



Minutes of Members Meeting

Held at the British School Room, Cliff Road
At 7.00pm on Tuesday 18th November 2025

In attendance and apologies

In attendance were Mike Johnson, chairman, Janette Templeton, Richard Hulme, Geoff Martin and eight members.

Apologies were received from Jonathan Gould, Tanya Burgess and Martin Smith

1. Minutes of the Members General Meeting held on 26th November 2024

These were taken as read and approved.

2. Review of the year

The Chairman was pleased to report a much more successful year—with full occupancy and hence improved income. Last year two of our units were unoccupied for large parts of the year which was obviously troublesome and had a significant impact on our bottom line. Thankfully, this year, with Unit 4 occupied by Lydia Walker (Harviste Ltd) - who runs a small sales marketing business and, with our approval, shares desks with two other individuals (an accountant and an event planner) - and with Units 2/3 occupied by Natalie Clune (Reset Physiotherapy and Wellness) we are now fully occupied once again.

As a result, we were in the happy position this year to be able to make a donation of £10k to the Parish Council for village good causes. £5k of this was given to the Sherston Football Club to help them pay for urgent repairs to their clubhouse and a further £5k was given to the Holy Cross Church which was put towards repairing the nave roof which had partly collapsed.

He reminded the meeting that it is the income generated from our occupiers that pays for the maintenance and repair of our building. No money is spent on management fees. In addition, this income is used to pay the PC for our annual rental (£12k) which in turn is used by the PC towards repayment of their PWLB loan. Any surplus beyond this is potentially available to be redistributed to the village for good causes.

He said that since 2018 when we first felt able to distribute any surplus income, we have made £40k in donations towards village good causes and have set aside a further £30k as a contingency for the Village Hall should they need it. We also have provided rent relief for some of our tenants during the Covid period – which helped to keep them going during that difficult time.

As for the future? We are hoping to be in a position later this financial year to make a more significant donation. Ideally, we would like this to be a more meaningful contribution towards a large village project should one be identified. This might for example be towards the desired improvements to the sports field or perhaps youth facilities or indeed anything else that the village needs.

We have this year, together with the Village Hall, been in receipt of complaints from some residents about the misuse of the car parking area to the rear of the Old School. This was coincidentally at almost the same time as we received an enquiry from the PC as to whether we might consider opening up this area for more general use to ease the parking problems in the village. The bottom line is that this car park is subdivided into two distinct parts. The area nearest to our building is owned and controlled by SOSIC and is dedicated for use by our

tenants. The rest is owned and managed by the VH and is intended for use by visitors to the VH. None of this area was constructed as a car park. It was constructed as a children's playground. The access into the site is narrow and dangerous. No large vehicles are allowed into the car park. Despite this damage does occur and will in time have to be repaired. The current estimated cost of resurfacing this area is c £54k! We are adamantly opposed to this area being opened for use as a public car park. We have been asked to erect "no parking" signs at the entrance to the site – to overcome the occasional misuse by third parties. We do not propose to do that either as it would simply confuse matters, would most probably be ignored and would be impossible to police.

As you know all the work undertaken by the Board is voluntary and I give my thanks once again to everyone on the Board for everything that they do. It is very much appreciated.

Thanks also to Vicky Saucedo our cleaner who does a sterling job keeping everything so neat and tidy inside the building and to Tim Vacher, our gardener, who has made a really good job of sorting out the exterior surrounds.

Finally, to end my review on a sad note. As I am sure many of you will be aware, Peter Sidebottom, our past Chairman, Life President and benefactor, passed away earlier this year. When SOSIC was formed in 2010 he played an important role in fundraising and indeed personally paid for drawing up the plans for the conversion of the Old School to commercial use. In recognition of this great service and as a permanent reminder of the important role Peter played in ensuring the success of this project, a plaque has been placed in the foyer leading into the Co-op premises. He will not be forgotten.

3. Board membership and succession planning

Three directors have, this year, to retire by rotation and all have agreed to continue in office. A unanimous show of hands was given for the re-appointment of Mike Johnson, Richard Hulme and Geoff Martin.

The re-appointment of Janette Templeton is due in March 2026 and in order to avoid the need for a general meeting at that date she agreed to offer herself for re-appointment at this general meeting. Her re-appointment was approved unanimously by the members present.

Jonathan Gould will be due for re-appointment in November 2026.

The chairman reported some progress with succession planning and hopes to be able to provide more specific news in due course.

4. Directors' Reports

- Membership

Janette Templeton reported that the membership list stands at 248 (last year 225). She continues to try to raise awareness of the Old School project and held a recruitment drive on Boules Day 2025, encouraging 30 more villagers to become members. She would like to repeat this next year perhaps jointly with the Village Hall. She said that in addition having a table outside the shop on an occasional basis is an effective way to attract new members and would like to try this again. She would also like to consider involving the school somehow.

- Tenancy

Richard Hulme said that he is pleased to have full occupancy of the premises. He is also pleased to report that discussions with the Co-op to renew their lease in 2026 are at an advanced stage and solicitors are preparing a new lease.

We were fortunate to have a director of Mid Counties Co-op, Paul Mather, at the meeting and he was invited to explain the current situation with his business. He said Mid Counties Co-op is getting together with Central Co-op to considerably increase their combined store

numbers and, in a very competitive market, be more able to sustain financially and competitively their offer of service and employment to the community.

- **Property**

In Jonathan Gould's unavoidable absence there were no particular property issues that needed to be raised at this time.

- **Finance**

Geoff Martin pointed the meeting to the increasing revenue stream resulting from full occupation and underlined the relationship between that and the continuing ability of SOSCIC to make donations to village good causes.

5. Questions

The board was asked if SOSCIC could be of any help in hastening the new doctors' surgery, perhaps financially. The chairman said that he thought the delay was not for financial reasons but more as a result of planning both at Wiltshire County and with the NHS Commissioning Board

There is a drain in the car park that continues to block and cause a small flood. The chairman pointed out that the drain is in the area of the car park owned by the Village Hall, although he would see if SOSCIC could arrange for some help from our gardener.

6. Chairman's closing remarks

Mike Johnson thanked all members for coming to the meeting and then closed the meeting.

Mike Johnson
Chairman