

Annual Parish Meeting - 22 April 2026

Willingham Action Group (“WAG”)

Year ended 31 March 2026

Annual accounts attached

The following currently attend Committee meetings in a range of different capacities:

Chair – Paul Knighton

Vice-Chair and Social Lead – Sue Berry

Treasurer – Richard Foster

Secretary – Hanna Bowran-Pavey

Enviro/Community Orchard Lead – Jeremy Sweet

Communications Lead – Emma Byrom

Social Activities Liaison – Sarah Firth

Social Media Lead / Photographer – Prakash Nayee

Website and IT Lead – Martin Smith

Sustainability Lead – Alex Mueller

Sustainability Deputy Lead – Louise Eadie

Operations Lead – Howard Berry

Church Liaison – Frances and Jeremy Watts

WAG operates a fluid model with everybody doing what they can, when they can.

We have collated an email list of some 200+ volunteers, some of whom have expressed a positive desire to be “Friends of WAG”, and thus be our first point of contact when help is required. This list has also been used to advertise events across various village amenities and associations. It has now been migrated to the Brevo mail server to help manage GDPR more efficiently.

We are progressively forging stronger links with other groups in the village – the Church and their restoration committee FOWC; the Gardening Club with joint efforts in planting bulbs around the village; Willingham Social Club – there are some useful synergies there; the library’s FOWL; and Fen Gallop/Willingham School Association, together with the many groups that attended our 2025 post-Gallop fete, the latter as a continuation of the Willingham Welcomes event in 2024.

Events April 2025 – March 2026

Fete in collaboration with Fen Gallop/Willingham School Association, July

Bar, BBQ, teas and cakes, singer Becky B.

All clubs, societies and associations relevant to Willingham were invited to attend with their information stands/gazebos. We had mixed weather but were successful from the point of view of integrating exhibitors to foster a more coherent village offering. We made a slight loss financially but, given our reasonably healthy balance sheet (see accounts), we remain willing to accept that kind of risk from time to time.

Willingham Feast Programme, September/October 2025:

WAG organised a Repair Café in Ploughman Hall (provided for free for this event, with thanks to WPC) and Teens' Silent Disco for the Feast, and provided planning and publicity support for a wide range of other events organised by other groups and clubs, including Wine Quiz and Dance @ Social Club*, Art Group and Photography Club Exhibitions, Harvest Festival and Church Lunch, all accompanying the traditional Funfair on the Green

Scarecrows around the village in the runup to the Feast, initiated and managed by Willingham Village Facebook. Many morphed into ghouls around Hallowe'en. Becoming a popular annual event, with special thanks to Katja Gauci.

Christmas – Advent Windows, 2x lights switch-ons, culminating in Carols on the Green on 24th December with mulled wine and mince pies courtesy of WPC (with special thanks to Coun. Simon Clark)

Wassail, 11 January 2026 – Coronation of Sue and Howard Berry as our Wassail King and Queen for the year, awakening of the fruit trees, consumption of mulled cider and sausages.

Enviro and Community Orchard

Grants were received from SCDC Community Chest, FECA and Coop Community Fund for a range of actions which supplemented the budget received from WPC.

Orchard: In addition to general management activities, fruit trees lost due to flooding and drought were replaced. In the woodland area, trees lost were replaced mostly with hornbeams and a few holm oaks. A new picnic bench and a memorial bench to Polly Fawcett supplied by her family were installed. Nest and bat boxes provided by Bruce Robjent were positioned in and around the orchard. Hedge laying instruction was provided for volunteers and the south hedge laid.

Wild Meadow : Scrub was cleared from the southern section of the site and trees planted at the northern and southern ends. Wetland and wild flowers were planted and sown in the disturbed land around the pond. Additional nest and bat boxes were installed. A picnic bench has been ordered for placing this summer.

Other areas: Invasive brambles and blackthorns were cleared from **Barton Field**. Spring bulbs were planted on the **Green** and in **Wilford Furlong** sheltered housing area with the assistance of the Gardening Club and village volunteers, providing fine displays this spring. A garden seat has been ordered for Wilford Furlong. Hedging plants were placed in the gaps in the hedge between the **Ploughman Hall and QE2 field** and this hedge will be laid in the autumn.

Other activities and thanks

Our **Facebook** page continues to attract interest with the number of followers still rising. Most recent figures show 542 followers. Over the last 28 days we have had 19194 views and 760 engagements (comments, likes and shares). Since December 2025 we have had ~40 new likes.

The new **website** is up and running: www.willinghamlife.co.uk with dedicated email, bin nights, road closure alerts, events calendar, links to other websites and community group content, a repository Willingham News section and much more.

Some WAG members also volunteer to help with the **Youth Club** organization – more volunteers are being sought from the wider community.

We are closely engaged with **Friends of Willingham Church** and **Friends of Willingham Library**, providing assistance in their activities.

Thanks to **Women's Institute** and First Responder Tom Miller as our regular First Aider for their support at various events.

Thanks also to WPC and particularly Mandy, Annika and Amy at the Clerk's office for their regular assistance and support, Councillors Linda King, Valerie Mckee, Jim Watson and Steve Moore, and to Chair Derek Law.

Plans for 2026/27

Social:

- Fete 5 July following Fen Gallop
- An autumn feast – series of events tbc:
 - Another edition of "Scarecrows" / Teen silent disco 9 Oct Ploughman Hall / Adult silent disco Willingham Social Club 10 Oct / Repair Café (tbc)
 - Other events still being planned
- Advent windows / lights switch-on on the Green (we hope to make more of this) / Carols on the Green.
- Possible music event on 1 Dec to the advent session (Open Circle Singers and Drummers have been approached)
- Wassail event in January

There are plans underway to introduce a Village Larder in the form of a regularly monitored box of non-perishable foods in the church porch. At the moment we are still at the fact-finding and consultation stage.

Enviro:

Hedge laying of the hedge behind the Ploughman hall is planned for this autumn. We are planning to plant trees around the QE2 field. In addition we are developing plans for improving Barton field with more trees and shrubs and placing of nest and bat boxes as well as bee hotels. An additional grant will be applied for to fund this work.