, and with ten youth and seven other organisations.

THE TEAM AND WHAT WE DO

Penrith Mountain Rescue Team involves around 80 people, most of them local to Penrith, and has up to 40 operational members, all of whom are unpaid volunteers. It also includes one search dog. The Team is available 24/7 for 365 days in the year, whatever the weather conditions.

The area the Team covers is the largest amongst Cumbria's ten local teams, extending from the Far Eastern Fells of the Lake District around Haweswater, across to the North Pennines and Cross Fell, and all the way up to the Scottish border, accounting for about 1000 square miles.

DID YOU KNOW?

Penrith MRT's area includes the highest points on two of England's most popular long-distance trails, the Coast-to-Coast (Kidsty Pike) and the Pennine Way (Cross Fell).

The Team offers four specialist capabilities:

- Accessing and evacuating casualties from inaccessible places, such as mountains, hillsides, forests, and remote rural areas.
- Search of all terrains, urban as well as rural, for missing people.
- Search and rescue from water environments, including rivers and urban floods.
- Provision of first-on-scene casualty care, to protect life and to prevent any deterioration for the casualty, through to handover to ambulance services.

Typically, we are tasked by Cumbria Police or Northwest Ambulance Service and we work closely with these and other emergency services, including HM Coastguard, Great North Air Ambulance and Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service.

DID YOU KNOW?

In both 2024 and 2025, Penrith MRT responded to 46 call outs, accounting for over 2500 rescuer hours in each year. **This represented a 20% increase on our call outs in 2022 and 2023.**

The team was formed in 1945, becoming a registered and organised charity in 1959 with the aim of helping people in difficulty in the local fells and mountains. We moved into our current base in 1990.

Further information about Penrith MRT is online at www.penrithmrt.org.uk

Enquiries and requests for further information – please contact Alasdair Brock, Project Lead via betterbase@penrithmrt.org.uk or **07464 954596**



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 **PenrithMRT**  **@penrithmrt**

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