

# What's on...

## Abbey St Bathans SWI

The first of this session's meetings is on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 7:30 in Preston Village Hall. We meet, we talk, and we eat. Some craft, some cook, but we all share. We welcome new members, so please consider joining us. Why not come as a visitor and see if you enjoy what's on offer?

This year, among other things, we will be learning about bread-making, folded books, the Eyemouth-based social enterprise Retweed, and glass jewellery. If you are interested and want more information contact Mary McFarlane T: 01361 840385 E: maryfaith@hotmail.co.uk or Betty Snow T: 01361 883434 E: bettysnow@btinternet.com.

## A Date for Your Diary

The PACT Annual General Meeting (AGM) is taking place at 12:00 on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October in Preston Village Hall. During the AGM, business matters will be dealt with, such as a presentation of the previous year's accounts and the nomination of new members to the Board. This will also be a chance for you to hear what PACT has accomplished over the past year, meet the Board, and ask them questions.

Refreshments will be served after the meeting, and we are also planning some entertainment for all the family.

More information will be published nearer the time.

## Book Making Workshop

Want to learn a new skill? Join us for a day making a multi-sectional book using a decorative stitch with a folded paper cover attached by coloured supports. All materials are supplied.

Our tutor will be Mark Ramsden, MA. Mark is a bookbinder and conservator. You can see his work at [www.bookmanconservation.co.uk](http://www.bookmanconservation.co.uk).

Date: Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November

Time: 10 til 4 (come early for coffee at 9.30)

Venue: Preston Village Hall

Tea and coffee will be supplied but please bring a packed lunch.

Booking is essential. Please contact Betty Snow T: 01361 883434 E: bettysnow@btinternet.com

# Whispers on the breeze

## Welcome

Welcome to the Summer 2019 edition of the PACT newsletter. We intend to issue a newsletter several times a year in order to keep everyone in the community of Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl & Preston informed about the work PACT is doing on their behalf.



My first task as the new Chair of PACT is to say goodbye to Wendy Reid, who helped establish PACT and was our first Chair. She's leaving Berwickshire to start a new job on the island of Ulva off the west coast of Mull. I thank Wendy for all her hard work and wish her the very best for the future!

I hope you'll find this newsletter interesting and informative. You can learn more about PACT and what we do on our website: [pactrust.org.uk](http://pactrust.org.uk).

Liz Macfie

## What is PACT?

**PACT stands for Preston & Abbey Community Trust. It was created following a consultation the Community Council organised in 2015.** It is a voluntary organisation with charitable status, and its mission is to undertake projects and activities that will help improve the quality of life of people living in Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl and Preston. The Board of Trustees who oversee PACT's work are all volunteers and live in the community it serves.

PACT receives funding through the community benefit paid by three nearby windfarms: Penmanshiel, Aikengalland Quixwood Moor. We spend funds on behalf of the local community, for example to produce and distribute this newsletter, and to meet future broadband running costs at both village halls. We also run grant schemes on behalf of the windfarm companies that local groups and projects can apply to for funding. Some of the projects we have supported feature in this newsletter.



## Exciting finds by the Bunkle & Preston History Group

The Group is investigating the history of the parish and nearby areas by consulting a number of different archives and also working on the ground. The parish may be a quiet, rural area now but in the past there has been a great deal of activity. We decided to look for the 'Lost Village of Bunkle'.

A geophysical survey of the field in front of Bunkle Castle was undertaken, along with a metal-detecting survey. Following this, exploratory archaeological excavations were conducted in 2018 and a further, more extensive, excavation in 2019. Both of these were under the direction of professional archaeologist Richard Carlton of The Archaeological Practice.

Our finds have included lots of wooden posts and wattle (stakes driven into the ground with branches woven around them to create a wall), some pottery, and a large carved stone. Samples collected in 2018 gave dates ranging from 1035 to 1300. Samples from our more extensive dig this year are awaiting analysis, so who knows what more we will learn from these!

The digs were supported by grants from both Aikengall and Penmanshiel wind farm funds.

## Would your project benefit from a PACT grant?

PACT runs grant schemes on behalf of three wind farm operators in our area. If you or a local group have an idea for a project, let us know, by emailing [hello@pactrust.org.uk](mailto:hello@pactrust.org.uk).

Each grant scheme operates differently and we can advise you which scheme will be best suited to your project. Projects must provide clear benefit to the wider community of Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl & Preston. Your organisation does not have to be a registered charity to apply but must have charitable aims.

Applications are considered at PACT's regular meetings.

### AIKENGALL II WIND FARM COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

The maximum amount that can be applied for at any one time is £5,000, and for individuals' applications £2,500.

### PENMANSHIEL COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

The maximum amount that can be applied for at any one time is £1,000.

### QUIXWOOD MOOR WIND FARM FUND

Grants of up to £5,000 (up to £10,000 in exceptional circumstances) are available for community organisations that provide projects or activities that fall within key themes, such as encouraging rural regeneration.

For more information on each grant scheme, and application forms, see the PACT website: [pactrust.org.uk](http://pactrust.org.uk).

## Community consultation: The next step

Residents across the Preston and Abbey St Bathans area will be contacted over the next few weeks by staff from BAVS (Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Service). When we held the community consultation in 2015, we learned that people want to see more activities in their community. So the work BAVS is doing on behalf of PACT aims to develop a plan for activities to be held locally based on residents' views.

BAVS will also develop a database so we can stay in touch with the whole community. For example, it will help us be sure this newsletter is seen by everyone, in whatever format they prefer. It will also enable us to encourage active involvement in our community and give all residents a say in designing future plans.

BAVS representatives will be attending local events, contacting community groups and going house-to-house to meet people. They will then run a series of community events and taster activities, offering residents the opportunity to get involved.

## Recent grants awarded by PACT

PACT runs grant schemes on behalf of three wind farm operators in our area. Here are just a few examples of how these funds are being spent in our community.

- Preston Village Hall received a grant to upgrade facilities in the kitchen. A new cooker and an instant hot water boiler were purchased, making the Hall an easier and more efficient place to prepare food and refreshments at events.
- A community didgeridoo concert took place at Abbey Kirk in June, with about 100 people attending. The event was organised by Charlotte Dobie who said, 'I had lots of really positive feedback - it was well worth the effort! Many thanks to PACT for making applying for funds so straightforward.'
- Bunkle and Preston History Group held the Eastern Borders History Gathering on 9<sup>th</sup> March in the Volunteer Hall in Duns. The Gathering was designed to give history and archaeology groups in the eastern Borders a chance to meet up and exchange knowledge and ideas. It also gave the groups an opportunity to share expertise and develop a network of useful contacts who can help with projects.

All 14 tables were occupied by local history and archaeology groups as well as representatives of the REELS project (Recovering the Earliest English Language in Scotland) from Glasgow University, Archaeology Scotland and BAJR (British Archaeology Jobs and Resources). Five talks took place during the day with good audiences. A total of 104 people attended the event. Evaluation of the day was overwhelmingly positive, with people wanting it to take place again and to continue on a regular basis either yearly or two years. Catering was provided by Abbey St Bathans SWI and was a great success, with comments such as, 'Fabulous!', 'Just perfect', and 'the best sandwiches and cakes I've had in ages'.

## Your Community Council needs you!

The Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl and Preston Community Council meets nine times a year, on the last Thursday of the month, for a couple of hours in the evening. Our business is to speak for all the residents of our area, and the subjects covered are varied, including the state of the roads, giving opinions on planning applications, and considering grant applications to a wind farm fund. As some cc members have left/ are leaving after long service, we have vacancies.

**We need new members**, no experience or special skills are needed, you just have to be a resident of the Community Council area. If you are interested, please contact the secretary on ..... and we will get back to you with more information. This is your opportunity to make a difference to our community, (and we have good biscuits at the meeting too).

## Abbey St Bathans village hall update

Although we have had permission to demolish the old hall for some months now, this has not proved to be straightforward. Abbey Hall clearly doesn't want to be removed without a struggle, but one by one the obstacles are being overcome.

The site is deemed to be very sensitive, so the new hall will be built on piles to minimise site disturbance. The tree and hedge were removed at the end of June, both of which will be replaced. They were inspected first for birds' nests and we were given the go-ahead, with three days to clear the site before another nest check. At the 11th hour, bats were found roosting in the nearby oak tree! As a result, we have had to apply for a bat disturbance license.

The kitchen end of the hall is constructed of asbestos sheets, so special license's have to be obtained to remove them. Meanwhile, the final engineer's reports have been sent to Building Control and the all-important building warrant will, we hope, be issued soon.

Once the conditions of our planning permission have been met, tenders for contractors will begin. We expect a wind and watertight building to be up before winter, with the completion expected next summer, with full bat approval.