Preston and Abbey Community Trust
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
Held at Abbey St Bathans Village Hall
18 June 2026 at 18:00

Ref	**Present**: James Robson (Chair), James Dobie, Victoria Dobie (Secretary), Scott Holmes **Apologies**: Pip Chandler (Treasurer) and Ian Repsch.	Action
1.	**Welcome** • JR opened the meeting and welcomed Trustees.	
2.	**Introductions and Apologies** • Apologies received from Pip Chandler (Treasurer) and Ian Repsch.	
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 P1-180626)** • The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.	
5.	**Action Log Review (paper attached P2-180626)** • PACT70 (PATHS Project): On Agenda (Item 10) • PACT78 (Preston Village Hall Project): On Agenda (Item 10) • PACT86 (Local Place Plan Update): On Agenda (Item 9). • PACT102 (Aikengall IIa Community Benefit): On Agenda (Item 11). • PACT110 (Triodos Fund Improvement): On Agenda (Item 6). • PACT111 (Financial Reporting Strategy): On Agenda (Item 6). • PACT113 (Windfarm Income and Lifespan Report): Ongoing.	

	• PACT114 (Budget Review): On Agenda (Item 6).	
6.	**Treasurer's Report (PC) (paper attached P3ab-180626)** • The Trustees received and considered the Treasurer's Report, circulated in advance of the meeting. • The PACT bank balance as of 1 June 2026 was reported as £118,381.01. • Approximately £33,000 remained committed or ring-fenced, including funds for the Winter Fuel Payment Scheme, swimming subsidy and Preston Village Hall refurbishment. *Triodos Fund Improvement* • The Board reviewed the Triodos bank statement and confirmed that the previously agreed transfer of £50,000 into a higher-interest six-month Triodos account remained outstanding and will be progressed. • The Board agreed that completion of the transfer should be prioritised alongside the completion of the Xero accounting system. *Financial Reporting Strategy* • Considerable discussion took place regarding implementation of the Xero accounting system. • Trustees noted that significant progress had already been made, including the import of historical transactions, creation of individual funding streams and coding of expenditure. However, further work remained before meaningful management reports could be produced. • SH advised that bank transactions up to the March 2026 year end had been uploaded, but a proportion of transactions still required coding and reconciliation before reliable reports could be generated. • The Board agreed that completing the Xero implementation was now a higher priority than maintaining separate spreadsheet-based reporting, recognising that continuing to operate parallel systems would duplicate effort unnecessarily. • It was agreed that SH would liaise directly with Greaves West & Ayre to resolve the outstanding coding and reconciliation issues, including arranging a telephone or Zoom meeting if required. • SH and PC will meet following her return to review the accounting structure, ensure reports meet PACT's requirements and complete the migration to Xero. • VD will update PC on the Board's agreed approach. *Draft Budget:* • The Board considered the draft budget but agreed that preparation of a separate budget should be placed on hold pending completion of the Xero implementation. • It was anticipated that, once operational, Xero would provide the financial reporting and budget monitoring required by the Board, removing the need for separate spreadsheet-based budget reports.	**PC (PACT110)** **PC (PACT111)** **VD (PACT111)**

7.	**Community Events** *Summer Barbecue 15th August 2026 (IR)* • No update provided by IR due to absence.	
8.	**Community Communications (IR)** • No update provided by IR due to absence.	
9.	**Grant Applications (VD) (paper attached P4-180626)** *Grant Applications Subcommittee Activity (VD) (paper attached P6-180626)* • VD introduced the Grants Report and provided an update on current grant activity, including applications approved since the previous Board meeting and outstanding reporting requirements. • The Board noted that all of the following grant applications had been considered and approved by Trustees via email since the previous meeting and were presented for formal noting in the minutes. *Preston Cemetery Headstone Repair Point North Quixwood Application May 2026* • The previously approved application for £4,500 towards Preston Cemetery headstone repairs from the Quixwood Fund was noted. *26-06-03-HeartforDunsBeerMusicFestival26 (£2700.00 approved by email 09.06.26)* • The Board noted the previous approval, by email, of £2,700 towards the provision of a sound system and sound engineering for the September 2026 Beer & Music Festival. • The award will be funded from the Aikengall Community Benefit Fund. *26-06-02-Ellemford Show 2026 (£5201.50 approved by email 09.06.26)* • The Board noted the previous approval, by email, of an award of £5,201.50 from the Aikengall Community Benefit Fund. *26-06-01-LawViewImprovements (£2000.00 approved by email 09.06.26)* • The Board noted the previous approval, by email, of £2,000 towards landscaping works and installation of a bench at Law View, Preston. • The award will be funded from the Aikengall Community Benefit Fund. *Final Report - 25-11-01-BerwickshireHighSchoolGrand Piano (paper attached P5-180626)* • Trustees received and noted the final project report.	

	• The Board agreed that the funding had been well used and represented a worthwhile investment for the community, noting the positive use being made of the grand piano. Trustees noted the final report and raised no concerns.	

10.	**Community Projects**
	
	Preston Village Hall Project (JD)
	• A snagging meeting involving the architect, contractor and Preston Village Hall representatives was confirmed for 19 June 2026.
	• PACT continues to hold £5,416 as retention pending completion of snagging works.
	• Approximately £14,646 remains ring-fenced within the Quixwood allocation for completion of the Preston Village Hall refurbishment.
	• Following completion of the snagging inspection, the Board will review whether any of the remaining ring-fenced funds are required for outstanding works before determining the final allocation of the balance.
	• Trustees noted that the refurbished hall is now in regular use and has been well received by the community.
	
	Village Hall Rent Subsidy
	• Discussion took place regarding the previously discussed proposal for PACT to subsidise hall hire charges for community events organised by local residents.
	• Feedback received from Village Hall Committees suggested that further clarification was required before introducing the scheme.
	• Matters discussed included:
	  o eligibility criteria for qualifying community events;
	  o ensuring a consistent approach between village halls;
	  o whether a subsidy was necessary in all cases;
	  o avoiding unintended financial disadvantage to individual halls; and
	  o whether the proposal would deliver additional community activity.
	• The Board agreed that further discussion with the Village Hall representatives was required before a final decision could be taken.
	• VD agreed to arrange a meeting with Hayley Shaw and Duncan Osler to agree suitable operating principles or determine that the proposal should not proceed.
	
	Paths Project (JD)
	• The Board held an extensive discussion regarding future development of a community car park at Preston Cemetery alongside improvements to public access and footpaths within the Preston area.
	• Trustees agreed that the car park and paths proposals should now be developed together rather than treated as separate projects, recognising the opportunity to improve pedestrian access between the village, cemetery and the Whiteadder river corridor.
		JD (PACT78)
		
		VD (PACT115)
		
		JD (PACT70)

	• The Board recognised that several possible route options remained available and agreed that all options should be explored before reaching any conclusions. • It was agreed in principle that PACT would be prepared to fund reasonable professional costs associated with progressing the project, including: surveyor fees, legal costs; and project management support. • Trustees discussed the need for external professional advice, recognising that the Board did not currently have sufficient capacity to manage a project of this complexity without assistance. • The possible appointment of an experienced rural surveyor was discussed, with SEEDS and Edwin Thompson mentioned as organisations with relevant expertise. It was recognised that professional input could assist in identifying feasible route options, engaging with landowners and coordinating the project. • It was agreed that the appointment of a surveyor to be progressed. Trustee responsibility for this appointment to be confirmed. • It was agreed that JR, SH and VD to arrange a meeting with the owner of the fields to discuss potential access to the Whiteadder riverbank and associated path proposals. • It was agreed that the PACT Action Log will be updated to reflect that the cemetery car park and paths projects will now be progressed together.	
11.	**Windfarm Communications** *Aikengall IIa Community Benefit (JR)* • James Robson updated the Board on correspondence with Rachael Hamilton MSP seeking support in securing community benefit payments for Aikengall IIa at the recommended rate of £5,000 per MW. He indicated that a positive response had been received from the MSP requesting further background information. • The Board agreed that existing correspondence, together with Scottish Government guidance and announcements supporting the £5,000 per MW community benefit level, should be collated and forwarded in support of the request. • JR agreed to provide the additional supporting information requested by the MSP. *Quixwood Community Benefit Fund* • Victoria Dobie reported on a meeting held on the 18th June 2026 with David Todd (NTR) and Sophie O'Connor (Point North) regarding administration of the Quixwood Community Benefit Fund. • At this meeting it was agreed that the revised Quixwood funding guidelines would include provision for Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl and Preston Community Council (ABPCC) to apply for funding from its allocated share of the Quixwood Fund, subject to approval by the Chair of PACT. The Board agreed that this would provide an important governance safeguard, ensuring PACT remained aware of, and able to coordinate, applications relating to community benefit funding.	 **JR (PACT102)**

	• VD reported that an Grantshouse Community Council has obtained Scottish Borders Council approval to undertake clearance works around the former petrol station site as part of proposals for a new Village Hub. Trustees noted that, once this work proceeds, Grantshouse's use of the Quixwood Fund is expected to become broadly comparable with ABPCC's expenditure on the Village Hall refurbishment projects. • The Board also discussed the importance of maintaining a coordinated approach between PACT and the Community Council when considering future applications to the Quixwood Fund, recognising that both organisations should work collaboratively in determining community priorities. *Crystal Rig Community Benefit* • VD reported on a meeting held on 2 June 2026 with representatives of Fred Olsen Renewables regarding the Crystal Rig Community Benefit Fund. • Crystal Rig IV has now been commissioned, with the first community benefit payment expected to be received by ABPCC within approximately six months. • Crystal Rig I is approaching the end of its operational life and is expected to be decommissioned shortly. • The proposed repowering of Crystal Rig I has not yet received planning approval. • Trustees noted that commencement of Crystal Rig IV funding should broadly offset the ending of Crystal Rig I payments, ensuring continued community benefit income. • Should the Crystal Rig I repowering proposal proceed, future community benefit payments could increase significantly because of the higher community benefit rate applicable to newer developments.	
12.	**Any Other Business** *Abbey Timber Solar Project* • The Board considered an outstanding invoice from Munro Wilson relating to work previously undertaken investigating grid connection options for the proposed Abbey Timber Solar Project. • Although the project had not proceeded, Trustees acknowledged that the work had formed part of the agreed feasibility exercise. • The Board unanimously approved payment of the outstanding invoice for £600. *Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)* • SH reported on his attendance at the recent DTAS Borders Network meeting. • Trustees heard that many Development Trusts are managing significant community assets and delivering a wide range of community projects. • Experience shared at the meeting suggested that community-led housing projects have often proved financially challenging, with rental income frequently sufficient only to service borrowing rather than repay capital investment.	

	• SH also reported that a number of community asset buy-outs, particularly in the Highlands and Islands, are experiencing financial sustainability issues, providing useful learning for PACT when considering future projects. • Trustees noted that DTAS provides specialist advice covering areas such as finance, governance, property and project development. The Board agreed that this expertise could prove valuable as PACT's projects become larger and more complex. *Development Officer Funding* • SH reported that the Scottish Government currently provides funding, administered through DTAS, to support employment of Development Officers for up to three years. • Discussion took place regarding the potential benefits of employing a Development Officer to assist with project development, funding applications and delivery of future community projects. • Trustees recognised that the increasing scale and complexity of PACT's activities may exceed the capacity of volunteer Trustees alone. • The possibility of sharing a Development Officer with a neighbouring Development Trust or community organisation was discussed as a potentially cost-effective approach. • SH agreed to investigate the funding criteria, application process and practical arrangements for employing a Development/Project Officer or similar post. *DTAS National Conference* • SH expressed an interest in attending the DTAS National Conference later in the year. • The Board agreed to fund the associated registration and reasonable travel expenses. *Trustee Succession* • JD informed the Board that he intends to stand down as a Trustee at the next AGM. • Discussion took place regarding succession planning and future Board capacity. • Trustees acknowledged the importance of recruiting additional Board members to support future projects and maintain organisational resilience. • All Trustees agreed to bring names of potential new Trustees for discussion at the next Board meeting remembering that any resident that is a member of PACT is eligible to stand for the Trustee role.	**SH (PACT116)** **All (PACT117)**
13.	**Future Meeting Dates** • August 20th – Preston Village Hall • October 15th – AGM at Abbey Village Hall	