

Minutes of the monthly meeting of Johnston Community Council held on 11th May 2026 in the Johnston Institute, and also online using the Zoom video-conferencing platform.

Present: Cllrs Nina Philpott, Len Gale, Tracey Young, Christine Wilkins, Louise Jones, Grayham Passmore, Aled Thomas, John Bonwick; Peter Horton (Clerk).

Apologies

C'llrs. Janet Jeffries, Yvonne Llewellyn, Rikki Schroeder, Neil James.

Members wished C'llrs Janet Jeffries and Yvonne Llewellyn a speedy recovery.

2633 - Declaration of known interests

None.

2634 - Approval of minutes of April 2026 monthly meeting

The minutes were approved as written (proposer C'llr Louise Jones, seconder C'llr Grayham Passmore).

2635 - Opportunity for public representations on tabled agenda items

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the meeting.

2636 - Discussion with ARISE officials regarding the proposed solar farm on land At Great Harmeston Farm

Bethan Curtis-Thomas & Lewis McArthur were present from Arise Solar Energy, to address the meeting regarding the proposed solar farm planned for land at Great Harmeston Farm.

As context to the discussion, the Chairman explained that the deadline for responses to the current pre-application consultation on the project was 22nd May. He mentioned the possibility of arranging a public meeting in the village before that date, to enable local residents to express their views on the proposals. Mr McArthur confirmed that Arise would be willing to attend any community meeting planned. Mr McArthur proceeded to outline Arise's efforts to date to inform the Johnston community of the project plans. In terms of how the consultation was going, no significant design changes had yet been made, but some may be in the future, depending on the responses to the pre-application consultation. He proceeded to show those present the current version of the project plan. Using the plan as a reference, he proceeded to outline details of the project layout as it was currently anticipated. Some archaeological investigations were planned which could potentially affect the final scheme.

C'llr Aled Thomas asked about the minor changes that might be made to the scheme following the pre-application consultation. He asked if J.C.C. would be able to comment on any changes after they had been made. Mr McArthur explained that the opportunity for this would be during the formal planning application process. Having said that, he thought that, informally, comments made in the meantime could potentially be accommodated.

C'llr Aled Thomas asked about separate areas of land in between the various zones of the proposed development. What would be to stop the intervening areas of land being filled in with yet more panels in future years. Ms Curtis-Thomas explained that this would not happen under the existing scheme, as any such plan would mean the entire scheme would have to be re-commenced from the ground up, and the cost of this would be prohibitive. She also explained that any future projects would have to

be considered on their merits, with any cumulative impacts always being considered as part of the planning process. Mr McArthur added that the Grid consent for electricity export from the scheme was for a certain capacity, which would be fully used by the current application.

C'llr Aled Thomas mentioned the current calls from some political quarters for moratoriums on these kinds of project. He wanted to know if these calls would affect the proposals for the scheme under consideration. Mr McArthur responded that this was unlikely, but that a watching brief was being maintained.

C'llr Christine Wilkins asked why this particular site had been chosen. It was explained that Grid availability was the primary driving factor for the choice of site, as well as the higher sunshine levels in the south of the Country. C'llr Christine Wilkins felt it would be better to put the panels on buildings, rather than take valuable farmland.

C'llr Aled Thomas asked about the community benefit fund. He noted that no commitment had yet been made on this aspect. He also commented that, while only a relatively small part of the scheme would actually be sited in the Johnston CC area, the impact on Johnston would be greater than on any surrounding communities. This raised questions about how the community benefit fund would be distributed. Ms Curtis-Thomas acknowledged the concern, and assured those present that a significant proportion of the community benefit fund would go to Johnston. Regarding final figures, Mr McArthur explained that final figures could not be provided until the final size of the scheme was known.

C'llr Christine Wilkins asked about logistics during the construction phase of the project. In response, Mr McArthur referenced the transport and access plan already published on their website. This plan aimed to spread out the disruptive impact of construction as much as possible. Regarding traffic controls, etc., for works in the Highway, he explained that there would be extensive liaison with the local Highways Department to minimise disruption as far as possible. He also noted that, while the overall construction phase was expected to last for 6-9 months, this would not be continual.

C'llr John Bonwick asked if the land around the panels would be used for grazing. Mr McArthur explained that this would be dependent on agreements with landowners. There was no decision yet on grazing, due to possible concerns by the P.C.C. Ecologist over the negative effects of grazing. Grazing could be facilitated on some parts, but this had not yet been finally decided.

C'llr Aled Thomas mentioned concerns over nitrate compounds leaching into the Cleddau waterway, which had largely halted house-building projects locally at present. He wondered if it was fair that a development such as that proposed should be allowed to go ahead in this climate. Ms Curtis-Thomas explained that most of the detrimental byproducts from house-building were connected with associated sewage increases. In connection with the solar farm development, there would be no such negative effects, and in fact it was thought that the overall effect would be positive.

C'llr Aled Thomas then suggested that, if this was the case, then maybe 'credits' earned by the scheme could be used to facilitate house-building that would otherwise be blocked. Mr McArthur commented that any such negotiations would only be possible after the scheme completion, but could certainly form part of discussions between involved parties.

C'llr Aled Thomas undertook to inform Arise of any public meeting scheduled. Monday 18th or Tuesday 19th May were suggested as possible dates.

Regarding potential timelines for progressing the project, Mr McArthur hoped for a formal Planning application submission shortly after July, but almost certainly by the end of 2026. A year would be needed for a decision to be reached, including detailed input from P.C.C. officers, and a final decision at Welsh Government level. Following the discussion, Members thanked the Arise officers for attending, following which Mr McArthur and Ms Curtis-Thomas left the meeting.

Matters Arising

2637 – N.a.C.R.O. address to Community Council.

Now arranged for the June meeting.

2638 - Discussion of problem with illegal parking around junction of Langford Road and Main Road

Still in hand with C'llr Aled Thomas to liaise with P.C.C. officers about measures to address the problem.

2639 - Discussion of traffic problems at Old School Lane / Cranham Park

No work yet carried out by P.C.C.

2640 - Discussion of measures needed to address poor drainage around footbridge, Langford Road

No change. C'llr Louise Jones had seen gullies being cleared recently in the vicinity of the bridge. It was thought this could possibly be a precursor to carriageway works.

2641 - Potholes / pavement cracks around The Close.

C'llr Aled Thomas had spoken with P.C.C. officers, but no work had yet been carried out.

2642 - Discussion of Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales determinations on Member allowances for 2026/27

Allowances to be paid in the June meeting. Members were reminded to notify the Clerk if they intended to waive the allowances.

2643 - Any necessary discussion of P.C.C. proposals for highway improvements at Church Road

C'llr Aled Thomas reported that the current owner had been contacted by P.C.C. officers, who had explained that the hedgebank was in his ownership. It appeared that some work had since been done to cut back the hedgebank.

2644 - Discussion of dog-fouling and littering problems on Hillcroft Field

Still in hand with C'llr Aled Thomas to speak to P.C.C. officers.

2645 - Planning

There were no Planning matters for discussion this month.

2646 - Correspondence

- 01) John Bonwick – Formal acceptance of co-option onto council – noted.
- 02) Powis Communications – Updates on solar farm project – dealt with in 2636 above.
- 03) P.P.S. Pembrokeshire – Playground inspection reports – noted.
- 04) Internal auditor – internal audit report on 2025/26 accounts – dealt with in ‘Accounts’ below.
- 05) Paul Cleaver – Reminder of impending need for updated tree report – Clerk to seek second quotation for comparison.
- 06) St. Peter’s Church – Request for financial assistance – Charitable donations to be placed on agenda for discussion in June.

2647 Accounts

Payments for approval

David Banfield (bus shelter cleaning, April 2026)	: £ 72-00
Easy Websites (direct debit for website / email provision)	: £ 36-96
Denise Mayr (internal audit)	: £ 185-00
F.J. Groundworks (INV-1059)	: £ 120-00
Johnston F.C. (Grass-cutting)	: £ 360-00
P.P.S. Pembrokeshire (Playground inspections)	: £ 1935-98

Income

P.C.C. (precept first instalment) : £13000-00

The above payments were approved by Members (proposer C’Ilr Nina Philpott, seconder C’Ilr Louise Jones).

End of year financial report

This was formally accepted by Members (proposer C’Ilr Nina Philpott, seconder C’Ilr Aled Thomas).

Consideration of internal audit report on 2025/26 accounts

Members formally accepted the report (proposer C’Ilr Nina Philpott, seconder C’Ilr Louise Jones).

Completion of Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26

Members completed the Annual Governance Statement. This was formally approved along with the Financial Statement (proposer C’Ilr Louise Jones, seconder C’Ilr Len Gale). The document was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

Possible need to improve the council’s training plan to be placed on June agenda for discussion.

2648 - Discussion of formalising arrangements for regular defibrillator checks

It was agreed for monthly checks of community defibrillators to be added to the Clerk’s contract of employment, with appropriate adjustment to the working hours to compensate for this (proposer C’Ilr Nina Philpott, seconder C’Ilr Christine Wilkins). Amended contract to be approved and signed in June meeting.

2649 - Any necessary discussion of issues connected with Vine Field

Quotation still awaited for the tree work needed on the field. Clerk to chase this up, as well as chasing up completion of the fencing work agreed in the April meeting.

