

Minutes of the monthly meeting of Johnston Community Council held on 12th January 2026 in the Johnston Institute, and also online using the Zoom video-conferencing platform.

Present: Cllrs Yvonne Llewellyn, Louise Jones, Nina Philpott, Rikki Schroeder, Neil James, Janet Jeffries, Christine Wilkins, Grayham Passmore, Aled Thomas; Peter Horton (Clerk).

The Chairman voiced support on behalf of all present for Cllr Tracey Young, whose father-in-law had recently passed away, and whose funeral was scheduled for the following day.

Apologies

Cllr. Tracey Young.

2540 - Declaration of known interests

None.

2541 - Approval of minutes of December 2025 monthly meeting

The minutes were approved as written (proposer Cllr Grayham Passmore, seconder Cllr Yvonne Llewellyn).

2542 - Opportunity for public representations on tabled agenda items

There were no members of the public present who wished to make representations.

2543 - Any necessary discussion of solar farm proposals on land outside Johnston and Freystrop, including discussion with Arise Renewable Energy officials concerning their plans to construct solar farm on land outside Johnston

Members welcomed Mr. Lewis McArthur, Senior Renewables Planner from Arise Renewable Energy, to the meeting.

Mr. McArthur proceeded to address the meeting concerning the proposed project. He mentioned that the proposals would affect four local communities, including Johnston, Tiers Cross, Rosemarket and Llanstadwell. He distributed maps and plans showing various aspects of the proposals, and also copies of a brief community newsletter which had been produced concerning the scheme.

Mr McArthur mentioned that the site was chosen partly because it has close proximity to the National Grid, making connections much more straightforward. He mentioned the informal consultation that had already taken place in the Johnston Chapel, and which a number of Members had attended.

Members posed a number of questions to Mr McArthur, as follows :

Q – What was the projected start date for the project if approved? A - Maybe after 2028, and more likely in the late 2020s, or even 2030.

Q – What would be the anticipated construction period? A - 6-9 months.

Q – Would local labour be prioritised? A - Previous experience would be essential for the main construction work, but local labour would be utilised as much as possible.

Q – What would be done to address the potential detrimental effects of channelling from runoff? A – The stream flowing through the site towards Redstock had been flagged as one of the more sensitive parts of the development site, and Arise were using an experienced ecology firm to advise on these aspects.

Q – Where would on-site materials and equipment be stored during construction? A – In the compound shown on the plans, and also, by arrangement, on nearby unused fields, and fields planned for construction, but on which work had not yet commenced. This would be pre-planned logically.

Q – What would be done to address potential problems of reflective glare? A – This would be addressed based on the results of a commissioned ‘glint and glare’ study, which would identify areas of concern. These would be addressed by various measures, including planting hedgerows where necessary, minor alterations in the orientation of panels, etc. C’llyr Neil James mentioned the experience of residents affected in this way by existing solar farms around Westfield, and felt it was a significant potential problem. Mr. McArthur stressed that if the glint and glare study indicated an unacceptable impact in any locations, then this would have to drive changes in the scheme.

Q - How would the company screen against unacceptable visual impact? A – This would be done by various means, including growing / increasing the height of hedgerows, placing panels further back from boundaries in some locations, etc.

Q – Would the impact of the effects of glint and glare be monitored during the lifetime of the scheme? A – There would be conditions relevant to this on any planning consent granted for the scheme, which would have to be observed.

Q – What changes to the scheme had been implemented to date from consultation responses already received? A – residents on the south side of Johnston were identified as most affected, and the planned locations of the solar arrays at this location had been taken back around 50m as a result. Other possible measures to shield the panels from view were discussed, including increasing the height of surrounding hedgerows, etc. C’llyr Neil James commented that he felt the visual effect of the proposed development needed to be much more clearly explained and publicised.

Q – Would sheep be used to graze the land around the solar arrays? A – They were not certain about this. They had had some discussions, but the answer to this would depend in part on what the landowners wanted. However, it was noted that P.C.C. had indicated that they would be against this proposal, due to ecological concerns.

Q – What would be done to protect the badgers that traverse the site? A – It was accepted that, while there were no badger setts on the development site, there were some nearby that might traverse the site while foraging, etc. A North-South corridor of hedgerows / woodland was proposed, to provide a route for badgers to traverse the site. Also, badger gates would be used, to enable badgers to cross between fenced areas.

Q – How would elderly residents and those without access to the internet be provided with information about the scheme, which ran to 138 pages online? A – It was accepted that this was challenging. Reference was made to the community newsletter already produced. However, C’llyr Neil James suggested this was insufficient, being too brief, lacking in detail, and also only having been circulated to a small part of the village. C’llyr Neil James suggested that the whole village should be directly contacted. He felt that Arise needed to be more inclusive and open about their proposals. Mr. McArthur said that another community newsletter would be produced soon, and this would be more widely circulated. He suggested that J.C.C. assistance with this could help with publicity. C’llyr Neil James suggested that a permanent display could be placed in the Village Institute, which was very widely used.

Q – How would any community benefit fund be used to benefit the community? It was mentioned that the community benefit fund generated by the scheme could be in the region of £65000 / year, split between the four communities affected by the scheme, and for the lifetime of the scheme. Details of how the fund would be split (i.e. by land area, population, perceived adverse effect of scheme, etc.) were yet to be addressed. However, it was suggested that, apart from straightforward financial payments, in-kind work could be done within the community. C’llr Aled Thomas suggested that this might be a good aspect to consider. He suggested a possible offset against environmental impacts, to allow housing projects to proceed that would otherwise be difficult to implement. However, some Members were firmly against any new housing in the village, due to problems with infrastructure, traffic congestion, etc.

Q – What would happen to the panels at the end of their life? A – They would have a likely lifespan of around 30 years. Recycling methods and capabilities were continually improving, so the panels would be likely to be relatively easily recyclable by the end of their lifespan.

Q – Why choose solar panels instead of wind turbines? A – Pembrokeshire is currently oversubscribed for wind power, but not for solar power. In conclusion, C’llr Neil James stressed the need for more openness on the part of Arise, reiterated the offer to place a display in the village hall, and requested much easier accessibility to documents for the residents of Johnston. Following the discussion, Members thanked Mr McArthur for attending, after which he left the meeting.

Matters Arising

2544 - Discussion with P.C.C. officers about proposed footpath / Highway improvement works along Church Road

No further update from P.C.C. available. C’llr Aled Thomas undertook to chase up information on relevant deadlines in February. Agenda item to be tabled for February to discuss possible requirements that J.C.C. might wish to put forward.

2545 - Discussion of badger activity in Glebelands estate

Quotation from F.J. Groundworks still awaited.

2546 - Discussion of problem with illegal parking around junction of Langford Road and Main Road

In hand with C’llr Aled Thomas.

2547 - Discussion of traffic problems at Old School Lane / Cranham Park

No update to date.

2548 - Discussion of measures needed to address poor drainage around footbridge, Langford Road

Plans for site meeting between C’llr Aled Thomas and P.C.C. officers still in hand. C’llr Neil James commented that the matter was a high priority, as the situation had progressively worsened considerably.

2549 - Potholes / pavement cracks around The Close.

No change, with pothole repairs still awaited.

2550 - Planning

Planning consents notified

25/0597/PA - Alterations and extension; Site Address: 114 , Hillcroft, Johnston, SA62 3QA

2551 - Correspondence

- 01) P.C.C. – Notification of changes to service bus schedules – noted.
- 02) NACRO – Acceptance of meeting invitation to attend February monthly meeting – noted, and agenda item to be tabled accordingly.
- 03) P.P.S. Pembrokeshire – Playground inspection reports – dealt with in agenda items 2553 and 2554 below.
- 04) F.J. Fencing and Groundworks – Quotation for grounds maintenance work at Glebelands Field – dealt with in agenda item 2557 below.
- 05) One Voice Wales – Invitation for nominations to attend Buckingham Palace garden party – C’llr Neil James was nominated. Clerk to inform O.V.W. accordingly.
- 06) One Voice Wales – templates for internal resolution policies – agenda item to be tabled for discussion in March.
- 07) Local resident – concerns over dog-fouling on Hillcroft Field – Clerk to forward to P.C.C., to ask them for more enforcement, and also to invite their comments on what measures they could put in place, including requesting signage and a litter bin.

2552 - Accounts

Payments for approval

David Banfield (bus shelter cleaning, December 2025)	: £	72-00
Easy Websites (direct debit for website / email provision)	: £	36-96
TBS Skip Hire (INV-26880)	: £	432-00

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

Income

P.C.C. (precept final instalment for 2025/26)	: £	13000-00
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Discussion / setting of budget and precept for 2026/27

Members approved the budget as drafted, with a projected expenditure for 2026/27 of £66,467 (proposer C’llr Rikki Schroeder, seconder C’llr Janet Jeffries). Members thanked the Clerk for the work done in preparing the budget.

Members set the precept for 2026/27 at £39,000, this being unchanged from the current year (proposer C’llr Neil James, seconder C’llr Janet Jeffries).

2553 - Any necessary discussion of issues connected with Vine Field

Nothing to discuss this month.

2554 - Any necessary discussion of issues in Close Field

Members expressed concern at the recurring issues with broken glass at the playpark, which mainly appeared to be alcohol bottles. However, since there was a standing arrangement in place for the playground inspectors to clear away any broken glass encountered, there was not much more to be done.

2555 - Discussion of possible provision of BMX ramps in Close Field Playpark

Members discussed briefly other options for the playpark, including a possible outdoor gym. However, C’llr Louise Jones commented that, as local children had specifically requested the BMX ramps in the survey carried out some time previously, it was important not to just dismiss this idea.

Item to remain on the agenda for forthcoming months.

2556 - Discussion of progress with work to wooden pavilion

C'lr Neil James reported that the asbestos disposal license was currently awaited, on receipt of which work would be able to proceed.

2557 - Any necessary discussion of land development at Glebelands Field

Members considered the quotation received from F.J. Groundworks for grounds maintenance. It was proposed that agreement would be made for grass-cutting three times per year at £50/cut, path-cutting through the meadow, etc. three times per year at £50/cut, clearing paths of bindweed, etc once per year at £400, and clearing around the pond once per year at £200, for a total projected annual cost of £900 for 2026.

C'lr Neil James proposed that overhanging growth and ground obstacles should also be removed as required, to form a 2-3m canopy.

It was also proposed that Item 5 in the quotation, for installation of a drainage pipe and backfilling with earth, should be accepted, at a quoted cost of £550.

Members approved the above proposals (proposer C'lr Neil James, seconder C'lr Nina Philpott). Clerk to inform F.J. Groundworks accordingly, after checking the proposed response with C'lr Neil James for accuracy.

[NOTE – C'lr Louise Jones left the meeting at this point with apologies]

2558 - Any necessary discussion of P.C.C. proposals for highway improvements at Church Road

Covered in 2544 above.

2559 - Discussion of needed repairs to St. Peter's Road bus shelter

NO response had yet been received from P.C.C. Property Services. Clerk to chase this up.

Members were reminded that P.C.C. had said they planned an exhibition in the village in February, and could accept proposals at this event for other projects in the village. Work to improve the bus shelter was considered as a possibility to be put forward. C'lr Aled Thomas undertook to contact Will Davies of P.C.C. to seek information on the planned public event.

2560 - Any other business

Scaffolding. C'lr Neil James commented on having seen children playing on scaffolding in the village. Post to be put on the community Facebook page warning about the dangers of this.

Christmas tree lighting. C'lr Grayham Passmore requested an agenda item to discuss having a formal switch-on of the lights in 2026. Agenda item to be tabled for discussion in April.

The meeting ended at 8-43pm. Next scheduled meeting – 9th February 2026.

Signed..... Chairman Date.....