Preston and Abbey Community Trust
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
Held at Preston Village Hall
20 August 2026 2026 at 18:00

Ref		Action
	Present: James Robson (Chair), Pip Chandler (Treasurer), Victoria Dobie (Secretary), Scott Holmes and Ian Repsch. **Apologies**: James Dobie	
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 10 (Preston Village Hall); and secondly, due to his role as Treasurer of the Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Service (BAVS). • JR declared a conflict of interest in relation to the proposed Preston Graveyard Car Park project (Item 10) due to his connection with the relevant landowner. It was agreed that JR could assist with initial discussions/scoping but would not seek to influence decisions where his conflict applied, with other Trustees taking the lead as appropriate.	
4.	**Minutes from Last Meeting (paper attached P1-2008626)** • The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.	
5.	**Action Log Review (paper attached P2-200826)** • PACT70 (PATHS Project): On Agenda (Item 10) • PACT78 (Preston Village Hall Project): On Agenda (Item 10) • PACT86 (Local Place Plan Update): On Agenda (Item 10).	

	• 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). • PACT115 (Village Hall Subsidy): On Agenda (Item 10) • PACT116 (Development Officer Funding): Verbal Update (AOB) • PACT117: (Trustee Succession): Verbal Update (AOB)	
6.	**Treasurer's Report (PC) (papers attached P3-200826)** • The Trustees received and considered the Treasurer's Report, circulated in advance of the meeting. • The PACT bank balance as of 20 August 2026 was reported as £276,724.15. • Discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining a clear picture of the funds available to PACT for new commitments. It was noted that the information currently available did not provide Trustees with a sufficiently clear consolidated view of balances, commitments and anticipated expenditure across the different funding streams. *Triodos Fund Improvement/ New funds - short term deposits* • The Board reviewed the funds currently held by PACT and discussed the amount that could safely be placed into a short-term deposit while retaining sufficient cash for existing commitments and forthcoming projects. • The Board noted that PACT now held a substantially larger balance following receipt of additional community benefit funding. • After discussion, the Board agreed to place £100,000 in a six-month short-term deposit. The anticipated return was discussed and will be dependent on the interest rate available at the time of placement. • The Board considered whether a different banking arrangement might provide greater flexibility in future, particularly given the administrative burden of opening a new account for each deposit. The Board agreed that for the present the £100,000 six-month deposit should proceed using the existing banking arrangements. *Financial Reporting Strategy* • Significant progress has now been made. All bank transactions have been entered into Xero and reconciled, representing a substantial amount of work undertaken by the Trustees. • The Board discussed the work required to ensure that the historic transactions are correctly allocated to the appropriate funding streams and that the information held in Xero provides a reliable basis for the year-end accounts and future financial reporting. • The process of establishing the opening balances for the different funding streams had required considerable work, as the statutory accounts do not necessarily provide the level of detail required by PACT to distinguish between individual funding sources.	**PC (PACT110)** **PC (PACT111)**

	• Further checking of the transactions was considered necessary before the information is passed to Greaves West & Ayre for preparation of the year-end accounts. • The Board noted that some of the work undertaken to populate Xero had initially relied on Trustees' knowledge of individual transactions rather than checking every underlying document. The current work is therefore intended to ensure that the accounting records and supporting documentation are complete and robust. • The target is for the information to be provided to the accountants by the second week of September, in order to avoid delaying preparation of the accounts and potentially affecting the timing of the AGM. • The Board noted that there was a need to move quickly because the AGM is scheduled for October and the accounts will need to be available in good time. *Future Accounting Arrangements* • The Board discussed the extent to which day-to-day bookkeeping and data entry should continue to be undertaken by PACT Trustees or by Greaves West & Ayre. • It was noted that Xero is cloud-based and can be accessed by the relevant Trustees, allowing them to view transactions, reports and balances directly. • The Board discussed whether the accountants should continue to undertake routine data entry or whether Trustees could undertake more of this work themselves, with Greaves West & Ayre retaining responsibility for reviewing the accounts and preparing the statutory accounts. • The costs associated with the Xero licence and accounting support were also discussed. The Board understood that there may be a charity discount available on the Xero licence and agreed that this should be checked. • It was also agreed that clarification should be obtained regarding the accountants' ongoing charges and the extent of work included within their service. • The Board agreed that the Treasurer's email address should again be used consistently for financial correspondence and invoices, as this would provide a more straightforward central record. *Draft Budget:* • The Board discussed the need to monitor expenditure against each funding stream so that PACT does not over-commit restricted funds. A high-level spreadsheet showing funding sources, balances and anticipated expenditure remains useful for monitoring projects, but the Board wishes to avoid maintaining unnecessary duplicate financial systems. • The Board agreed that Xero should ultimately provide the core financial reporting, with a simple project/budget forecast maintained where necessary to monitor expected expenditure and commitments.	

7.	**Community Events** *Summer Barbecue 15th August 2026 (IR)* • The Board reviewed the final expenditure for the Summer Barbecue, which was £1,680.33, and noted that the event had been delivered within the agreed budget and had been considered a success. • The Board noted the substantial practical work involved in delivering the event, including catering, transport and activities such as the coach trip and bouncy castle. • The Board discussed the positive response from residents and the overall success of the event. *Future Community Events* • The Board discussed the programme of community events for the remainder of 2026 and into early 2027. Ideas discussed included: a community quiz night; a winter warmer event (PC); another wreath-making/other similar' workshop; Burns Night (IR); a music/social evening; trips and outings, including a possible visit to the Chain Bridge Honey Farm; children's Christmas Swimming pool party; and other community activities/talks arising from local suggestions. • The Board agreed that the programme should remain manageable, taking account of the organisational workload involved and the capacity of Trustees to deliver events. • The possibility of engaging a self-employed coordinator to assist with the organisation and delivery of community events was discussed, particularly in view of the practical workload involved. • The Board discussed the practicalities of licensing if drinks were sold at future events, including the distinction between requesting donations and charging for drinks. The importance of ensuring that the wording used for any future event complied with the terms of the relevant licence was noted. • The Board agreed that future events should be brought forward with clear budgets, proposed timings and identified responsibilities, so that they could be properly considered and progressed.	
8.	**Community Communications (IR)** • The Board discussed community communications and the possibility of producing another community newsletter. • It was suggested that an autumn/winter newsletter could be produced towards the end of October or in November, allowing information about forthcoming winter activities and events to be included. • The Board agreed that the existing communications plan should be followed and that information about upcoming events, including Burns Night, should be incorporated.	
9.	**Grant Applications (VD) (paper attached P4-200826)** *Grant Applications Subcommittee Activity (VD) (paper attached P5-200826)*	

	• 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. *Dance Class Funding Community Benefit: 26-08-01-MpulsiveDance (approved by email 27.07.26) 26-08-01-MpulsiveDance/Dance Class Funding Mailchimp (paper attached P6-200826)* • The Board considered the previously approved application relating to M-Pulsive Dance Classes. The original application had been made by a resident in relation to her daughter but had been intended to establish whether the funding could be made available more widely to children and young people in the community. The Board agreed that the opportunity should therefore be publicised more widely rather than treating the grant as support for one individual applicant. • The Board agreed that if demand exceeded the £3,000 budgeted allocation, the matter could be brought back to the Board for further consideration. • PACT will verify that applicants are residents and M-Pulsive will invoice PACT for the class fees. The £25 membership fee remains payable by the resident/applicant. • The Board also noted the wider principle that wind farm funding may be available to support residents undertaking activities through which they are acquiring skills, where the activity meets the relevant funding criteria. *26-08-02-DunsGirlGuidesCamping (£500.00 approved by email 27.07.26)* • The Board noted the previously approved £500 award to Duns Girl Guides for their camping activity. The grant had been approved by email and the award letter had been issued. *Final Report: 25-07-01-PrestonCommunityCafeHallRentalCosts (paper attached P7-200826)* • Trustees received and noted the final project report. *Final Report: 25-10-02-SpellingtoCommunicate (paper attached P8-200826) & Final Report: 25-11-02-SpellingtoCommunicateAddionalHire (paper attached P9-200826)* • The Board considered the final reports relating to the Spelling to Communicate funding. It was clarified during discussion that the two related awards formed part of the same overall funding arrangement rather than being entirely separate projects. *Final Report: 26-02-02-DunsPlayFest2026 (papers attached P10-200826)* • The Board considered the final report from Duns PlayFest 2026. • Trustees agreed that the report demonstrated that the event had been very successful and that the project itself appeared to have been worthwhile. However, the Board noted that the report did not provide sufficient information about ticket sales and, in particular, the number of local residents who had taken up the free tickets associated with PACT's support. Trustees agreed that this information is important when assessing the value and community benefit of future applications.	

	• It was noted that some of the forms accompanying the report appeared to have been returned blank and that further clarification should therefore be requested. • VD to contact the organisers to obtain the relevant attendance/ticket information. *Final Report: 26-01-01-CommunityBeekeeping (paper attached P11-200826)* • The final report for the Community Beekeeping project was noted. The Board discussed the project positively and noted the value of community activities of this type. *Outstanding Grant Reports* • VD noted that a final report remained outstanding from International Tartans - 25-10-01-InternationalTartansTraining. • VD agreed to contact the recipient to establish whether the project had been completed and obtain the outstanding report.	
10.	**Community Projects** *Preston Village Hall Project (JD)* • The Board received an update on the Preston Village Hall refurbishment and noted that there were still a number of snagging items to be completed. • The Board discussed the correspondence received from JD and the progress towards bringing the project to a formal conclusion. PACT continues to hold the retention amount pending completion of the snagging works. • The Board also discussed the remaining unspent grant funds. It was explained that the underspend arose partly because the project had also received other funding, including support towards solar panels and the air-source/energy-related elements of the project. Approximately £14,646 remains available within the Quixwood allocation. Of this amount, approximately £5,416 relates to retention/snagging, leaving approximately £9,000 available for additional improvements. • The Village Hall Committee has identified a number of improvements that were not included within the original specification but which would improve the completed facility. These include additional works in the kitchen and other improvements identified by the Hall Committee. The Board agreed in principle that the remaining underspend could be used to complete appropriate additional improvements to the Hall, rather than automatically returning or leaving the funds unused. However, because the proposed expenditure would fall outside the original agreed scope of the Quixwood funding, the proposed works and costs must be submitted to Point North for approval before the funds can be used for this purpose. JD has asked the architects to provide costs for the proposed additional works so that these can be submitted for approval. • It was agreed that once the snagging and agreed additional improvements have been completed, any further requests from the	**JD (PACT78)**

	Hall would need to be treated as a new funding application rather than being assumed to fall within the existing project. • The Board agreed that the intention should be to bring the project to a clear conclusion once the snagging and agreed improvements are complete. *Village Hall Rent Subsidy* • The Board continued its discussion of the proposed scheme under which PACT would cover the cost of village hall hire for eligible community events organised by local residents/groups. The intention is to make it easier for community groups to organise activities without having to submit a separate grant application simply to cover the cost of hiring the hall. • The Board discussed the importance of ensuring that the scheme applies to genuine community activities rather than private or personal use. The Board also considered whether the scheme would materially increase participation, given that hall hire charges are relatively modest. • It was agreed that the practical arrangements should be discussed with the village hall representatives before the scheme is finalised. • VD agreed to meet with Hayley Shaw and Duncan Osler to agree how the scheme could operate and bring the proposal back if further decisions are required. *Swimming Subsidy* • The Board considered the final report on the swimming subsidy. The funding for year ahead has been confirmed and was discussed. The scheme had been publicised with a closing date and has received a strong level of take-up. Approximately 24 swimming lesson places have been booked, and three children have joined the Duns Amateur swimming club, compared with one or two in the previous year. Membership levels were described as relatively steady, with many residents who had previously taken out membership continuing to do so. • Expenditure to date was approximately £14,000, against projected annual expenditure of around £18,000–£20,000. The Board noted that the available budget also included an amount carried forward from the previous year, meaning the total available funding was somewhat higher than the £18,000 figure alone. A further approximately £4,000 was expected to be incurred during the second half of the year. • The Board considered the scheme to have been successful and noted the increased participation. *Local Place Plan* • VD provided an update on the Local Place Plan.The next stage is to produce an action plan for distribution to every household, setting out the outcomes of the consultation together with short-, medium- and longer-term priorities. There had been some delay in getting the agreed material into final written form. • VD and Keith Dickson are due to meet to progress and finalise the action plan. • The Board noted that the Local Place Plan could be important in supporting future community projects by demonstrating that	**VD (PACT115)** **VD (PACT86)**

	proposed developments reflect identified community priorities. In particular, the Plan could provide useful evidence when seeking planning support for projects such as the cemetery car park and associated access improvements. *Preston Graveyard Car Park and Paths Project* • The Board had a substantial discussion about the proposed Preston Cemetery/Graveyard car park and wider paths project. • The Board confirmed that it wished to continue progressing the car park project but also considered whether the opportunity should be used to explore improvements to pedestrian access and potential paths linking Preston, the cemetery, Cumledge and the Whiteadder river. • VD reported on discussions with Jenny Douglas of FBR Seed who has experience of car parks, paths and similar community projects. Jenny had indicated that the firm could potentially assist with planning and professional advice and could bring in appropriate colleagues to deal with other aspects of the project. • The Board agreed that the car park and paths should be considered together at the scoping stage, while recognising that the car park itself could proceed independently if the wider path network proved impractical. The Board agreed that it was appropriate to use professional support to establish what could realistically be achieved. VD to develop the relationship with Jenny Douglas/FBR Seed and arrange further discussions regarding the scope and options. • The Board discussed the size and purpose of the car park in relation to the wider paths project. The Board agreed that Jenny should be asked to look at the different options rather than PACT determining the preferred solution in advance. The Board recognised that there would be fees incurred during these discussions and VD agreed to keep the board updated. • A discussion with landowners regarding potential path access is to be pursued, with SH taking the lead, given JR's conflict.	**JD (PACT70)**
11.	**Windfarm Communications** *Aikengall IIa Community Benefit (JR)* • The Board received an update on the ongoing discussions regarding the level of community benefit payable in relation to Aikengall IIa. JR reported that a positive email had been received from Rob Fryer. • It was confirmed that the PACT Account has been credited with £180,000 by Community Windpower in relation to Aikengall IIa. • JR reported that Rachael Hamilton MSP had assisted in contacting Community Wind Power and that the payment had now been received. However, the precise amount due and the basis on which the payment had been calculated remain unclear. JR had continued to seek clarification from Community Wind Power and had copied in Rachael Hamilton MSP. • The Board agreed that it was important to establish the amount properly due to PACT and to seek a more formal/legal	**JR (PACT102)**

	arrangement governing future payments and utilisation of the funds. • JR to continue discussions with Community Wind Power regarding the amount due and future arrangements.	
12.	**Vice-Chair Post** • The Board discussed the need for a Vice-Chair position. VD explained that she had specifically asked for the item to be placed on the agenda because she felt it would be helpful to have another Trustee who could provide support and act as a point of reference, particularly while she was dealing with the Preston Graveyard Carpark as Secretary, considering JR's conflict of interest • Scott Holmes was proposed as Vice-Chair and indicated that he was willing to undertake the role. The Board agreed to this proposal.	
13.	**Any Other Business** *Development Officer / DTAS* • SH reported on further discussions with DTAS regarding potential funding. Two broad funding routes had been identified: (a) funding which could potentially cover the cost of a full-time Development Officer for up to two years, although this is primarily targeted at particular types of organisation/projects; and (b) smaller grants of up to approximately £25,000 per year, which could potentially be used as match funding towards a part-time post. • A part-time Development Officer was estimated to cost approximately £30,000–£35,000 per year. PACT would have to employ the individual, although routine payroll and associated administration could potentially be handled by the accountants. The Board discussed the management responsibility that would nevertheless remain with PACT and recognised that employing someone would create its own administrative burden. • The Board considered whether there was currently sufficient work or a sufficiently defined programme of projects to justify employing a Development Officer. It was agreed that there is not currently a sufficiently clear need to employ someone. • The Board nevertheless considered the work undertaken by SH in identifying the potential funding route to have been valuable. It was agreed that the information should be retained so that PACT can move quickly if a significant project or programme of work arises that would justify a Development Officer. *Charity Collection* • The Board agreed that the amount of approximately £298.00 collected at the Summer BBQ event would be donated to the Duns Food Bank. • The Board also noted that, for future collections, it would be preferable to identify the intended charitable recipient in advance so that donors know where the money will go. *Trustee Succession / AGM*	**SH (PACT116)**

	• The Board discussed the forthcoming AGM in October and the need to ensure sufficient Trustees are available for the next period. • JD has indicated that he intends to stand down as a Trustee at the next AGM. The Board recognised that additional Trustees will therefore need to be recruited. • It was agreed that Trustees should actively consider potential candidates rather than waiting until the AGM is imminent. • It was agreed that PACT117 could come off the Action Log.	**VD (PACT117)**
14	**Future Meeting Dates** • October 15th – Abbey Village Hall	