

Willingham News

Report for Annual Parish Council Meeting - April 2026

Overcoming financial challenges in 2025

2025 was a turbulent year for *Willingham News*. As reported last year, we lost several regular advertisers at the end of 2024. In early 2025 we began an appeal for donations to keep the magazine solvent and at the same time ran a drive for new advertising. Both were sufficiently successful that WN returned to a stable financial footing by the end of the year, to the extent that we are in a position to request a grant from the Parish Council of less than £1,000 in order to make up the shortfall between income and expenditure. This is an unusually low figure thanks to the generosity of readers who responded to the appeal for funds. We hope not to need to repeat such an appeal in the foreseeable future.

Our drive for new advertising in 2025 led to several new businesses appearing in the magazine for at least part of the year, eventually driving the advertising income up to a similar level as for 2024. We decided to start the advertising renewal process at an earlier stage in 2025 than had been the case in previous years in order to anticipate remedial action if as many advertisers withdrew as in 2024. In the event, we have been able to balance those who have withdrawn with a similar number of new advertisers. We also found another route to boosting income as a result of changing printers.

Healthy outlook for 2026

Our regular printers, Target Print, ceased trading part way through 2025. They managed to broker an interim arrangement up to the end of the year with a printer in Bury St Edmunds, who agreed to print for the same price as Target. In the meantime, we sought quotes from local printers and settled on Print-Out in Histon who were not only able to offer a slightly reduced price for the same quality of product but also agreed to include full-colour print for the inside of the cover, front and back, within that price. This gave us the opportunity to offer our existing advertisers colour advertising at a higher price.

Consequently, we now have an extra colour page of advertising (on the inside back cover) in the magazine plus a further colour page (on the inside front cover) to be used for editorial purposes or for further colour advertising if the demand is there. The advertising income for 2026 is looking healthy, at a similar level to 2024 and 2025 while running costs (the main ones being design and print) have not increased over that period.

Personnel changes

Personnel of the team has changed only slightly. James Watts has taken over as Treasurer in March 2026 from Frances Watts. Frances deserves enormous thanks for her work on the finances over many years and especially for seeing us through choppy waters in 2025 to calmer conditions in 2026. A new editor, Sukey Miller, is joining our ranks this year. It will be good to have a new face with fresh ideas to keep the magazine lively and relevant to all ages.

PC grant application

The team is grateful to the Parish Council who kindly underwrites any annual losses, provided these do not exceed £5,000, and for 2025 we would like to request a grant of £757 from the Parish Council.

(Draft accounts supplied)