

Sinodun Players Trustees Report 2025-2026 for the AGM

Trustees: Will Lidbetter (Chair), Martina Platts (Secretary), Minaz Beddall (Financial Trustee), Anna Garland, Nicholas Morley, Martin Parr, Emma Trotman (Safeguarding Trustee) and Mike Baker.

Achievement and Performance

Sinodun Players CIO has now completed its first full financial year following the transfer of assets and activities from the Sinodun Players Amateur Dramatic Society. Throughout the year the trustees have continued to develop the governance and strategic direction of the charity, whilst ensuring that the organisation remains focused on its charitable objects, supporting drama, education, volunteering and cultural life in Wallingford and the surrounding area.

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.

The trustees believe that the charity continued to make a significant contribution to arts education and cultural participation throughout the year. Theatre productions, workshops, technical training opportunities and youth theatre activities all provided opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to develop skills, confidence and experience in performing arts and theatre production.

Encore Youth Theatre continued to play a central role in the educational activities of the charity. Members participated in Easter and summer activities and continued to be involved in productions and workshops that developed performance, teamwork and technical theatre skills. Encore members were also increasingly integrated into the wider activities of the organisation and supported in accessing volunteering and technical opportunities across the theatre. The trustees also agreed changes to membership arrangements to help strengthen these links and promote long-term engagement with the organisation.

Theatre productions during the year included *The Inheritance*, a Portuguese-language play specially translated for performance and presented in our Warburton Studio Theatre; *The Father*, a powerful and widely acclaimed exploration of dementia accompanied by post-show discussions led by external specialists; *The Unfriend*, a highly successful contemporary comedy; and *Murder, Margaret and Me*, exploring the relationship between Agatha Christie and Margaret Rutherford as part of Wallingford's Agatha Christie Weekend. Encore's production was the excellent *Around the Stage in 5 Plays*, a devised piece by Diana Christie.

Our annual pantomime, Hansel and Gretel, once again brought together performers, volunteers and audiences from across the community and proved as popular as ever. The breadth, quality and diversity of our programme was recognised through the award of the NODA London Flame Award for District 12 (Oxfordshire), recognising both the organisation's breadth and depth of programming and its inspirational contribution to the pursuit of excellence in local theatre.

The charity also continued its long-standing commitment to supporting amateur theatre more widely. The Corn Exchange once again hosted a successful Drama Festival, providing opportunities for local drama groups to perform and receive adjudication. In addition, Sinodun Players' production of Death Knock was well received both at our own festival and at other local drama festivals, helping to showcase the talent of our members and strengthen links with the wider amateur theatre community.

The charity continued to support hosted productions and incoming performances that broadened our artistic offer and introduced new audiences to the Corn Exchange. Highlights during the year included Acoustic Ballroom, a Pink Floyd Tribute concert, Jazz Divas, which achieved a sold-out performance, and Bootleg Shadows. These events complemented the charity's own productions whilst providing an additional source of income to support our charitable activities.

Training and skills development remained an important part of the charity's educational work. Support from South Oxfordshire District Council enabled the charity to offer Set Design, Vocal and Stage Combat workshops for members and volunteers during the year. These opportunities helped develop practical theatre skills, support future productions and further the educational objectives of the charity.

The charity continued to seek opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations in the town. A successful collaboration with a local restaurant combined a themed meal with a film screening at the Corn Exchange, creating an enjoyable audience experience whilst supporting both the theatre and a local business. This reflected our wider ambition to play an active role in the cultural and economic life of Wallingford.

The charity continued to work with community partners throughout the year. Following participation in a Community Meet Up organised by Wallingford for All, trustees and volunteers established links with SOHA to explore opportunities for residents to become involved with volunteering, theatre activities and the wider work of the Corn Exchange. We also participated fully as a main venue and contributor in Wallingford's larger events such as the Winter Blues and Jazz festival and the large town-wide Summer festival, Bunkfest.

Sinodun Players continued to support community events in Wallingford and the surrounding area. In June 2026 volunteers assisted with the Wallingford Walled Gardens event, which in turn generously made a donation towards the work of the Corn Exchange.

The Corn Exchange hosted the Little Theatre Guild's January 2026 regional meeting, welcoming delegates from amateur theatre groups across the area. Attendees were also

able to enjoy a performance of Hansel and Gretel, helping to promote both the work of Sinodun Players and the facilities of the Corn Exchange to the wider theatre community.

Sinodun Players and the Corn Exchange were represented at the Mayor's Sunday event in May 2026, where we were honoured to receive the Wallingford High Steward's Award for Service to the Town.

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 trustees continued to work closely with the Board of Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd to maintain and improve the Corn Exchange as a welcoming, safe and sustainable venue for the arts.

During the year, significant work was undertaken to address deterioration to the stonework on the front elevation of the Corn Exchange building. Surveys were commissioned and investment approved to ensure that repairs are carried out in a manner appropriate to the building's historic character whilst protecting it for future generations.

In parallel, considerable time and resources have been invested in developing proposals to improve the external appearance of the building. Planning approval has been secured for a programme of façade lighting, banners and related enhancements intended to increase the visibility of the Corn Exchange, strengthen its presence within the town and better communicate the breadth of artistic and community activity taking place within the venue.

The charity also invested in improved security measures, including the installation of two CCTV cameras. These improvements support the organisation's safeguarding responsibilities and contribute to maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for audiences, volunteers and participants.

Accessibility remained an important consideration during the year.

Considerable effort has also been devoted to improving the organisation's information technology infrastructure and data management systems. This work has included planning for the adoption of Microsoft 365 and a wider programme of cyber security and network improvements. It is also necessary to ensure that the organisation can obtain appropriate insurance cover against cyber and information security risks.

The trustees have also taken steps to strengthen the organisation's approach to intellectual property and emerging technologies. During the year, work was undertaken to improve compliance with copyright requirements. In addition, the charity developed guidance governing the use of Artificial Intelligence across its activities.

Work also commenced on a review of policies and procedures following feedback received during the establishment of the CIO.

We have been pleased during the year to appoint a number of high-calibre individuals to key voluntary positions within the organisation. Alongside ongoing work to recruit and support new volunteers, the trustees remain committed to recognising the enormous contribution made by our volunteer community.

The trustees continue to consider how best to attract new members, increase engagement with the wider community and ensure that volunteers feel fully part of the organisation.

Chair of Trustees: Will Lidbetter

August 2026