St John Ambulance Cymru

Priory House, Beignon Close
Ocean Way, Cardiff CF24 5PB
www.sjacymru.org.uk

029 2044 9600

Priory Chapter Board Meeting

Friday 18 September 2026 at 09:30 at NHQ, Cardiff

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION AND DECISION
The Priory Dean opened the meeting with prayers and noted the passing of members since the last Board meeting.
Chair's Introductory Remarks The Chair reported on Grand Council, which he had attended together with the CEO and the Priory Dean. Grand Council brings together representatives from Priories across the world, and this year's theme had been "Partnerships". The Chair and the CEO had led a session on partnership working between boards and executives, and the Priory Dean had been interviewed on stage by one of the Charity's volunteers about the global St John family, which had been very well received. The Chair noted that the 150th anniversary of the St John Ambulance Association was approaching, and that it was important that the history of St John in Wales was properly reflected in the celebrations.
Minutes of the June 2026 Chapter Board meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2026 were approved.
CEO Report The CEO reported on the following points: • The experience of St John People continued to improve, with a noticeably more positive atmosphere at events than a year ago. Support for high-profile events in England, such as the Notting Hill Carnival and the London Marathon, continued to grow, giving volunteers experience of a scale and range of cases not otherwise available in Wales. The target of 200 qualified event responders by the end of 2026 remained on track. • The Director of Clinical Operations and Education was leading work on registration with Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW). In England, event medical providers are losing their exemption from Care Quality Commission inspection, and the Welsh Government is now looking at the equivalent position in Wales. The CEO is chairing a national group on this and is in constructive dialogue with HIW, and the Charity expected to be the first event medical provider in Wales to be registered with HIW. • Wales was increasingly being seen as a venue for major sporting and cultural events over the next few years, and the Charity was well placed to benefit given its reputation for quality.
Finance Report The Director of Finance and Resources presented the Finance Report, highlighting the value of the new absorption costing work in properly allocating overheads to each income stream. Some

contracts had performed better than expected and cost control remained ahead of plan, but income generation continued to be a challenge during July and August.

The Trustees encouraged the Executive Leadership Team to continue to support high-profile events taking place in Cardiff.

Appointment of New Auditors
The Director of Finance and Resources updated the Board on the external audit tender and recommended that the Charity proceed with the preferred firm. As the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC) had already discussed the tender extensively, it was agreed that the Chair of ARGC would meet the firm's engagement partner and that authority would be delegated to the Chair of ARGC to ratify the appointment on the Board's behalf.

AI Policy
The Director of Finance and Resources introduced the new AI Policy, explaining that its underlying principle is to enable the responsible use of AI, with as few rules as necessary but as many as needed, and that it is intended to be a living document.

The Trustees were very supportive of the Policy, noting that it was in line with good practice elsewhere, particularly its focus on enabling responsible use rather than prohibition, the distinction it draws between governed and public AI tools, and its emphasis on human accountability, with AI assisting rather than replacing human judgement. Points raised in the discussion included:

- the need for a clear link to HR policies where misuse of AI might arise;
- the increasing use of AI built into everyday software, such as Microsoft Copilot, which the policy would need to keep under review as the market develops;
- whether the use of AI outside the Charity's own governed environment should be monitored and added to the risk register, which would be considered;
- the value of brief guidance or training for Committee Chairs on getting good output from AI tools, and of building up a library of good-practice prompts over time.

The Board approved the AI Policy.

Articles of Association Update
The Chair updated the Board that the point that had remained outstanding with St John International at the time of the last meeting had now been resolved, and that the Head of Governance would take the agreed position forward. The Board confirmed it was content with this approach.

Committee Terms of Reference and Members
Following the Committee review agreed at the June meeting, each Committee had reviewed and commented on its own terms of reference, with only those of ARGC still to be finally signed off. Subject to that, the Board approved the Committee terms of reference and agreed that this was a helpful step towards recruiting additional Committee members from outside the Trustee body in due course.

Property Transactions
The CEO presented the property transactions paper, which provided an update to Trustees of current activities in relation to the property portfolio and sought consent for a number of property transactions. Income from property sales continues to be held for reinvestment in the Charity's estate. Updates were given on a number of properties, including Seven Sisters, Barry, the return of the Llanfyllin ambulance station following the Welsh Ambulance Service's move to an alternative building, and the release of an unused leased car park near Caldicot Leisure Centre.

The Board approved the property transactions set out in the paper.

Committee Minutes
The minutes of each of the Committee meetings had been shared, and each Committee Chair highlighted any key points not already covered elsewhere on the agenda. The key points noted were:

Fundraising and Engagement Committee: The Committee had discussed the pressure on the fundraising team following the departure of three team members and had requested a recovery plan. It was noted that a positive outcome on a small number of pending grant decisions could materially improve the position.

People Committee: The main focus of the meeting had been a deep dive into the growth of Children and Young People (CYP) activity, which had identified that the number of places available in Badger and Cadet units was not currently a constraint on growth. The Committee had also identified a need to look at how LINKS (university society) groups, which appoint their own leaders, relate to the Charity, and had agreed to review the structure with the universities and current LINKS teams.

Finance and Resources Committee: The Committee had discussed the budgeting approach for the annual pay award, taking into account Real Living Wage uplifts and the need to preserve pay differentials for lower-paid staff. The Committee had also discussed whether to move the Charity's financial year end to allow more lead time for budget planning, which would be considered further.

Audit, Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC): In addition to matters covered elsewhere on the agenda, the Committee had received a draft governance review setting out a three-year direction of travel for closing gaps across all layers of governance, and had discussed progress on IT, including reducing reliance on the Charity's legacy outsourced provider.

Clinical Committee: The Committee had discussed progress on the recruitment of Healthcare Professionals and accredited prior learning routes for NHS clinicians joining the Charity. The clinical team was now fully staffed following the arrival of the new Director of Clinical Operations and Education. It was noted that the Welsh Ambulance Service had withdrawn endotracheal intubation from paramedic scope of practice, in line with the position across the NHS, which would change some elements of clinical training.

Evans Bevan: One further grant application had been approved, bringing the total to two for the year. The Fund was looking to widen its scope to include individual applications (for example, to support a young person's relevant dissertation research) as well as divisional grants, subject to the terms of the trust.

Order Matters
The Chair noted the following points:

- Richie Paskell had started as the new Order Officer, preparations were continuing for the Visitation, and work was progressing on digitising Priory administration, including invitations.
- The Archivist updated the Board on the National Lottery Heritage Fund bid, which was close to submission but was being revised in scope following informal feedback.
- An update had been received from Grand Council and St John International on international fundraising relationships.
- The Chancellor reported on the work of the Hospitaller, including a longer-term project with the National Muslim Council of Wales to register the St John Eye Hospital for Zakat donations. A joint fundraising appeal across the England, Scotland and Wales Priories was also under way to fund eye-screening equipment for Hebron and Gaza, with a target of £100,000.

The Chancellor gave an update on preparations for the 150th anniversary of St John Ambulance in Wales (from 10 July 2027), noting that the St John Ambulance Association was founded in 1877, prompted partly by the needs of Welsh mining communities, some years before the Priory for Wales was formally established in 1918. Plans include the Investiture at Llandaff, a poem commissioned from the National Poet for Wales (to be read in English and Welsh), and a sponsored two-day pilgrimage from Slebech to St Davids next summer. The Trustees welcomed the plans.

The CEO and the Chair of the Clinical Committee also updated the Board on catastrophic bleed kits. NHS Wales has adopted a position that distinguishes "public access trauma kits" (whose locations are known to the Welsh Ambulance Service) from privately provided "bleed kits" (which are not). The Charity's position is that it will not itself provide bleed kits and will instead focus on delivering good first aid training so that members of the public know what to do if a kit is available. It was agreed that it would be worth considering whether a clearer public position statement was needed, given the Charity's past involvement in a similar campaign.

Board Development Session
The Chair opened a discussion about whether the current one-day board meeting format allows enough time for strategic discussion and raised the possibility of extending future meetings or changing the balance between formal board business and strategic thinking time, while being conscious of the travel demands already placed on Trustees.

The Trustees generally supported finding more time for strategic discussion, while noting that long meetings are not always productive and can be difficult for Trustees with other responsibilities. The CEO noted that broader strategic conversations would also help give clearer direction to the Executive between Board meetings. It was agreed that a strategy meeting would take place on Thursday 3 December 2026 and the normal Trustee meeting on 4 December 2026 and that some meetings will be extended in 2027 to allow more time for strategic discussions.

Policies
The Board noted that five policies had been approved by Committees: the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy, Complaints Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Procurement Policy and Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy. The Board thanked those involved in preparing them.

Closing Remarks
The Chair recognised the volunteers involved in the resuscitation of a spectator who had suffered a cardiac arrest at the Newport Festival of Running, who had since made a full recovery, and confirmed that a Prior's Vote of Thanks would be made.

The Chair also thanked Angela Overment, Director of People, Culture and Experience, who had announced that she would be leaving the Charity in November, for her contribution since joining the Charity at a difficult time.

Next meeting
The next scheduled Chapter Board meeting will be on 4 December 2026.

The meeting ended with closing prayers.