

**SIDLESHAM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD IN SIDLESHAM MEMORIAL HALL ON  
MONDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7.00PM**

1. **Trustees Present:** (Treasurer and Acting Chairman) Norman Robson, (Secretary) Corina Hall, and Allison Tupper.

**Village residents present:** Mike French, Martin Hoskins, Martin Mellodey, Kate Wade, Bill Martin, Fiona Lewis, David Guest, Jane Blackford, Adrian Harland, Louisa Robson, Richard Stewart, Lucinda Gibson-House, Nikki Buchanan, David Draper, Andrew House and non-resident Tricia Tull.

2. **Apologies:** David Blackford.

Norman Robson welcomed those present.

3. **Chairman's Report:** There have been quite a lot of changes within the last few months and as a result you will probably be hearing quite a lot from me in the role of acting chairman and treasurer. Alison Tupper distributed a summary of the Annual **Report for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> April** as follows:

“The trustees of Sidlesham Community Association (SCA) submit their annual report for the year above during which we have concentrated on selling the facilities to a Manhood audience rather than the more limited area of Sidlesham. This widening of the catchment area has been undertaken to reach a wider audience and thus have the hall and other facilities used by a wider group of hirers. Externally the major user of the grounds, Infinity FC, have now completed the renewal of the changing rooms, which has proceeded as part of their desire to obtain success in a higher league. Turning to the cost side of our growth, we are using an old building, and whilst the capital investment has now been completed, we still incur repairs and renewals of approximately £9,000 per annum. This figure was similar to the previous year and represented nearly 50% of our total costs. In many respects such costs could be much higher except for the fact that external repairs have been undertaken by the Parish Council – for which we are grateful. The other major aspect of costs has been our utility bills of water and electricity. In the year just ended this cost was 30% of our total outgoings. During the year we took the opportunity when renewing our agreement with Infinity FC to begin charging separately for electricity and whilst this was at cost price, this major user of electricity is now covering a substantial part of the overall cost in this area. We are also mindful that the Parish Council have taken responsibility for the renewal of the floodlights with replacement LED bulbs. This should also contribute to a better use of energy.

We applied during the year for a grant towards the replacement of the hall heaters as one had failed during a cold spell in the winter. Although the grant from Ferry Farm was declined, we were introduced to an energy firm who are now reviewing both the type of electric heating used and the most appropriate form of heating to suit our needs. It is anticipated that this review will be available for the next Ferry Farm grant committee's use.

Internally, we have had significant additions to the trustees. We welcomed both Kate Wade and Tim Edwards. In their contribution, both in the day-to-day management, as well as their input to our strategic review, an input of 'new blood' had been welcome to the management of the charity. Existing trustees continue to fulfil a valuable role although both the Chairman and Treasurer had announced that they wished to stand down after many years of service, much of which in the early days of taking over from the then existing users was time consuming work, with little progress in the early years as we became established.

The trustees carried out a strategic review in the course of the year and this is now being formulated into a business plan, which will reach fruition shortly. We are mindful that there are many volunteers aside from the trustees who help, particularly with the ground maintenance. Financial progress is shown with the highest surplus generated in any year under current management of £6,549 or 25% of sales income. Although this is an achievement in itself, we are nevertheless aware that the ultimate ambition is the replacement of the current building with a new build. We have sold our building to hirers so far on the basis of fees a little less than competitor halls. This will need a thorough review as we price our charges during the summer. We will need to reflect the current building's poor insulation in the winter months and the costly annual repairs bill due to the age of the current premises. The trustees are proud of the progress but recognise that we need to continue to grow income whilst trying to contain costs with much work being done on the premises free of charge."

You might say that this is not a report on our first year, but it is in fact the first we took over the actual running of this building and grounds. Some of you may say we had profit two years ago, but that was money bought in through the covid exercise when we rented this building to the NHS – that was a one-off exercise spread over two years and came to over £33,000. This is the first year we have made use of our profitability and I will talk about that profitability when I take on my 'Treasure's hat'. Heating and maintenance are a bit drain on our resources, which is not surprising considering the age of the building and the roof is a constant problem requiring inside and outside work. We have in the last twelve months spent too much time what I would call 'nasal gazing', which is not constructive. We started well doing an assessment of how we move forward but unfortunately time and meetings have been diverted by other issues.

The other thing from a Chairman's prospective is that in addition to our existing trustees we now have two potential new ones, who are willing to stand as new trustees. What is a weakness is not having relative skills, such as boardroom skills and we need to concentrate more on the bigger picture. I hope that this can be rectified in the coming year.

The other thing, which has become clear over the year, is that the footprint of this building is too large, we have too many rooms for the population and unless we are pulling people in from other towns, ie Selsey, we are not going to generate sufficient income from the residents of this village. That is a good thing because if we are ever

to have sufficient funds for a new build, we now know that we need to think about a much smaller footprint.

There are one or two people in the audience who are willing to put themselves forward as trustees, we have had several trustees resign, and are therefore looking to replace those trustees.

I welcome those who have come forward to join us as trustees and move forward in the months ahead.

## 5. Treasurer's Report:

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 <sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025		
Income (£)	2025	2024
Football Income	8,201	6,612
Café Income	2,403	2,974
Grants	0	0
Village Functions (net)	6,975	4,705
General Hiring	5,273	3,673
Luncheon Club/Bar takings	<u>2,826</u>	<u>2,490</u>
	25,678	20,454
Expenditure (£)		
Website, Printing & Subscription	624	1,792
Insurance	383	405
Premises Expenditure & Maintenance	8,998	8.802
Donations/Wreath	50	50
Utilities (Water & Electricity)	6,194	4,870
Equipment Purchased	2,216	2,161
Cleaning & Hall Running costs	270	1,715
Admin Costs	<u>394</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>19,129</u>	<u>19,795</u>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>6,549</b>	<b>707</b>
Bank Account	30,251	23,702

Accounts prepared by Norman W Robson Hon Treasurer, independently verified by Tony Harrison and accepted by the Trustees.

Norman Robson said that the accounts resulted in a surplus of approximately £6,500. This is the first year we have had a genuine surplus not taking account of the covid experience.

**INCOME:** Looking first and the **Football Income** of £8,201, this has gone up by 24%, this is thanks to members of the Parish Council who have worked to encourage this side of the business. We have Mike French who has spent a lot of time in getting the pitch in good nick and Paul Devonshire who has been responsible for grass cutting over the last twelve months. Some very practical people have made a significant contribution. My thanks to the Parish Council for their management contribution and those practical people who have worked so hard on the grounds. The second Income Item is **Café Income** at £2,403– this is actually Café profit, because this is the surplus having paid for milk, coffee etc. A big contribution to that is Lucinda Gibson-House and Corina Hall; many thanks to them for the work they have put in, which sometimes is pretty boring and pretty cold.

The next item is **Village Functions** and this covers a wide range of events including Theatre events and the bar. If there is a good production this will result in a good income from the bar in the main hall, as opposed to the Villagers bar which many of you know is managed by the Infinity Football team.

**General Hiring** at £5,273 – One major Rugby occasion when we had a coach load of players who swamped us with their drinking skills.

**Luncheon Club/Bar** takings £2,826 – this income has significantly improved recently, and I mention this because Kate Wade is in the room and has been largely responsible for this. In addition to Kate, Wendy Devonshire has been assisting in that regard, and many people in this room have enjoyed the benefit of the food.

In the year to April 2025 we ended up with Total Income of £25,678 compared to last year's income of £20,454.

**EXPENDITURE:** On **Premises Expenditure and Maintenance** of nearly £9,000. It costs approximately £170 per week to keep this building open, and if you haven't got more than £170 per week coming in you are running at a loss. You must have a surplus on whatever activities you are doing in order to pay that overhead and if hirer's are not contributing to electricity costs this is an even heavier toll on us. This figure is not dissimilar to the figure of last year. The main hall has five 2kw heaters in it, and when people hire the hall they want it on for at least four hours – that is £15 in electricity alone. The type of heating we have at the moment is not the best type of heating and that is to be addressed over the course of the next six months.

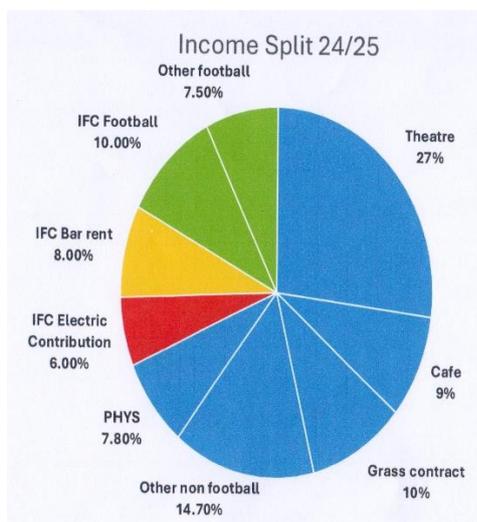
**Utilities (Water and Electricity)** There is no gas laid on as we use bottled gas in the kitchen. The Parish Council have installed LED lighting in the Floodlights and that has substantially reduced the cost. We now charge Infinity for the electricity they use in running their bar. In the summer months Infinity continued to use electricity to keep their stock cool, but they now have addressed this situation themselves, and the bills have considerably reduced.

Jane Blackford asked if the SCA as a charity were paying for VAT on the electricity consumed? Norman confirmed that the SCA are paying 5% VAT on the electricity bill. He has argued the case but as the SCA are running the building to produce a

profit we are expected to pay. The previous payers of electricity in the building were happy to pay VAT on gas but then they were able to reclaim VAT back. We do have a special arrangement in paying rates, which this year is about £10,000, and if we had to pay this it would be a severe hole in the SCA accounts.

Paul Devonshire asked why the SCA had not applied for grants. On the charity website there are 16 government grants that could be applied for. Norman confirmed there had been no grants received in the last two years. Corina Hall said that she received emails from various bodies regarding grants but they were very specific in what they would give grants for. For example, refugees, education, young children and she has seen nothing applicable to the SCA at this time.

## INCOME SPLIT:



IFC (Infinity) is a significant user, as are various other football clubs now. We have another user PHYS who use only the grounds for regular exercise purposes, and when it rains they use the outside stands. There is the Motor Club who meet here once a month and make their own refreshments for members. These small hirers contribute to the 27% listed as Theatre.

The Parish Council now pay us to cut the grass, but the figures given to date represent accounts only up to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

**CASH FLOW FOR 2025/26** – for May, June, July and August was circulated and discussed.

These figures are passed to the Parish Council monthly at their meetings.

Wendy Devonshire queried the figure for Luncheon Club/Bar takings on the annual accounts. Norman said that was Income, not profits. On the few occasions when we have opened the bar for the Luncheon Club we have only sold £10.00 worth of drinks and that was added to Luncheon Club takings. That figure is derived from what you pay into the bank and is profit income. Norman said that luncheon club were not charged for the use of the premises, nor the gas or electricity etc., so that figure is not *pure profit*.

How are we doing in this current year? If you look at the Net Surplus/(Deficit) you will note that we now have a Deficit of approximately (£2,200) compared to a surplus

this time last year of approximately £2,700. Therefore we have a turnaround from one year to the next of some £5,500. Jane Blackford queried why 'drama' is not listed on the cash flow. Norman said those figures were reflected in Village functions. This current year is of concern because of the turnaround of approximately (£5,000) and we need to do a lot of hard work in the remaining months of the current year if we are to achieve the profit or surplus that we made in the year to April 2025. We have this month had the bill in for Wi Fi, and this figure sticks out like a sore thumb. Andrew House enquired what the figure of £1,290 in June for entertainments costs referred to. This was the cost of Art work completed on the building. Kate Wade asked why the £900 bill on Wi Fi could not be spread over several months. Norman asked why should this be spread over several months, we will not have a repetition of this bill. If we spread this we would be left with a deficit of £4,000 instead of £5,000. Kate Wade asked if Infinity had paid the last bill, as this money would make a difference to the figures. Norman said this is a cash flow forecast and not looking at debtors and creditors.

Paul Devonshire enquired what field maintenance covered. Norman said this would be white lining for the football pitch which is quite expensive, and petrol for the mower, (the fuel alone works out to about £38.00 per month).

#### **10. Election of Trustees.**

There have been a number of resignations of Trustees over the course of the last few months and I would like to comment on the considerable contribution from Wendy and Paul Devonshire. Wendy on her work as the booking officer and Paul for the grass cutting, and although they have stood down as Trustees I hope that they will continue on a voluntary basis. My thanks to them both for their work over the past couple of years.

**Existing Trustees** Norman Robson, Corina Hall, Allison Tupper, and we have two new residents applying to join SCA as Trustees: Lucinda Gibson-House and Richard Stewart. Kate Wade asked to read an article regarding Trustees for Charities and their strategic aim and safety policies that need to be adhered to, as opposed to being just a member of a community organisation, and ensure that one votes for Trustees who meet these requirements that the Charity Commission demands. Norman replied that you can only draw trustees from the residents who live around here and people who you might like to have on your board have not come forward. This is common in organisations such as SCA who look for people who are unpaid, who are willing to give of their time as well as relative skills. This is not a vast village when looking for resident trustees. We have advertised widely and asked people who are already trustees to ask around. Norman said that he had been Treasurer and Chairman at different times over a period of twelve years and in that time we have had to take some pretty tough decisions. We have had discussions with the National Lottery, discussions with the Parish Council as to whether to borrow money for a new build etc. This all takes considerable time and Norman felt it is the time commitment that drives people away – he feels that he spends three or four days a week at least on SCA business and at 86 years of age he would welcome someone to take on the role of Treasurer. Tricia Tull enquired as to the legal number of Trustees

required and was told the minimum was three and the maximum was nine. Jane Blackford asked if the Treasurer and the Chairman could be the same person and was told there were no rules on this according to the constitution. Norman said he had chaired this meeting as the past Chairman was not available. Paul Devonshire asked if being a Trustee and also working regularly in management was like marking your own homework. Do the trustees know what they are supposed to be achieving? How can they set a strategy in order to attain it? He has difficulty looking at Infinity Football compared with SCA? Two strategy meetings were held this year by the then Chairman and Treasurer, and in most big businesses once you have done that you do a second stage which decides what operations are we going to undertake to make that strategy happen, and that is a bit we have not done and need to. On the other hand we are a small group of volunteers and getting people's time to talk theoretically to a large extent is not an easy matter, and we are not talking about a massive turnover, but about £30,000. One has put in perspective the difference between £30,000 and £30million.

The two prospective trustees were then asked to comment on the skills they could bring to the SCA.

Lucinda Gibson-House said she was a teacher for 34 years, currently a landlord, so has knowledge of tenancy rights etc., and has operated her own small business, so knows the need to make money. She has been on the committee for educational grants, safe guarding and care of students and more recently a fund raiser for the local Samaritans, and she was previously for a time a Parish Councillor. Richard Stewart said he was new to the area, previously he was a Town Councillor in Tunbridge Wells for two and a half years, but now lives in Sidlesham. As a councillor in Southborough he worked in catering and was a Homestart volunteer (a charity for homeless young people) for six years. He was an Osteopath but now retired had a lot of time on his hands.

There were no questions from the floor re these new trustees and they were voted in.

Paul Devonshire then made a statement as follows:

“At a band concert arranged by Wendy Devonshire (WD) on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024, I Paul (PD) was accused by Norman Robson, the SCA treasurer, of theft. I would like to make a statement setting out the situation as I see it.

The band is one in which WD performs and its membership is scattered, the furthest member coming from Waterlooville. In recognition of their a) coming some distance and b) playing for free at this concert, it was arranged with them by WD that they would have free drinks as a goodwill gesture. These were to be supplied by WD.

Prior to the concert, I had taken drinks from behind the bar and placed them in the fridge in the kitchen. This was because there had been a comment, on previous occasions, that drinks had not been chilled, and customers had not been happy.

Norman was notified of this in an e-mail timed at 3.45pm.

Unfortunately, both WD and PD were not present in the kitchen at the interval, since both of us had been diverted to other pressing matters. We were, therefore, unable to supervise the situation. Given their understanding of what had been agreed, band

members took those drinks that were in the fridge. The ones that were intended for them were still in the boot of my car.

When Norman made his accusation, I attempted to replace whatever drinks might have been taken. Indeed, I think I replaced more. However, he has remained fixed with his explanation that I was stealing.

I will say that at no time was it my intention, or that of Wendy to defraud the SCA or for it to incur any financial loss. We have lived in Sidlesham for 35 years, and, during that time, we have contributed in many ways to the life of the village. For the last three years we have been trustees. I have arranged five talks on issues of social importance as well as giving three lectures of my own, I have written and produced a stage show, The Universal Upheaval of Womanhood, that described the roles of women in WW1. I have been the main grass cutter in fulfilling contracts with the parish council that are worth over £1,000 per annum to the SCA. I could list the contribution of Wendy.

I will not allow my reputation to be tarnished over an honest mix-up that I had attempted to resolve immediately.

Norman said that as Paul was under investigation with Airs in respect of aspects regarding this statement, he thought it inappropriate to answer these points. However, there were several issues that Paul had omitted in his statement including the fact that as trustee he did not obtain permission for the free drinking, neither Paul or Wendy had signed the official document to allow them to operate the bar, or set up a bar in another part of the building.

The audience also fully partook in the free drinking and not just the band, and, as Paul stated such drinking was completely unsupervised. In addition, Paul took no details of the stock removed from the bar and held no record of what was stolen from the official bar. If it was his intention to use his own supply from his car, then why not stock the free drinks from his alleged supply in the first place?

Paul would have an opportunity to state his case before an independent authority through the Airs Group, who are entirely independent, so neither should publically pre-judge the situation at this time. Paul know his views already that he has not acted within the SCA licencing laws, thanked him for his input and that ended this discussion.

Please note that both Devonshires decided to remove themselves by resignation as Trustees before the start of the meeting following a request from the chairman to both Devonshires to do so. Wendy Devonshire delivered her booking diary to the top table saying she would no longer be responsible for SCA bookings.

AOB: No other business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.