

SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE CHARITY

MINUTES FROM MEETING 20th JANUARY 2026 (6.30pm)

Present:), In person - Martin Collett (MC), Peter Morgan, Nico Borkmann (NB), Ian Purvey (IP), Laura Holloway (LH) **By video link** - Steve Gandy (SG), David McLindon (DM)
Apologies: Kate Foley (KF)

Agenda	Actions
<p><u>Welcome:</u> MC welcomed everyone present and thanked LH and IP for hosting. Apologies had been received from KF.</p>	
<p><u>Declarations of interest:</u> The following declarations were noted. MC and SG are members of the Parish Council. DM is a member of the PlayPark Committee. PM is Treasurer to the PCC.</p>	
<p><u>Minutes of the last meeting:</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2025 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p><u>Ratification of electronic decisions since the last meeting:</u> MC asked trustees to ratify three grant decisions made by email since the last meeting. These were £500 towards the new VAS speed signs, £250 towards village Christmas assets and an increase to £300 for Christmas Eve Carols. MC confirmed that he had saved email replies on file, including those from himself and SG who had declared an interest in two of the items and on that basis excluded themselves from any decision making. Trustees ratified all three matters.</p>	
<p><u>Matters arising:</u> Trustees ran through each action and noted the following not covered elsewhere on the meeting agenda.</p> <p><u>Village Hall Insurance</u> – this had been switched to the VH bank account and residual monies allocated transferred from the charity accounts.</p> <p><u>Christmas Market invoicing</u> – transactions had completed and funds transferred to PCC who collated event income.</p> <p><u>Marketing of the Village Hall</u> – This was planned but no further progress made.</p> <p><u>Partner contributions towards charity overheads</u> – a guidance note still needs to be drafted to share with partners seeking to use Charity infrastructure and support.</p> <p><u>Harvest Supper Flyer</u> – this had happened. Trustees noted the success of the event and thanked those involved.</p> <p><u>Musical event</u> – this had happened. Trustees noted the success and thanked Steve and Tina Gandy.</p> <p><u>Christmas Carols</u> - this had happened. Trustees noted the success and thanked Martin, Karen, Maggie, Niko, Faith and Richard Jones who had led planning along with others. The need to increase volumes to cater for larger number for 2026 was noted. The investment in items to be reused for future years also acknowledged (Father Christmas outfit, thermal flask and 12-days of Christmas props).</p> <p><u>Charity Newsletter</u> – this has been drafted and circulated.</p> <p><u>Village Hall Grant</u> – the residual grant held by the Parish Council had been transferred to the village hall bank account.</p> <p><u>Grant request for VAS speed signs</u> – this had been considered and agreed.</p>	<p>MC</p>

<p><u>Budget:</u> PM had circulated draft budget for 2026/27 in advance of the meeting. This showed a projected income of £9,150 and expenses of £820. It assumed a distribution of £8,500 to village assets and via grants, leaving a residual value when current balances were considered of £1,930. The budget assumed annual village events would transact through the charity, with funds generally directed to key village causes. Trustees queried whether the Christmas Market would transact through the Charity and agreed that this should be clarified. They expressed a desire to work with and support the Christmas Market, and that this should be communicated to the Committee.</p> <p>Trustees noted the budget and that this presented a positive position for year two of the Charity, agreeing that funds directed will need to match the level of income and there would be opportunity to manage this dynamically during the year. Trustees then discussed what if any village asset they felt should be a focus of support. Noting the healthy Village Hall reserves and soundness of PlayPark finance reported by DM, trustees agreed that supporting capital expenditure on key Church projects should be viewed as a priority given the value the building held within the local community. This was to be made clear by MC when he meets with the PCC in February.</p>	<p>MC</p> <p>MC</p>
<p><u>Finance and Banking:</u> PM had circulated in advance a record of recent transaction, including the distribution of c £650 to both the PlayPark and Village Hall, along with £1,300 to the Church as profit from the Harvest Supper. Separately, a grant of £500 had been made to towards the new VAS speed signs and £250 towards Christmas assets. The Christmas Carols event had cost £270, within the increased budget of £300 agreed by trustees. Trustees noted that fundraising activity had been positive, setting the Harvest Supper proceeds aside, c. £565 had been raised from Oktoberfest and c. £480 from the Guess the Sound of Music event.</p> <p>PM reported that £237.32 was held in the PayPal account from residual event ticket sales income. Trustees agreed that this account should retain a balance of c. £50 to remain active but otherwise proceeds should be transferred to the Charity Natwest account. DM transferred £200 accordingly. Trustees noted that the Charities current balance for cash in hand or held was c. £2,100.</p> <p>PM had circulated a note to trustees detailing how gift aid could and could not be applied to the charities fundraising. Trustees considered this noting that it was a helpful clarification of the HMRC approach. Trustees endorsed the note and agreed that this would be reflected in fundraising activity undertaken.</p>	<p>DM</p>
<p><u>Village Hall:</u> PM had produced an updated financial forecast for 2025/26 for the Village Hall. Budget costs were broadly in line with expectations, although the additional income generated from Charity related fundraising activity and associated rental had been beneficial. Work had been funded for c. £700 to improve the audio arrangements in the hall, to enhance the appeal to hirers. The closing balance of the VH account including reserves was noted to be £10,800.</p> <p>Trustees noted delays in supplying the VH statements that occurred due to the current banking arrangements. They felt it would be helpful for this to be explored, with a view to PM having online access if possible.</p>	<p>PM/KF</p>

<p>Trustees noted the electrical heating charges seemed beneficial and queried whether the demand could be easily tracked so that trends could be seen and the cost during hire more clearly understood. They also felt it would be useful to see hire trends, to explore timings and type of bookings.</p> <p>A conversation ensued on the need to help boost the VH Committee numbers so that there were more volunteers to help progress activity such as marketing, financial planning and compliance. The excellent work of the current Committee was agreed, but trustees recognised that at times they may feel pressured or stretched when managing village hall requirements. This matter was to be discussed with the current committee and subject to that, the Charity would promote the need for additional volunteer support in the village.</p>	<p>MC</p>
<p><u>Fundraising Strategy and Activity 2026:</u> Trustees noted that they had already appraised the level of activity as part of the draft 2026/27 budget review. There was a conversation to have with the Christmas Market Committee to see the extent of collaboration and support this wanted from the Charity, with the view of trustees being that they hoped to work closely with the Committee to support fundraising and fund distribution to agreed causes (noting these were determined by the Committee).</p> <p>Trustees felt that it would be beneficial to agree dates early in the year for annual activity and publish these so that villagers could note early in diaries. On this basis, trustees agreed that the ideal annual events fundraising activity that they hope to convene and support for the year would be:</p> <p>Easter Egg Rolling Event – 6th April - to support PlayPark Summer event tbc – 4th July – Funds to be divided inc. % for Charity Oktoberfest – 26th September – Funds to support Charity Harvest Supper – 17th October – Funds to be divided inc. % for Charity Christmas Market – 5th December – Funds to be allocated as per Committee Christmas Eve Carols –24th Dec - Free village event sponsored by Charity</p> <p>Trustees discussed wider approaches to fundraising, with a consensus that securing regular giving would probably be a challenge. However, they agreed that legacy giving from residents who valued Swalcliffe should be pursued and promoted through communications and a more general campaign. Albeit that this should be approached cautiously and sensitively.</p>	<p>MC</p> <p>DM MC NB MC</p> <p>MC/PM</p> <p>MC</p> <p>IP/LH</p>
<p><u>Grant Making Policy:</u> SG had reviewed the prior policy and streamlined this into a simpler document. Trustees discussed the balance of having simplicity alongside the formality necessary to ensure funds were allocated diligently. There was a mix of viewpoints on how this might be achieved. The Chair sought a consensus view that the policy as redrafted was sufficient, but a simply introductory summary would be created using co-pilot and act as the initial gateway to the new policy. Trustees consented that this approach was a sensible way forward.</p>	<p>MC/SG</p> <p>DM</p>
<p><u>Trustee Recruitment and Succession:</u></p>	

<p>Trustees discussed the need to be transparent about recruitment and succession plans. They noted that currently there were eight trustees and the maximum level was 12. They felt that the number and mix was about right, with the main village assets and activities well represented. They did however note that although the Christmas Market Committee was represented through Laura and Ian, there was no formal link to the PCC/Church. Trustees agreed openness to considering how this might be resolved and noted that MC was to meet with the PCC to talk to them about the Charity and its activity in February. They felt that this conversation should include stronger representation within the Charity if that was what the PCC aspired to.</p> <p>Although there was no immediate need for succession planning, trustees also felt that in communications how anyone interested might make themselves known or find out more about the role of a trustee should be promoted. This could include speaking with a current trustee or considering the trustee role description. Expressions of interest could then be received. Trustees noted the need to maintain an overall balance of skills, village representation and maintain a collegiate trustee Board.</p>	<p>MC</p> <p>IP</p>
<p><u>Communication Update and Plans:</u></p> <p>IP gave an update on plans and trustees noted that since the last meeting an inaugural charity newsletter had been circulated successfully. IP would be working on a second newsletter to be circulated Feb/March, including details and images from recent activity. The newsletter would also consider actions arising from the meeting. The 'get to know a trustee' section would focus on LH.</p> <p>The need to maintain links and regular updates with The Link publication was also agreed. In relation to highlighting future dates for fundraising activity.</p>	<p>IP/LH</p> <p>MC</p>
<p><u>Trustee Update:</u></p> <p>PCC – MC had already provided an update on his planned meeting with the PCC which was agreed as positive. Trustees noted that they hoped to establish a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship with the PCC. They noted pressures on the Church fundraising and volunteer pool, restating their intention of aiding the Church with fundraising for building components in need of repair or safeguarding.</p> <p>PC – SG expressed thanks from the PC for grants agreed by the Charity that supported the purchase of the new VAS signs and village Christmas assets.</p>	
<p><u>Any Other Business:</u></p> <p>NB updated trustees on contact that he has had Countryside Learning Charity that owned the woodland at the far end of the village down Park Lane. He reported that the Charity no longer used the woodland and had given the impression that maintaining it was not a priority. His contact had been in relation to the footpath running through the woodland, in his capacity as Parish Footpath Warden. Trustees noted that the woodland was well used by villagers both via the formal footpath but also other routes that had been established over time. The woodland was agreed to be an asset which local residents felt strongly about. NB suggested that there maybe a role for the Charity</p>	

<p>in seeking stewardship, or in the longer-term ownership of the Woodland and that there could be a risk to use if the Learning Charity sought to sell the woodland on commercial terms. Trustees agreed with NB on this matter and that the Chair should contact the Learning Charity to explore possible options, working with NB on this matter before reporting back at a future meeting.</p> <p>MC updated trustees on engagement that he has had with Swalcliffe Park School in relation to students currently undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The School had approached MC to help coordinate local activities suitable for the students to undertake as part of the volunteering requirements. These activities had been agreed with the Church, Parish Council and PlayPark. NB made the suggestion that mowing the Churchyard would be beneficial. It was noted that this would need to be risk assessed by the School, who oversaw the project and supervised the students. MC would propose the idea though for them to consider.</p>	<p>MC/NB</p> <p>MC</p>
<p><u>Date and venue of next meeting:</u></p> <p>Trustees noted that the meeting cycle for 2026 was as follows – 21st April / 21st July / 20th October. The venue of the next meeting was tbc.</p> <p>MC reported feedback from KF that as meetings were on a Tuesday, it was a challenge for her to attend as it clashed with a regular weekly engagement. Trustees felt that as dates had been agreed and they had sought to manage diaries, it was not reasonable to rearrange them now. MC agreed to explore this further with KF.</p>	<p>MC</p>