

WINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Chairman's Annual Report
April 2025 – March 2026

FINANCE, CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND AUDIT

The audited accounts for 2024/25 balanced and the Independent Internal Auditor reported that the Financial Statements and Accounting Records for the year ending March 2025 showed "...a fair, reasonable and true representation. Wingham Parish Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources".

The unaudited 2025/26 end of year accounts have been reviewed and accepted by Councillors and will be independently audited in the coming months.

I'd like to thank our Parish Clerk, Kerry Coltham, for her bookkeeping and the councillors involved in the internal audit checks for their work.

No councillors took the Basic Allowance during 2025/26.

The 2026/27 Public Budget Meeting was incorporated with the Parish Council meeting in November 2025.

After due consideration, the 2026/27 precept was set at £59620.65, a slight increase on last year, but a decrease of £3.73 per Band D equivalent property as the tax base has increased.

The following purchases were made during the year:

- Office/Staff costs (including: clerk salary; pension; tax; NI; expenses; BT B/Band & line rental; WFH allowance; stationery; Charles Arnold Baker on Local Council Administration 14th edition; IT support (HIBITS): Office 365, back up, website maintenance)
- 10m 3-socket extension for the Christmas Tree lights
- A Welcome to Wingham poster winning entry enlargement for the Commemorative planter
- EcoGreen dog waste bags for the three dispensers
- Rental of enhanced access portable toilet at the Recreation Ground (removed 5.2.26)
- Insurance, including cyber risk insurance
- Newsletter inserts for the Wingham Community News printed by Dover District Council
- Commemorative tree plaque replacement, Elgars Field
- Membership renewals – KALC/NALC; SLCC; CPRE
- Community Carol expenses (covered by donation): Megaphone, sweets, band, refreshments
- Speed Indicator Device batteries and chargers
- Fees (including: Hire of Village Hall for meetings; External Audit; Independent Internal Audit; ICO Registration; Bank; CHAPS)
- 5-bar wooden gate for Elgars Field (to be fitted soon)
- Maintenance of the public toilets in St Mary's Meadow and emptying of the High Street recycling bin paid to Dover District Council
- Annual Parish Assembly costs, including Community Awards and refreshments
- CCTV monthly line rental plus annual maintenance
- Water for the allotments

EQUIPMENT REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTIONS

Ground maintenance was carried out by Harmer & Sons on a three-year contract until 1 April 2027.

Hedge maintenance at Elgars Field and tree removal at the Recreation Ground was carried out by Leaf Tree Services. The annual Health & Safety inspection of village trees was carried out by Invicta Arboriculture in July 2025. Tree guards and posts were erected by volunteers at the Recreation Ground. Red Lion Corner Garden, Wingham Remembrance Garden and the Perennial Garden at the High Street crossing were maintained by volunteers with new plants donated and purchased. Verge edges and pavements were also maintained by volunteers.

Extra cleans of the portable WC were required at the Recreation Ground following vandalism.

The High Street defibrillator was checked monthly.

Playdale Playgrounds carried out the annual inspection of the Play Area, MUGA and Outdoor Gym and subsequent maintenance of the gates, aerial runway and other fixtures and fittings.

Both Speed Indicator Devices were serviced by Westcotec.

The Paddock bench next to the bus shelter was repaired.

Grants, Donations and Projects

Community Grants were awarded to the Village Hall, St Mary's PCC for the burial ground, Scouts, the Recreation Ground, the Pre-school and Wingham Community News. Small capital grants were awarded to the Village Hall, Scouts, Football club, Pre-school and St Mary's PCC.

A donation was made to the RBL Poppy Appeal for the Remembrance Wreath.

KCC Highways were paid for a Wingham Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) scheme on Adisham Road at the junction of Seaths Corner, yet to be installed.

A licence and asset transfer from DDC to the Parish Council for the Community Shed was undertaken. The precept for 2026/27 once again includes funds for village organisation grants, plus a contribution to the WPC new office fund, WC maintenance at St Mary’s Meadow and amounts budgeted for general maintenance.

TRAINING, CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Cllrs Duke and Parry attended ‘Nuts and Bolts’ KALC training for new councillors. Cllr Duke also attended the KALC Chairmans Conference and NALC ‘Local Democracy in Action’ seminar. Cllr Parry attended a Cyber Resilience seminar. The clerk attended the KALC Clerks Conference.

Meetings attended by councillors and the Clerk include the A257 Traffic Group, the Village Hall Committee, the Recreation Ground Committee, DDC Town & Parish Council meetings and KCC Highways meetings.

VILLAGE ACTIVITIES

The Remembrance Service took place on 9th November and Community Carols on 18 December 2025. A week-long Litter Campaign with support from DDC took place in September 2025, culminating in a village litter pick on 13th September and a further community litter pick took place on 14th March 2026.

CLERK, PARISH COUNCILLOR AND VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Cllr Sharon Addis	Chairman of the Parish Council
Cllr Enid Brice	Internal Audit, Planning Committee, GDPR, Wingham Village Hall rep
Cllr Dan Collins	Planning Committee Chairman, Training coordinator
Kerry Coltham	Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, Speedwatch Coordinator, A257 Traffic Group Administrator
Cllr Andy Cook	Allotment checks, SID Maintenance and moving
Cllr Jeff Duke	SID data analysis, Internal audit
Cllr Russell Graydon	Vice Chairman, Property Maintenance, AED Maintenance, Highways & A257 Traffic Group rep, Planning Committee
Cllr Bob Harvey	Flood Warden, Internal Finance, Planning Committee, Play Area checks
Cllr Mark Parry	Policy & Communications support
Cllr Martin Smith	Environment/sustainability, Recreation Ground rep, Tree Warden
Bryan Curtis (resident)	A257 Traffic Group representative, Flag Warden
Wingham Foot Path Group	Footpath Warden

THANK YOUS

The Parish Council has limited resources both financially and in terms of manpower. We would not be able to achieve as much as we do without the support and work of Wingham residents and businesses.

Working together means we have a vibrant community. Once again, I am indebted to all those who support our activities. I set out below those who I know have contributed to this and apologise in advance if I have forgotten anyone who should be thanked.

- My fellow Parish Councillors, District & County Councillors & especially our Parish Clerk, Kerry Coltham
- Our Independent Internal Auditor, Jess Gibbins, of Young’s Accountancy
- All village volunteers and residents who have attended meetings, responded to consultations, taken part in village events, tidied our village, and carried out regular Speedwatch sessions
- Gareth Winters, Wingham Community News Editor, and distributors of the Wingham Community News
- Village Committees, Groups and Organisations
- Village wardens: Footpath Warden – Wingham Footpath Group; Flagpole Warden – Bryan Curtis; and Tree Warden – Martin Smith
- Businesses: Village Christmas Tree: Wingham Country Market, Wingham Fire Brigade and the Dental Surgery; Elgars Estate Agents for photocopying; The Anchor for supporting the Litter Campaign litter pick; The Dog at Wingham for supporting the “Welcome to Wingham” poster competition and community litter pick; Wilmshurst Bakery for supporting the community litter pick
- A257 Traffic Group members, including local MPs, District, County and Parish Councillors, who have participated in the group aimed at improving safety on the A257 in the village and surrounding areas
- Our county association, Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), for its support and advice
- PC Jon Bowler, Neighbourhood Beat Officer, Dover Community Safety Unit
- Wingham Primary School & children for participating in the poster competition

This concludes my Annual Report