APPROVED
Preston and Abbey Community Trust
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
Held at Preston Village Hall
16 April 2026 at 18:00

Ref	**Present**: James Robson (Chair), Victoria Dobie (Secretary), Pip Chandler (Treasurer), Scott Holmes, Ian Repsch. **Apologies**: James Dobie **Administrative Officer**: Kat Chisholm	Action
1.	**Welcome** • JR opened the meeting and welcomed Trustees.	
2.	**Introductions and Apologies** • Apologies received from James Dobie.	
3.	**Conflict of Interest (VD)** • SH declared two conflicts of interest: firstly, with Agenda Item 11 (Preston Village Hall); and secondly, due to his role as Treasurer of the Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Service (BAVS). • Trustees confirmed that any material conflicts would be managed appropriately should formal decisions be required.	
4.	**Minutes from Last Meeting (paper attached P1-160426)** • The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.	
5.	**Action Log Review (paper attached P2-160426)** • PACT70 (PATHS Project): On Agenda (Item 11) • PACT78 (Preston Village Hall Project): On Agenda (Item 11) • PACT86 (Local Place Plan Update): On Agenda (Item 7). • PACT102 (Aikengall IIa Community Benefit): On Agenda (Item 12).	

	• PACT109 (Community Solar Panel Project:): Agreement to close as project not moving ahead. • PACT110 (Triodos Fund Improvement): On Agenda (Item 6). • PACT111 (Financial Reporting Strategy): On Agenda (Item 6). • PACT112 (Future Community Event Planning & Preston Events): VD confirmed the village hall management committees have been contacted with regards to subsidised hall hire for community events. The Trustees agreed that no further immediate action was required and that monitoring will continue informally. • PACT113 (Windfarm Income and Lifespan Report): Ongoing. *Discussion* • SH suggested that historic actions on the Action Log could be removed to improve clarity. It was agreed to retain the detail but restructure the log so that historic items are moved to a "further details" tab, with the main tab focusing on current actions only.	
6.	**Treasurer's Report (PC) (paper attached P3-190226)** • The Trustees received and considered the Treasurer's Report, circulated in advance of the meeting. • The PACT bank balance as of 16 April 2026 was reported as £102,496.41. *Triodos Fund Improvement* • PC outlined options for placing surplus funds in Triodos fixed-term deposit accounts, noting available 6- and 12-month terms with varying interest rates. Trustees discussed the balance between achieving improved returns and maintaining sufficient liquidity for operational and grant commitments. • It was confirmed that the Board had previously agreed a reserve policy of approximately £50,000 to be retained as a contingency buffer, broadly equivalent to around six months' operational costs. This was reaffirmed as a prudent level of working reserve, particularly given variability in grant payments and timing of income from wind farm contributions. Trustees agreed that as this sum will remain unspent, and there are no imminent spending commitments, this could be considered for short-term investment. • The Board agreed to invest £50,000 in a 6-month fixed-term deposit at 3.4%, recognising this as an appropriate balance between return and flexibility. It was noted that these funds cannot be accessed during the term, but sufficient liquidity will remain available. • A 12-month option may be considered in future, subject to cashflow certainty. *Financial Reporting Strategy: update on meeting with Greaves West & Ayre* • PC provided an update following the recent meeting with Greaves West & Ayre on 20 February 2026 to discuss the implementation of Xero accounting software.	**PC (PACT110)** **PC, VD, SH (PACT111)**

	- It was confirmed that the structure of the accounts had been agreed and aligned to PACT's funding streams, allowing transactions to be coded in a more transparent and structured way. SH, VD and PC had subsequently reviewed and refined the coding structure following the meeting to ensure consistency in how different funding sources are recorded going forward. - It was noted that historic transactions may be more difficult to fully migrate or retrospectively code within Xero, but this was not considered a barrier to moving forward with the system. SH confirmed that while not all historic transactions had yet been fully entered into Xero, the coding structure was now in place and ready to be populated. - Trustees discussed how transaction data would be transferred into the system. It was noted that CSV bank transaction files could either be uploaded directly by Greaves West & Ayre or managed internally. The Board assured the Treasurer that either option was acceptable. - It was agreed that once bank transactions from 1 April 2026 onwards are available, these will be processed within the new Xero structure. *Budget Development* - A discussion took place regarding the absence of a current forward budget. It was noted that a previous budget structure existed and could be used as a starting point for reconstruction. It was also noted that earlier forward planning work had included projections of income and expenditure over a 12-month period, which could be adapted. - It was agreed that Greaves West & Ayre could assist in producing a formal budget within Xero once baseline figures are provided, and that historical figures from the previous financial year could be used as a reference point. - PC agreed to take responsibility for progressing the budget process and circulating an initial draft for review. SH indicated willingness to assist in developing an initial spreadsheet-based draft where required. *Agreed guide on grant funding - Suggested cap to 'external' grants* - VD introduced a proposal, arising from the earlier strategic discussion, to establish clearer parameters around grant-making, particularly for applications from organisations outside the immediate community area. - It was suggested that a guideline annual cap of £15,000 per annum be applied to external grant funding, as a broad ceiling to support long-term financial sustainability and balance funding priorities. - Trustees indicated broad support for this approach, subject to final confirmation and alignment with the overall financial strategy. It was noted that the proposed cap would act as a guideline rather than a fixed limit, allowing flexibility where justified.	**PC (PACT114)**

7.	**PACT Strategy and Draft Community Action Plan from Board Meeting 16.03.26 (VD) (paper attached P4-160426)** • VD introduced the paper on the PACT Strategy and Draft Community Action Plan (CAP), which builds on the Local Place Plan outcomes and subsequent Board discussions. • The Board confirmed the agreed strategic approach for PACT activities as follows: (a) The Board to continue at its present level of activity, focusing on delivering a grant programme based on application and Board approval; and delivering individual projects only where formally approved by the Board. (b) The Board agreed not to seek to employ a full-time project officer at present, recognising current financial constraints and the preference to avoid ongoing staffing commitments. It was agreed that project officer support may be commissioned on a project-by-project basis, where specific delivery requirements arise. (c) The Board agreed that the establishment of an Endowment Fund is desirable in the longer term, particularly as and when surplus funds may begin to accrue again. Trustees confirmed that PACT will seek to further the development of an Endowment Fund where opportunities arise in discussions with funders. • VD advised that the next stage will be to discuss the revised CAP with the Community Council Chair (Keith Dickson) and the Local Place Plan Project Consultant (Wendy Reid); and incorporate the agreed amendments and supporting narrative into a revised CAP draft. • Once this refinement process is complete, the updated CAP will be brought back to the PACT Board for further review and approval.	**VD (PACT86)**
8.	**Community Events** *Summer Barbecue 15th August 2026 (IR)* • IR confirmed that the Summer Barbecue will take place on 15th August 2026 at Abbey Village Hall. • Transport and entertainment arrangements will be organised in due course, with other operational details (including food and drink) to be finalised closer to the event. • A draft budget will be presented at the June meeting, using last year's figures as a guide. PC agreed to provide the previous year's figures to support preparation of the budget. • The Board agreed a provisional budget allocation of up to £2,000 for the event.	
9.	**Community Communications (IR)** • IR confirmed willingness to lead on the layout and compilation of the next community newsletter, noting that progress will depend on receiving content contributions from Trustees and community members. Potential contributors include Joy Dobie, Wendy Reid and others. • A publication timeframe of July was proposed, to support promotion of the Summer Barbecue and provide updates on the Local Place Plan / Community Action Plan and recent grant activity.	

10.	**Grant Applications (VD) (paper attached P5-160426)** *Grant Applications Subcommittee Activity (VD) (paper attached P6-160426)* • VD introduced the Grants report and provided an update on current grant activity, including applications, approvals, and outstanding reporting requirements. Trustees also received the accompanying paper from the Grants Subcommittee. • VD noted that further grant applications have been received since the last meeting, and that applications continue to come in on an ongoing basis. *25-08-01-PrestonStitchersHallHire – Final Report (paper attached P7-160426)* • Trustees noted the final report and raised no concerns. *26-02-02-DunsPlayFest2026 – Update to grant terms* • Updated terms and conditions were agreed by Trustees via email to reflect that 100 free festival day passes would be made available for PACT residents • VD reported on the free taster event held at Abbey St Bathans Village Hall on 15 April 2026, noting that it was a successful evening and a useful opportunity to trial the format and engagement approach. • It was noted that some Committee members did not receive the Mailchimp promotion for the event. KC will review the mailing list to ensure all Trustees are correctly included in future communications. *26-03-01-BHSRemovingBarriersToLearning (£2000.00 approved by email 09.04.26)* • Prior to this meeting, the Trustees discussed via email an application from Berwickshire High School. A partial award of £2,000 was approved on 9th April 2026 allocated specifically towards the food and clothing element of their application with the funds coming from Aikengall. *Application to Quixwood Fund for Gravestone repair, Preston Churchyard* • VD introduced a proposal to apply to the Quixwood Fund for the repair of gravestones in Preston Churchyard, where approximately seven headstones have been identified as fallen or damaged. The proposal builds on the community consultation outcome that the funding should be used for community environmental improvement projects accessed for community benefit projects. • Two estimated cost of works have been obtained. The upper estimate of approximately £4,200 would be used for the application. If the lower estimate contractors were then used, extra funds could cover unexpected contingencies. SBC have indicated that only SBC-approved contractors would be allowed to undertake the work.	

	- VD will progress the application to the Quixwood Fund on behalf of PACT, requesting the higher amount to allow for contingencies and adjusting for any unspent winter fuel allocation. - VD will also liaise with Quixwood to clarify potential flexibility in the use of funds previously set aside for PACT, including whether these could support other agreed community initiatives (e.g. winter fuel subsidy), and to confirm associated approval processes. *25-02-02-BorderIceRinkRenewableHeating – Final Report (paper attached P8-160426)* - Trustees noted the final report and raised no concerns. - VD highlighted that a condition of the grant included provision of free passes for residents, which will be delivered from October 2026. VD confirmed she will ensure this is appropriately communicated and publicised. *25-06-01-LanarkLodgeFacilities – Final Report (paper attached P9-160426)* - Trustees noted the final report and raised no concerns. - JR commented on his recent visit and noted that the work undertaken at Lanark Lodge was impactful and that PACT funding had made a visible difference. JR agreed to provide photographs for use on the PACT website.	
11.	**Community Projects** *Preston Village Hall Project (JD)* - The solar panel installation is now complete and operational. - Financial completion remains in progress, with final reconciliation and closure of accounts still to be completed. - The remaining balance relating to the Quixwood Fund will be confirmed once final project costs and funding receipts have been finalised. *Paths Project (JD)* - An update will be provided at the June 2026 meeting.	**JD (PACT78)** **JD (PACT70)**
12.	**Windfarm Communications** *Aikengall IIa Community Benefit (JR)* - JR reported that he had been unable to make contact with Rob Fryer. The Board agreed that in the absence of a response that the issue should be escalated via elected representatives. - JR agreed to escalate the matter by contacting the relevant MP and/or MSP to seek assistance in progressing a response and clarification of the community benefit calculation.	**JR (PACT102)**
14.	**Any Other Business** *Facebook posting guidelines* Trustees agreed guidelines for promoting events on the PACT Facebook page.	

	• It was agreed that promotion would be limited to events within the PACT area, or those directly subsidised by PACT or involving local residents. Events outside the area would not generally be promoted unless there is clear PACT involvement or support. • VD agreed to refer the proposed guidelines to the Community Council for comment and alignment. *Trustee Recruitment* • IR advised that a local resident had expressed interest in joining the PACT Committee. • Trustees noted that, as advised previously by DTAS, a formal appointment would normally take place at the next appropriate election cycle, rather than by co-option. • It was agreed that an informal introductory meeting would be arranged with the potential new Trustee to discuss involvement and next steps.	
15.	**Future Meeting Dates** • June 18th – Abbey Village Hall • August 20th – Preston Village Hall • October 15th – AGM at Abbey Village Hall	