

## **Agenda Item 21 – Willand Magazine**

Willand Magazine is Independently produced by volunteers not by the Parish Council. It has an editorial team and a distribution team with separate email (gmail) addresses that sit outside the Parish domain. It is produced once every 2 months – 6 editions per annum.

The Willand Magazine Editor has had to step down immediately due to ill health. As the advertising volunteer stepped down some time ago that role was also being covered by the editor and there is now no editorial team. The April/May edition of the magazine was produced last minute with the information available by a previous editor, as a one off, and Cllrs Warren and Hutter agreed to edit and produce the June/July edition as a one off as this edition is printed at the end of May and all information needs to be provided to the printer by mid-month. The Clerk and the previous editor have been providing support for this edition.

The Parish Council already provides support limited to the financial side – invoicing advertisers and paying printing and postage invoices. It also subsidises the magazine - this contribution equates to around one third of net costs.

A request for volunteers for the editorial team has gone out via the magazine itself, posts on Facebook and on the Parish Council website. So far, no-one has come forward. Unless someone comes forward imminently the magazine may cease production altogether. Some possible options are presented below:

1. The magazine ceases production. In which case a proportionate refund will be due to around 70 advertisers who pay for a year's advertising at different stages during the year, so any refund due will depend on when they paid and how many of their year's adverts have already been published. There will be no direct financial costs to the Parish Council as there will be no further printing or postage invoices to be paid. It will however involve the Clerk's time in calculating refunds due, contacting the advertisers and paying refunds as a one off exercise (some Councillor time will be required to authorise payments). Ultimately, this will reduce expenditure for the Parish Council.
2. The Parish Council takes production of the magazine in house and either:
  - a) One or more of the Councillors volunteer to edit the magazine going forward including chasing contributors, setting out copy and proof-reading, liaising with the printer and volunteer distribution team and dealing with the advertising requests, cancellations, changes and overdue payments and sourcing further advertisers where there are cancellations.
  - b) Employ someone to edit the magazine. A new part time role of magazine editor could be created and someone employed to carry out the role. Whilst the Clerk could be asked to edit the magazine, she does not wish to increase her hours and increasing hours represents a change of contract which needs to be mutually agreed.
3. The production of the magazine is contracted out.

### **POTENTIAL COSTS:**

- I. It is difficult to assess the costs. The magazine is produced bi-monthly, so the work is cyclical but enquiries and changes are received on an ongoing basis, particularly around advertising. The Clerk has spoken to a previous editor and it is difficult to quantify the hours required but after discussion it is considered that 94 hours a year is reasonable, more hours will be required to be worked during the months when the

magazine is produced but time also needs to be allowed for to deal with enquiries and changes to content and adverts at other times.

- II. Employing someone for 94 hours a year will cost approx. £1,270 per annum if paid at £13.50 per hour. Whilst the current Clerk does not wish to increase her hours the cost to add equivalent hours to the Clerk role would be around £2,000 per annum to include employers NI and possible pension contribution. This has been used to provide a maximum likely cost to employing someone.
- III. There may also be advertising costs for recruiting to a new role.
- IV. The costs for contracting out production of the magazine would have to be explored in more detail if this option is preferred but would likely exceed potential costs quoted in II above.

Any additional costs cannot be funded by additional advertising income unless the Parish Council becomes VAT registered as advertising is classed as a Vatable business expense, this would increase the cost to advertisers by 20% and create additional work for the Parish Council to file quarterly VAT returns. Different VAT rules apply for Parish Councils as they can claim back VAT paid on non-business expenses i.e. relating to statutory functions such as cemeteries and allotments or non-business activities such as providing community facilities/services i.e. play areas, parks, Christmas lights etc... which are all generally free to the public. Strictly speaking the threshold to register for VAT is nil for Parish Councils, but the HMRC make an allowance of £5,000 business income, above that a Parish Council must register for VAT.

***EMAIL ACCESS:***

Due to some difficulties in accessing the gmail account, if the magazine is to continue it is recommended that a new shared email address is set up on the Parish Council domain, this means that access can always be maintained via the Council's Microsoft account admin – the Clerk, Councillor Scott and the IT/Website Support Provider (WJP – Active Councils) are all admins.

**Debbie Bird, Clerk to Willand Parish Council  
May 2026**