

Sinodun Players Trustees Report 2024 – 2025 for the AGM

Trustees: Minaz Beddall (Financial Trustee), Anna Garland (Secretary), William Lidbetter, Nicholas Morley, Martin Parr (Chair), Emma Trotman (Safeguarding) and Michael Baker (co-opted)

Achievement and Performance

Sinodun Players CIO was run in parallel with the Sinodun Players Amateur Dramatic Society (SPADS) for a large period of the past year since the last AGM from its registration on 10th October 2024 until 1st June 2025 when all assets from SPADS were transferred to Sinodun Players. All activities undertaken in this period are for purposes of reporting to the Charity Commission formally associated with SPADS. Since 1st June all activities sit with the CIO. During this overlap period Sinodun Players acted in accordance with its objects by virtue of the objects being the same as SPADS' objects.

Object 1, To promote the advancement and improvement of general education in relation to all aspects of the art of drama and the development of the public appreciation of such art.

Sinodun Players is a new CIO established with the same Objects as its predecessor, the SPADS, the trustees having successfully sought agreement by resolution from the membership to transfer assets and purpose to the new CIO and to wind up the old charity.

Funds were received from SPADS on 18 June 2025, and application has been made to the Charity Commission to register the merger of SPADS and Sinodun Players so there forever exists a route through for any monies donated to the old charity or for anyone who wants to know what happened to it.

The new charity seeks to accommodate future ambitions for the organisation, be that a continuation of high calibre incoming shows for the benefit of our community, being involved in or having a voice for other arts

and performance opportunities in the town, or as a provision for cultural life in Wallingford and its surrounding villages. The charity seeks to be both inclusive and reflective of the needs of our whole community, including those who may normally struggle to access the arts because of cost or other impediments to participation.

In the coming year we seek to record our educational activity to produce a more detailed report on our educational purpose by May 2026, including but not limited to more systematically documenting the scope of our drama courses and skills training, measuring outcomes and impact, and using course evaluations as evidence.

The Encore youth group took part in both Easter and Summer workshops to build theatre skills, and many members and volunteers benefited from technical workshops. Encore members are increasingly being supported also to join our technical teams. Further workshops on set design and directing are being planned for all members and volunteers.

Theatre productions in the past year included: Measure for Measure including performances attended by local school students studying the play, including a Q&A session with director and cast; The musical the Last Five Years using our second theatre space whilst the remainder of the theatre remained open for other functions; the comedies A Breath of Spring, Entertaining Angels and You Never Can Tell; and Margaret Atwood's reimagining of the Odyssey, the Penelopiad. Our youth theatre group, Encore put on A Forest Full of Fairytales and then joined the cast of Dick Whittington. The final dress rehearsal of the pantomime saw us joined by an invited audience of local community care home residents, adults with learning disabilities and locally supported Ukrainian families.

Sinodun Players Committee and Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd have done much to ensure that we continue to identify, and support hosted productions, which both broaden our artistic offering and provide an additional revenue stream. The theatre was again this year a venue for the town's 'Bunkfest', a major nationally known free festival, the Wallingford

Winter Blues and Jazz Festival, our Drama Festival for local amateur drama groups, and the town's Agatha Christie Weekend. Our workshop team supported the 1155 Charity Bonfire Night event by building the effigy for the bonfire. The Christmas Punchbowl concert raised money for Crisis at Christmas.

The forthcoming production of the Father will feature the challenging subject of dementia and will be followed by a Q&A after every performance.

Object 2, To preserve, restore, maintain and enhance the building known as the Corn Exchange in Wallingford as a venue for the public performance of the arts.

The Charity works closely with the Board of our subsidiary company, Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd, to keep the building safe, up to date and fit for purpose. Active steps are made to make the Corn Exchange a welcoming venue, including to youth, and in the past year this has involved offering guided tours to local primary schools.

CIO status gives Sinodun Players the legal framework that public bodies or funders trust and recognise. South Oxfordshire District Council have been a vocal advocate for the change and have been fully supportive of it. This demonstrates that we take governance seriously, and it tells the wider community that it is our intention to be here in the future as a stable, professionally run organisation worthy of investment. We noted the Charity Commission's regulatory advice note at the inception of the charity regarding the ownership model for our main asset (the theatre) and the need to clearly define relationships with other organisations we work closely with, most notably the Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd.

Succession planning. The ability to attract new, diverse and committed members and therefore audiences starts with its decision-making committees. We have an active but aging core volunteer base. We hope that this commitment to good governance and removal of high levels of personal liability that previously came with trustee roles will help us

encourage more people into those roles and establish a renewed energy for the advancement of our objects.

Immediate benefits. The charity is now able to register for VAT whilst retaining its cultural exemption. Sinodun Players have formed a VAT group with the Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd which means that properly justifiable transfers can be made without a VAT charge being applied. This allows a regular rent payment to be made by Sinodun Players so that the Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd company has financial means to better maintain the building - something the charity was precluded from doing before.

In the process of transitioning to the CIO we have taken the opportunity to set in train a regular process to reflect on and refresh Sinodun Players rules for members, and to update and / or ratify key policies inherited from the previous charity, including those for grant making, safeguarding, grievance procedures and code of conduct guidelines.

Chair of Trustees: Martin Parr
August 2025