Trustees of Sinodun Players CIO

(Charity Number: 1210415)
Minutes of the 18th meeting held on 8 June 2026 at 7:45pm

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were given by Anna Garland, Will Lidbetter, Nick Morley and Martina Platts

   Attendees: Mike Baker (Chair), Martin Parr, Minaz Beddall, Emma Trotman, Stephen Williams (CXWL Board), Caroline Malnick (SPC).

2. **Minutes:** Agreed and signed.

3. **Matters arising:**

Outstanding Actions from Last Month:

- Anna to contact Gerry regarding the storage of the documents, which must be maintained in hard copy, following the transition from SP to SPCIO.

a) **Stonework façade –** looking at the possibility of using the same scaffolding for the stonework and external lighting project, as the stonework needs to be completed before the lighting project. However, between contractors that isn't possible due to liabilities, so Stephen is engaging with the surveyor to see whether he will take on the responsibility of the scaffolding – it's hoped this will be resolved next week.

b) **Data Protection and IT –** the estimate was sent to the board; however, the board haven't approved this as it's only an estimate rather than a quote – in principle, they'll approve one quotation, but before approval, they need to see a schedule of costs.
Action: Stephen and Gloria are chasing Chris Wales for the quote.

c) **Trustee Roles update from advertising –** Minaz reported she is heavily marketing the financial trustee role without much success; listed the position on Reading Action and Oxfordshire Volunteers- who have a list specifically for trustees- Facebook/Instagram post from the Sinodun Players accounts, and there are also handouts available at the box office. Minaz has reached out to Poul Alexander with no response.
Action: Minaz to contact Chris Wales to check finance trustee email junk.
Action: Emma to contact Chris Wright to design a poster for the foyer/front advertising the role and workshop lead

d) **Use of Generative AI –** Martin edited and shared the document following they May production but has had no feedback.
Action: Caroline to ask SPC to review the document.

4. **Items to and From the Board:**

The board discussed the 26/27 budget but deferred approval to the next meeting, as the lone work system, ladder training and IT outsourcing costs were not included.

The 26/27 budget sent to trustees on 7th June included these costs; however, the board haven't approved it yet, so no approval from trustees is needed at this time. There are two large costs included - both are estimates at the moment; the external lighting project of £50k and the stonework renovation project at £30k. The budget has been calculated on a worst-case scenario where CX pays for the whole project (without a grant from the SPs). The 26/27 budget covers cost with essentially no buffer for any unforeseen costs.

The IT estimate was discussed, and it seemed logical to treat it the same way as other shared SP/CX expenditure. Stephen to take back to the board.
Mike asked whether we gave a grant to cover the Creation Logic work, which we did. However, this is also excluded from the 26/27 budget as grant income and expenditure (net each other off) to allow year-on-year comparison. The final 26/27 budget is expected to come to the next trustee meeting for approval.
Minaz raised Martina's points sent via email. Stephen commented that the trustees approve the expenditure as the request comes through, as the CX has a £5k spend limit. It was agreed by the trustees that it would be good to understand what the CX are intending to spend their reserves on, likewise with the trustees recently planning how to allocate their reserves. The CX are recommended to keep a minimum of one year's expenses in cash reserves - would ordinarily be £100k. The cinema equipment will also need to be replaced at some point – this is estimated to be £100k, but Stephen acknowledged that this needs to be formalised. The CX has £225k in cash funds (the forecasted income is enough to cover budgeted projects). Of this, £48k is payable to SPs for the roof project, £86k is potentially payable back to SODC, leaving £95k, which is approximately equivalent to one year's expenses. Andy Pearson is also doing a walk of the building to identify things needing to be done. He estimated £16.5k needs to be spent this year (passing 30% to SP rent). The board noted a There has been a fall in cinema and income, and a proposal to increase the ticket price from £10 to £12 has been made. Ticket sales haven't increased for a few years. Stephen has compared similar venues and found that CX had the lowest ticket price. The board is now determining when to introduce the increase. Note that the cinema ticket increase has not been included in the 26/27 budget.

Tracy Noble is organising an open morning on 20th June to encourage more volunteers. John Warbuton has been nominated for the Great British Theatres Shining Star. John Warburton has also made a donation of £2.5k towards the stone renovation project. The trustees thanked John Warburton.

Update on the Lighting Project: The project has been split into three mini-projects – banners and lights, digital screens, and the rear of the building. Planning permission for the front lighting and banners has been approved with four conditions:
The work starts within 3 years
Any changes to the work need to go back to SODC
The materials used need to be in line with the planning application
The front railings, which are due to be reconditioned, must be returned, and the timescales to take them away, recondition, and put them back must be provided. The Creation Logic requested the costs for this by 12th June – no response yet.

Creation Logic are receiving expressions of interest and quotations from suppliers of lights, as we need three quotes. Mike said the banners are relatively cheap and that the fixings will only require a single quotation.

5. Items to and from the SPC:

Murder, Margaret & Me went well, with an estimated 54% of tickets sold. We were hoping to benefit from the back of the Town Council's Agatha Christie weekend, but that ended up being quite low-key. The Encore show has 200 seats sold so far. Backstage is very busy at the moment with Encore, Underdog, Drama Festival and incoming shows.

Encore rehearsals are moving to Monday night from Wednesdays. The SPC have supported Diana's request for the move, and the parents have been informed.

SPs have submitted and paid their first independent (from CX) PRS return, returning approximately £1140 incl. VAT for the first quarter (this covered pantomime, Winter Blue's weekend, a couple of incoming shows and The Unfriend). They didn't ask for any specifics of music but relied on % of box office takings.
Action: Martin to reach out to personal PRS contact to discuss figures.

H&S concerns that prop handguns and swords are not stored safely – they need to be locked away by law, so exploring using the archive cupboard currently in the Dennis Wood Studio.

Discussions continue on the second wheelchair space and whether it should be made permanent or just for certain shows.

The Artistic team has received 20 plays and is reading through them.

Socially, Chris Bertrand is doing storytelling for kids, Julie is organising local art and a wine tasting for social, and a quiz in November.

The SPC approved the budget for the Sewing Group, which the trustees also approved. The membership renewal date was 01.06.26. 111 memberships expired and 196 remain active members. A few people have continued to pay into the old SPADS Barclays account rather than the SP CAF Bank account.

The Incoming show team has increased the hire fee tariff to £950 from £850, although incoming shows usually agree a split of the box office instead.

Ticket sale prices are likely to be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Finance Update:

Minaz noted that the PRS levy is missing from a separate budget line in the 26/27 budget. It was agreed not to add a PRS levy budget line, as the prior-year spend is somewhere within the actuals (it is unknown where, but this will hopefully become apparent as the year goes on). The SPs have budgeted to grant the CX £45k for the 26/27 external lighting project, which was agreed at the May meeting, leaving the rent budget at £37k.

Gift Aid hasn't been claimed for a couple of years, as it's always claimed in arrears. However, we can no longer claim anything from SPADS, as the charity has been closed down. Action: Minaz will apply for an HMRC number – Dorothy/Anne can then set up a Gift Aid account.

The SPs have completed their first year-end as a CIO – Caroline has completed the majority of QuickBooks transactions from 31/05/2025, so the 26/27 budget is as accurate as possible. The SPs' 25/26 finished with approximately £8k surplus. CX owe ticket-sale takings for Murder Margaret & Me and The Unfriend, plus Unfriend programme ticket sales. Minaz has drafted a generic Trustees' report to accompany the annual accounts – Action: Minaz to run it by the accountants to see if it's appropriate.

7. Membership:

Dorothy Hirsch, Anna Garland, Will Lidbetter, Ric Harley and Abi Thornton make up the membership committee, and their first meeting is on 11th June, with the proposed 25th July event to be discussed at that meeting.

8. AOB:

CX Server – Mike ran into a problem whilst setting up trustee accounts. He consulted with Oliver, who confirmed the problem. Mike has asked Chris Wales to unblock the issue, but he's busy with the main SharePoint project, so he's not very hopeful we'll all get access to the server before then.

Minaz raised succession planning and said she will be standing down as trustee at the AGM. Vince is available for 12 months if we can't find anyone. The trustees thanked Minaz, acknowledging all she's done and the progress she's made – and congratulations! **Action:** Emma to approach CW. – workshop manager, house managers, finance trustee and trustees.

No safeguarding updates from Emma, except that the Encore show licenses have been submitted

Meeting Closed at 21:20

SPC Wednesday 1 July Anna
CX Board Monday 6 July Martina

13 July 2026
Will [signature]