

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of volunteer support, operations, and developments at Willingham Youth Club during the 2025–2026 period.

2. Governance Changes

In 2025, Willingham Youth Trust was formally dissolved as it was no longer required. All Trustees resigned, and financial responsibility for the youth club was transferred to Willingham Parish Council (WPC). All remaining funds (including funds raised by WYT at fundraising events) were transferred and ring-fenced specifically for the continued operation and development of the youth club.

3. Volunteer Management

WAG members Prakash Nayee and Paul Knighton volunteered to coordinate and manage a group of volunteers to support youth workers during club sessions.

A dedicated WhatsApp group was established in collaboration with The Connections Bus Project to ensure consistent volunteer attendance. The group currently consists of 13 members, including:

- 9 volunteers
- 4 Connections Bus staff

This system has been effective in ensuring that at least one volunteer is present at each session to assist with:

- Set-up
 - Activity support
 - End-of-session clear-up
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4. Venue and Attendance

With the support of The Connections Bus Project, access was secured to the main hall at Ploughman Hall in Dec 2025. This has enabled all age groups (year 8 to year 10) to attend together on a weekly basis.

This change has been highly successful, with attendance reaching up to 26 young people per session. The larger space allows for better distribution of activities and improved engagement across different age groups.

5. Programme Delivery

The youth workers from The Connections Bus Project, alongside volunteers, have delivered an excellent service. Their contributions include:

- A wide range of engaging activities

- Ongoing support and mentoring
 - Provision of food and drinks, which are particularly popular
 - Session monitoring, evaluation, attendance & participation, documenting session outcomes and impact
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6. Volunteer Capacity

Currently, three volunteers attend regularly when available, with typically one to two volunteers present per session.

Given the high attendance levels, it is recommended that a minimum of two volunteers attend each club night to:

- Provide adequate supervision where and when required
 - Support activity delivery
 - Work effectively alongside youth workers
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7. Equipment and Resources

Much of the club's existing equipment is worn or damaged and requires repair or replacement. Key items include:

- Table tennis table
- Pool table

Additionally, there is a need to invest in new equipment, such as:

- Indoor and outdoor volleyballs, posts, and nets
- Badminton rackets, net and stands
- Goal posts (for indoor and outdoor use)

Investment in updated equipment will enhance the quality and variety of activities available to young people.

8. Feedback from Young People

Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive. Key points include:

- Appreciation for weekly access to the youth club
- Positive engagement with youth workers and volunteers
- Enjoyment of the range of activities provided

Notably, there have been no altercations between different age groups. The larger hall space has allowed young people to spread out comfortably, contributing to a positive and inclusive environment.

There is also strong indication that allowing Year 11 students to return after progressing from Year 10 would be well received and beneficial for continued engagement.

9. Conclusion

The 2025–2026 period has been a successful year of transition and growth for Willingham Youth Club. Strong collaboration between volunteers and The Connections Bus Project has enabled consistent delivery of high-quality youth services.

Key priorities moving forward include:

- Increasing volunteer attendance per session
- Investing in new and replacement equipment
- Exploring opportunities to extend participation to older age groups

The continued support of Willingham Parish Council will be essential in maintaining and developing this valuable community provision.

Submitted by:

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