

SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE CHARITY

MINUTES FROM MEETING 7th OCTOBER 2025 (6.30pm)

Present:), Martin Collett (MC), Peter Morgan (PM), Ian Purvey (IP), Laura Holloway (LH), Steve Gandy (SG).

Apologies: David McLindon (DM), Kate Foley (KF), Nico Borkmann (NB).

Agenda	Actions
<u>Welcome:</u> MC welcomed everyone present and thanked PM for hosting. Apologies had been received from DM, NB and KF.	
<u>Declarations of interest:</u> The following declarations were noted. MC and SG are members of the Parish Council. LH and IP are members of the Swalcliffe Christmas Market Committee. PM is Treasurer Designate to the PCC and will be taking the role over formally in December when the current Treasurer steps-down.	
<u>Minutes of the last meeting:</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 2 nd July 2025 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.	
<u>Matters arising:</u> Trustees noted that matters arising were all to be covered under the main agenda discussions.	
<p><u>Banking and finance:</u> PM had circulated details on transactions and reserves for both the Charity and Village Hall. Trustees noted that £400 had been transferred to the PlayPark Committee which was equal to funds raised during the Easter egg rolling event. They also noted that £377.50 had been collected on behalf of the Church as part of their fundraising event to support Ukraine and this had been transferred to them. Following a successful Oktoberfest party, NB has agreed to make a donation to the Charity of £475. Other anticipated income over the coming months was expected to include around £500 from the Harvest Supper for the Charity and an equal amount for the Village Hall (overall income c. £1,000), c. £400-500 was also anticipated as Charity income from the musical event being organised by SG and Tina. Finally, £200 was expected in December from the Loggins Charity and Trustees noted the need to promote access to the Loggins funds that was consistent with the intended objects; although there was a degree of flexibility should that become necessary due to limited interest.</p> <p>PM outlined the need to be clear about what was and was not eligible for gift aid. A discussion ensued on this, and it was agreed to PM should draft some succinct guidance so that this could be referred to inform future fundraising ideas and planning.</p> <p>Trustees noted that the Village Hall finances were performing well, but that this was because lower than budgeted booking income was offset by lower levels of expenditure. PM highlighted that currently the insurance costs were being paid by from the Charity account, at a rate of £108.45 per month. To date, this monthly cost was being met from the £685.10 insurance rebate transferred by the Parish Council. Trustees agreed that it would be clearer for the insurance direct debit to be paid from the Village Hall bank account and arrangements should be made accordingly. At the point it transfers, any residual amount from the insurance rebate should also be transferred to the to help balance remaining payments.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MC / KF</p>

<p>PM and MC provided an update on how the Charity would be aiding the Christmas Market financial administration this year. They had met with Catherine and Stephen Warrington to discuss this matter. Trustees noted that support requested had reduced from the prior year, with the Christmas Market Committee making independent arrangements for accounting and supporting forward purchases via the PCC finances, which was on its own a separate charity dedicated to running the Church. Trustees agreed the importance of finding ways to support the Christmas Market event both through financial administration and volunteering, given the critical role it plays in the village fundraising calendar. PM confirmed that he would be invoicing stallholders again and supplying sum-up machines for use at the event. Doing this soon was felt to be important in case some didn't pay or cancelled. All Income from this support would be transferred back to the PCC to be included in the event total proceeds. Trustees were reminded that for the current year the Christmas Market Committee had determined that all income generated should go to support the funding needs of the Church, specifically towards the cost of restoration of key building features. It was understood that this was not setting a precedent for future years though. Trustees noted that the PCC had secured its own sum-up machines, which would help to provide wider coverage for the event for stallholders and enable the Church to accept card transactions more generally across the year.</p>	<p>PM</p>
<p><u>Charity insurance renewal:</u> MC confirmed that after exploring options this had been taken out with Zurich again at an annual cost of £99.15. Trustees noted that they offered a small charity / not-for-profit product that was reasonable for the Charity; a link to policy documents had been circulated in advance. MC highlighted that the cover included liability and made provision for community events. He highlighted the importance of completing a proportionate risk assessment when needed as had been done for the Harvest Supper.</p>	
<p><u>Village Hall Update:</u> KF had been away and was unable to provide an update in-person. MC confirmed that KF had contacted him before the meeting to confirm that the Village Hall Committee had scheduled a maintenance inspection of the hall over coming weeks. Trustees felt it would be helpful to also understand how the Committee had utilised the ACRE advisory service that had been subscribed to and what further steps had been taken to promote the hall to secure bookings and income following the prior discussions on this. They agreed that as part of the wider communications from the Charity they could potentially seek further volunteers to work with the Committee, particularly around communications and marketing, if this was agreed to be helpful. MC agreed to share thoughts with KF and subject to her views determine how this could work in a way that aided the current Committee approach.</p> <p>SG confirmed that he had visually inspected the hall externally and that in his view work to the exterior was medium term, not immediate. SG had reviewed the ACRE grants available and these had been reduced to 20% of any matched funds, with a minimum grant level of £7,500. Trustees agreed that funds were not currently available to make grants at this level viable. Other grant availability such as the National Lottery were noted and SG confirmed that this had been successfully secured on two prior occasions.</p>	<p>MC/KF</p>
<p><u>Fundraising:</u> A summary of current fundraising activity was given as detailed below. Trustees felt that it was important that the Charity</p>	

played a role across community fundraising events, even if income raised did not benefit the Charity. A discussion ensued about the operational overheads covered by the Charity that partners benefitted from and that these were potentially not always recognised / understood. Trustees agreed that it would not be appropriate to insist on a minimum level of donation when it was acting in a transactional way for community fundraising events, but that a statement should be drafted to encourage a reasonable donation towards the Charity overheads in these circumstances.

MC

Trustees also agreed that at the January 2026 meeting a forward plan of events and fundraising activity should be developed, including both Charity and third-party events. This would enable the Charity to identify opportunities that it could support and promote, whilst balancing the level of activity across the year ahead.

Harvest Supper – MC confirmed that this event was progressing well, and all tickets had sold out. Trustees endorsed the approach that this was a community event, with funds raised being distributed between village causes. This had been agreed by the organisers at the following split – Church (40%), Village Hall (20%), PlayPark (20%), Swalcliffe Charity (20%). MC highlighted that the ticket, auction and bar income should generate a total net income of c. £2,500. The event was an opportunity to promote future activity and the work of the Charity – any available promotional flyers to be supplied to MC so these can be made available on the evening.

IP

Christmas Market – MC noted that some of this had already been covered in earlier discussions. LH confirmed that the event was at capacity with 21 stallholders and a waiting list. The value of the Christmas Market as a community fundraising event was felt to be critical and the Charity should continue to find ways to support it and those who organise it.

Musical Quintet – SG outlined the format of this event being organised by him and Tina on 23rd November. Trustees welcome the event and considered ways to help make it a success. DM to be asked to promote it on the website and set-up booking for tickets via PayPal, including creating a QR code for use in marketing. SG confirmed that he would need access to sum-up machines on the day. SG to confirm any support that he needs from trustees with planning / logistics.

DM

PM
SG

Christmas Eve Carols on the Green – Trustees endorsed the event to be held early evening on 24th December noting the success and popularity of last year. They noted that this did not clash with anything the Church had scheduled. Trustees recorded that NB had sent a note confirming that he was happy to organise gluhwein (mulled wine) for the event. MC confirmed that residents Karen Riordan and Richard Jones have agreed to lead on the musical side and were considering options to ensure the event was family friendly and brings together the community. Maggie Irwin had also offered support, and MC would liaise with her to help plan promotion of the event similarly to how they had worked together on the Harvest Supper. It was suggested that alongside the mulled wine, residents willing could bring mince pies, sausage rolls etc to share out to those attending to enhance the event. Trustees agreed that it was important to forewarn the Stags Head that the event was planned, given that it would increase custom and trade that night.

MC

MC

<p>A discussion ensued on the value of bringing the community together and the role the Charity played as convenor. On this basis, Trustees also agreed that the event should not be viewed as a fundraiser although sum-up machines would be available should anyone want to donate on the night. Trustees agreed that providing a modest amount to fund the cost of staging the event was reasonable given that it was open, inclusive and supported community cohesion and wellbeing. It was also agreed that this event was a method of thanking all the community for their support of wider fundraising and volunteering activity that took place across the prior year. Communications should reflect that. This to be confirmed to those involved, particularly NB so he could consider and advise on refreshment needs and logistics. Trustees felt that provision of up to £200 would be reasonable and this aligned with the prior year financial support.</p>	<p>NB</p>
<p><u>Future allocation of funds:</u> MC explained that in discussing this matter the outcome should be that Trustees agree a clearer approach to how they will consider allocating future funding, including if this should be smaller amounts or to seek to build up larger scale investment for big impact projects. In relation to the latter, the need to have intelligence from residents and direction on village priorities was agreed as critical. SG outlined his experience of applying for grants on behalf of the Parish Council and Village Hall, noting that a degree of formality / due-diligence was good practice, and that it was common-place to require that grant funding was matched to encourage separate external project fundraising and greater value for money. PM outlined challenges that he had faced as a trustee of a larger charity in Sibford, noting that complex and bureaucratic process often presented a barrier and resulted in low uptake of grants. It was noted that this is especially true for individual applications as was being seen by interest in the Loggins money. Trustees agreed that a balance needs to be struck between what is reasonable in terms of checks-and-balances, whilst maintaining simplicity and proportionately. Reflecting on the current published policy, this was felt to be overly complex and in need of a review. SG agreed to undertake this review and share a revised version with Trustees for consideration, reflecting feedback now received. Once agreed, this could then be published and promoted.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that to help inform the Charity approach to allocation of funding it would be beneficial to hear directly from village causes and assets on what their future needs and plans were. This starting with the Village Hall via KF at the January meeting, the PlayPark via DM at the April meeting and that a separate conversation happens with the Church. This intelligence would allow the Charity to identify greater opportunities to support these plans and so far, as it was able to allocate funding available.</p>	<p>SG</p> <p>MC</p>
<p><u>Communications:</u> IP and LH updated Trustees on communication plans. These included a regular newsletter, with a suggested frequency of quarterly to be consistent with the trustee meeting cycle. It was felt that 'special' editions maybe necessary but setting up a frequency that was realistic was important. Content for the newsletter was outlined, including a Q&A section to bust myths and clearly present the Charity work and purpose. This could potentially also take the form of a vlog hosted on the website with hyperlinks from the newsletter. Content suggestions also included upcoming events, how to donate (including QR code) and a link back to the donations page on the charity website where legacy donations should also be a particular feature. The aim would be to have the inaugural newsletter</p>	<p>IP/DM</p>

<p>ready for circulation by the 1st week in November. IP to circulate comms plans and template newsletter for further input. MC offered to lend some professional expertise to help design the newsletter once drafted, creating a template that could be used in the future.</p> <p>IP confirmed that currently 62 individuals had signed up via the website to join the Charity mailing list. Trustees noted that the plan was to grow this list for wider coverage and then to use it for circulating news and information. The value of running this alongside existing channels was agreed. The communications plan evolving and presented by IP highlighted these channels and how they could be deployed effectively to reach critical audiences. Specifically, the valuable support and role played by the DellaDella mailing list was noted. IP to continue to engage with Della and where possible seek to cross-promote the Charity mailing list via her communications. Trustees noted that the immediate risk of losing access to the DellaDella list had reduced. The Link Magazine was also felt to be a valuable channel and the Charity having regular content feature something that should be explored with the Editor.</p> <p>A discussion ensued on the value of the website and supportive role provided by DM in making sure changes suggested happen quickly. The updated Trustee biography page was welcomed. Trustees felt that the website was potentially an under-used asset and that IP should consult with DM to see what steps could be taken to enhance it further. IP to develop these thoughts are run through with DM. Particularity the focus should be on ensuring the purpose of the Charity is clear and concise, and IP's brief should be to reflect on 'navigation, content, message'. The potential for promoting the Village Hall on the website was also noted.</p>	<p>IP/LH</p> <p>IP/DM</p> <p>KF</p>
<p><u>Trustee updates:</u> Trustees provided brief updates on wider village activities that they are engaged with.</p> <p><u>Christmas Market:</u> Much of this was covered already. Interest was high based on the growing reputation of the event. Discussion ensued on whether the Village Hall should also be offered as an overspill venue in future years. The hard work of the Committee and all the local volunteers was noted.</p> <p><u>Parish Council:</u> New speed signs had been purchased and positively received by the village. The cost of both signs came to c. £5k which was a higher spend than the Parish Council had budgeted. SG alerted trustees to £800 being held by the Parish Council, which was a residual amount from the last village hall refurbishment project. The Project was funded by two grants and village hall reserves. The grants had been spent and the £800 remained from the allocation of reserves. Discussion on how to treat this money ensued and on the advice of the Treasurer it was agreed that the money should be returned to the village hall by the Parish Council.</p> <p>SG queried whether the Charity might be able to allocate some modest funding (c £500) from its own reserves towards the overall cost of the new speed signs, which were invested in following feedback from the community that speeding was a significant concern and addressing this should be a priority. Trustees were generally open to this idea and suggested that the Parish Council submit a formal case for considering that they could review. It was agreed that MC and SG should not comment or vote on this matter given the conflict that would exist.</p>	<p>SG/PM</p> <p>SG</p>

<u>Any other business</u> MC shared news that he had been contacted by the Oxfordshire Village Hall Advisor, who had requested details on the Charity to share as good practice.	
<u>Date of next meeting</u> 20 th January 2026 – LH / IP to host – Swalcliffe Lea	