



**Preston and Abbey Community Trust
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
Held via Zoom
15th January 2026 at 18:30**

Ref	Present: James Robson (Chair), Victoria Dobie (Secretary), Pip Chandler (Treasurer), James Dobie, Scott Holmes, Ian Repsch Administrative Officer: Kat Chisholm	Action
1.	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● JR opened the meeting, welcoming trustees to the first board meeting of 2026. 	
2.	<p>Introductions and Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No apologies were received; all Trustees were present. 	
3.	<p>Conflict of Interest (VD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IR confirmed he had returned the Trustees Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest declaration forms, ● VD noted that the PATHS project could constitute a potential conflict of interest, and clear boundaries would need to be maintained regarding ownership and decision-making for any agenda items related to this project. ● No other conflicts of interest were declared. 	
4.	<p>Minutes from Last Meeting (paper attached P1-150126)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record. 	
5.	<p>Action Log Review (paper attached P2-150126)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PACT70 (PATHS Project): On Agenda (Item 11) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PACT78 (Preston Village Hall Project): On Agenda (Item 11). ● PACT86 (Local Place Plan Update): On Agenda (Item 9). ● PACT102 (Aikengall Ila Community Benefit): On Agenda (Item 13). ● PACT109 (Community Solar Panel Project.): moved to Agenda Item 11. 	
6.	<p>Treasurer’s Report (PC) (papers attached P3a-c-150126)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Trustees reviewed and discussed the PACT financial papers circulated in advance of the meeting. ● The PACT bank balance as of 15 January 2026 was reported as £150,636.01. PC noted that bank charges were minimal compared to interest income, indicating that the financial position was stable. ● It was suggested there might be better options for investing or placing funds to increase returns. The Board agreed this was worth exploring and PC confirmed that she would contact Tridos directly to discuss interest rate options and fund management improvement. ● The Trustees discussed the possibility of engaging an external bookkeeper to ensure continuity and robust financial oversight. PC emphasized she needed to understand the financial picture before transferring responsibility. The Board supported the use of Xero to streamline accounts, with all financial decisions remaining under PACT oversight. After discussion, it was agreed that VD, SH, and PC would meet face-to-face to review the current situation and plan the handover process to ensure all parties were comfortable with the system before moving forward. ● JR noted the need to prepare a budget for the upcoming year-end to avoid overcommitment of funds. ● SH requested a visual dashboard showing allocations from each fund. VD noted that previous spreadsheets could be reviewed in the meeting with PC and SH to help organize this information. ● PC confirmed that previous banking issues had been resolved allowing invoices to be paid without issue. VD reminded Trustees that obtaining a credit card for PACT was still outstanding, but the filling out of the forms was in progress. 	<p>PC (PACT110)</p> <p>PC, VD, SH (PACT111)</p>
7.	<p>Community Events (VD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VD introduced the agenda item by confirming that the first three events—Christmas Pool Party, Winter Warmer Party, and Burns Night—had budgets previously approved by email. <p><i>Christmas pool party (7th December 2025) – budget approval £600 03.12.25 by email</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VD reported that the Christmas Pool Party had taken place successfully and received positive feedback from attendees. All agreed the event was well-organised and enjoyable, and no issues had arisen. <p><i>Winter Warmer party (12th December 2025) – budget approval £800 03.12.25 by email</i></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PC provided a summary of the Winter Warmer Party, noting that approximately 30 people attended. Despite being advertised late due to timing constraints, the event was well-received, with positive mentions on social media from participants. PC suggested that earlier promotion in future years would likely increase attendance. <p><i>Burns Night (Abbey Hall, 24th January 2026) – budget approval £1200 03.12.25 by email and further £145 for postcard split costs with ABPCC on 29.12.25)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IR reported that the Burns Night event was fully booked with 56 attendees, which was the maximum capacity given the hall's available tables and cutlery. He was confident the event would remain within the approved £1,200.00 budget. VD confirmed that if additional funds were required for the event, she would circulate a request to the Trustees for approval. PC clarified that the total split cost for postcards related to the Burns Night invitation should be £310.44 (being half of the total mailing cost), not £145.00. This was unanimously approved. The Board discussed the possibility of holding future Burns Night events in Preston Village Hall but concluded that the smaller size of the hall would limit capacity. VD suggested no urgent need to change the current Abbey Village Hall arrangements, which had proven successful. <p><i>Christmas Wreath Workshops</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VD reported that the Christmas Wreath Workshops had also been highly popular and provided useful lessons for organising similar events in future years. <p><i>Future Community Event Planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VD proposed creating a plan for the year ahead. She suggested that three or four events could be coordinated by the core team (Burns Night, Summer Meal in Abbey St Bathans, Preston Drinks, and the Children's Christmas Party), while additional smaller events could be organised by other community members with support and possible funding from PACT. VD to provide feedback from the Community Council meeting regarding the event calendar and planning. There was discussion on how to encourage Preston Village Hall to organise events. Victoria noted that SH was a Trustee of Preston Hall and that this represented a potential conflict of interest in discussions. SH offered to make informal inquiries into how Preston Hall was being used and clarified that as a Trustee he primarily focused on safeguarding the hall's ownership rather than its day-to-day operation. VD noted that grant applications for hall maintenance were still to be submitted. Neither hall has yet claimed the available funding, and VD will send letters to ensure this is done. VD further clarified that the funding is primarily provided for maintenance and is not contingent on event organisation. It was agreed that hall usage and community event planning would be added to the agenda for the next Board meeting. 	<p>VD (PACT112)</p> <p>SH (PACT112)</p>
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<p>8.</p>	<p>Community Communications (VD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VD updated the Board on recent and planned communications activities. She confirmed that a mailshot had been sent to publicise both the Burns Supper and the Winter Fuel Allowance grants to local residents. No other major communications were currently planned, apart from routine updates via Mailchimp. • IR noted that he needed to speak to Keith Dickson regarding the management of the PACT website and confirmed that he was willing to take over responsibility for this task. The Board agreed that IR would lead on website management, with support from other Trustees as needed. • IR confirmed that the next newsletter would likely be produced in spring or summer. VD suggested that Joy Dobie might contribute content. IR clarified that the main challenge for producing newsletters was sourcing sufficient content; he would manage the design aspect but would need assistance with writing and collating the material. PC noted that she and Wendy Reid were available to help IR with content preparation if required. 	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Local Place Plan (VD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VD reported that the Local Place Plan had now been formally accepted by Scottish Borders Council and was on record, recognising the considerable effort of Wendy Reid, Keith Dickson, and the Community Enterprise team in producing the plan. • VD noted that the draft action plan had been circulated for review and that, while the plan was broadly suitable, there were aspects that required refinement. VD and Keith Dickson had provided feedback on the draft, suggesting the removal of unnecessary images to reduce printing costs and avoid distraction. VD highlighted that the final paragraph and proposed next steps in the draft action plan were insufficiently detailed and lacked clear outcomes and emphasised the need for PACT to determine more concrete objectives to guide future activity. A key point raised was the requirement to employ a projects officer to implement the Local Place Plan. VD highlighted that this role and its responsibilities were not clearly defined in the current draft and required more detailed planning. She suggested that the Board should work on this alongside PACT's strategic planning to determine the level of ambition for the coming years, ensuring outcomes were practical and achievable. The Board agreed that the plan should strike a balance between being sufficiently detailed to guide action but not overly prescriptive. • JR highlighted that Item 12 on the agenda, concerning longer-term planning for PACT, directly related to this discussion and suggested that the February meeting be structured as a strategic planning session to focus on overarching objectives rather than 	<p>VD (PACT86)</p>

	<p>routine operational issues. The Board agreed that this approach would allow time to reflect on PACT's long-term goals and ensure alignment between the Local Place Plan and the organisation's broader strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VD proposed that the February meeting should include both a formal agenda for Board items and a separate session for strategic discussion, with notes taken but only key consensus points recorded in the minutes. Trustees agreed that this would enable productive discussion without overcomplicating the formal record. VD emphasised that the action plan arising from the Local Place Plan should only proceed once there was a clear consensus on priorities and next steps, which could then be presented to the Community Council. 	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Grant Applications (VD) (paper attached P6-210825)</p> <p><i>Grant Applications Subcommittee Activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VD summarising the work of the Grant Applications Subcommittee, noting that both PACT and Community Council applications were included, and thanking the subcommittee for their diligence and effort. <p><i>25-02-02-BorderIceRinkRenewableHeating Update</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VD reported that this project was progressing well. The applicant had met all criteria for the grant, and payment had been made. Trustees were satisfied that the conditions attached to the grant had been fulfilled. <p><i>25-11-01-BerwickshireHighSchoolGrand Piano £2500.00 approved by email 10.12.25 - b) the advancement of Education)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to this meeting, the Trustees discussed via email the application submitted by Berwickshire High School for £2500.00 to cover the cost of a new grand piano. • The Board approved the application for £2500.00 by email on 10.12.25 with the funds coming from Aikengall. <p><i>25-11-02-SpellingtoCommunicateAddionalHire (£572.00 approved by email 10.12.25 - b) the advancement of Education)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to this meeting, the Trustees discussed via email the second application from Spelling to Communicate for £575.00 to cover a second hire of room. The Board approved the application for £575.00 on 10.12.25 with the funds coming from Aikengall. <p><i>25-06-02-Ellemford Show 2025 - Industrial Society – Final Report (paper attached P8-150126)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees noted that the paper they received was blank. KC to re-distribute for the next meeting in February. <p><i>25-09-01-BotanicalPrintingWorkshops – Final Report (paper attached P9-150126)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees noted the final report and raised no concerns. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees discussed the idea of exploring a solar array in a different locations. Concerns were raised over the importance of only pursuing projects that PACT could realistically deliver, noting the involvement of a subsidiary and the long-term commitments this would entail. Trustees agreed that this topic should be included in the strategic planning meeting on 19th February to allow a full discussion of the pros, cons, and implications for PACT's long-term strategy. SH expressed interest in understanding PACT's longer-term funding profile over the next 10–20 years, and VD confirmed she could provide a summary for the Board to inform this planning. 	VD (PACT109)
12.	<p>Longer term planning for PACT (VD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VD introduced the agenda item on longer-term planning, noting that this was a crucial area for the Trustees to focus on as PACT approached the end of its current financial year and looked ahead to future projects and funding opportunities. VD proposed that the February 19th Board meeting be treated as a strategic planning session, distinct from the usual operational agenda. This would allow Trustees to focus on defining PACT's medium- and long-term priorities, including community engagement, project delivery, and funding sustainability. She suggested that this meeting would involve a short formal Board agenda followed by an extended discussion on strategic objectives, with the outcome being a set of high-level priorities and potential actions for the next 3–5 years. Trustees agreed that this approach would help avoid getting caught up in day-to-day operational decisions and ensure that the organisation had a coherent plan moving forward. VD highlighted the importance of using the outcomes from the Local Place Plan as an input into this strategic discussion. Trustees discussed the format of the February meeting, agreeing that it should include a concise formal agenda covering any necessary approvals or operational items, followed by an informal, facilitated discussion of strategic priorities. Notes from the discussion would capture consensus points and potential actions while formal decisions would continue to be minuted. JR noted that this meeting would also provide an opportunity to review PACT's governance arrangements, including the clarity of roles and responsibilities for Trustees and any staff or contractors engaged to support projects. VD confirmed that the discussion would include consideration of the community development officer role and how it could be aligned with long-term strategic objectives. Trustees agreed that the outcomes of this session would inform the development of PACT's next action plan, ensuring that future initiatives were aligned with agreed priorities. 	
13.	<p>Windfarm Communications</p> <p><i>Aikengall Ila Community Benefit (JR)</i></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JR confirmed that a formal response was expected before the next Board meeting. <p><i>CRIV wind farm-community benefit fund (email approval Nov 2025)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees noted the background to the Crystal Rig IV (CRIV) Community Benefit Fund, including correspondence circulated in November 2025 from Fred Olsen Renewables, which proposed an annual payment of approximately £28,000 to the COABP area based on distance from the wind farm. It was recorded that VD and JD had previously discussed the proposal with Fred. Olsen Renewables and other local community councils, and that a Community Benefit Agreement template had been issued with solicitors instructed to progress the contract. Trustees confirmed that, following email consultation in November 2025, all PACT Trustees had agreed to accept the proposed level of funding and that, in this instance, payments should be directed to ABPCC rather than PACT, to ensure continuity of unrestricted community funding as Crystal Rig I is due to cease operations in 2027, with CRIV payments commencing before then. It was further noted that CR1 is expected to be recommissioned in 2029, at which point the funding streams would be aligned. Trustees reaffirmed their agreement to this arrangement, noting that it had already been approved by email. <p><i>Windfarm Community Strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board discussed future communication strategies related to wind farm funding. Trustees agreed that PACT should maintain clear records of all funding streams, including amounts received, timing of payments, and restrictions on use, to ensure transparency and accountability. They noted that proactive communication with funders would be essential to avoid delays or misunderstandings, particularly when fund allocations were backdated or contingent on specific projects. 	<p>VD (PACT102)</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PC raised the matter of the cost for the bus for the upcoming Burns Night event, confirming that Keith Dickson had arranged the transport at a cost of £240.00. Trustees acknowledged this and noted that it was within the previously approved budget of £1,200.00 for the event. 	
<p>15.</p>	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 19th – Abbey Village Hall April 16th – Preston Village Hall June 18th – Abbey Village Hall August 20th – Preston Village Hall October 15th – AGM at Abbey Village Hall 	