COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER
CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY 2025 - DECEMBER 2025

Trustees: Stephen Prior (Chair); Alice Severs; Linda Johnson; Leita Prior (Managing Editor/Administrator)

Charitable Objects:
"To relieve blind and partially sighted people, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, in County Durham and the surrounding areas by the provision of audio resources in particular, but not exclusively, a talking newspaper."

A FREE RESOURCE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE in COUNTY DURHAM

January 2025 saw CDTN opening its 11th year of continuous operation; with no breaks taken even during the two years of COVID measures. CDTN was set up to maintain an existing service that was about to close down along with its former charity provider, and we wanted to keep supporting those service users. Our charity has been run entirely by a small group of unpaid volunteers throughout.

Over the first 8 months of 2025 CDTN continued to provide its usual free audio package of local news and feature content for County Durham people who live with sight loss. The 80 minutes recordings were split into two halves: a 40 minute news section with content sourced mostly from The Northern Echo, and a 40-minute 'magazine' section with content sourced mostly from local and regional publications, and with articles chosen generally to do with local history or nostalgia. The Talking Newspaper has also always included VIP-specific notices and our own interviews or locally relevant packages such as coverage of the annual Durham Miners' Gala.

The recordings – either CDs or USBs— were delivered, as usual, by Royal Mail free of charge under the 'Articles for the Blind' concession. We continued to send out recordings to around 90 listeners every fortnight; with the average age of the listener body being around 85 years.

THE DECISION TO CEASE OPERATIONS

In August of 2025 the trustees collectively took the decision to suspend operations as our Managing Editor, Leita Prior, was unable to continue with the substantial workload in editing and producing the TN.

Subsequent to this, in 2026, we decided to cease operations permanently; we had been unable to find a similarly qualified, skilled and motivated volunteer editor (Leita has a Masters in Bi-Media Journalism and regularly worked 25+ unpaid hours/week on the TN) and we believed the situation to be unsustainable. Leita then sought, where possible, to liaise with neighbouring Talking Newspapers to ensure continued coverage for our listeners.

The final details of the wrapping up of the charity will be covered in the 2026 report when submitted.

THE FINANCES

(See Receipts & Payments Accounts in Appendix below)

Our service has been completely free to our users, and we have never asked them for donations. Recordings are carried in reusable heavy duty 'wallets' by Royal Mail under the free-of-charge 'Articles for the Blind' concession; listeners also return their postal wallets free of charge.

Our operating costs have included office rent, blank CDs, replacement postal wallets, insurance, newspapers, USB sticks, USB players, office supplies, and TNF subscriptions. Only two of our volunteers claimed expenses this year.

We receive no grant aid. Our costs are met by (a) the remains of a legacy from former charity VIPS in County Durham which closed in 2014; (b) public donations.

CDTN is a member of the Talking Newspaper Federation (TNF) through whom we enjoy a discounted insurance package along with advice and ideas.

Trustees declare they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:



……

Stephen Prior (Chair of Trustees)

20th October 2026

APPENDIX: RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT
(January 2025 – December 2025)
COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER
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NB All figures to nearest £.

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Last year £
Receipts					
Donations	**2,150**	**-**		**2,150**	**250**
Legacies	**-**	**-**		**-**	**-**
Recording Income	**1,354**	**-**		**1,354**	**1,719**
				-	
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	**3,504**	**-**		**3,504**	**1,969**
Payments					
Office (includes rent, insurance, communications)	**3,125**	**-**		**3,125**	**3,886**
Recording (includes distributed consumables)		**-**		**-**	**577**
Recording and reproduction equipment	**-**	**-**		**-**	**85**
Advertising	**-**	**-**		**-**	**-**
Volunteer expenses	**1,890**	**-**		**1,890**	**1,720**
Newspapers	**-**	**-**		**-**	**389**
				-	
Sub total	**5,015**	**-**		**5,015**	**6,657**
Net of receipts/(payments)	**- 1,511**	**-**	**-**	**- 1,511**	**- 4,689**
A5 Transfers between funds	**-**		**-**	**-**	**-**
A6 Cash funds last year end	**2,219**	**-**	**-**	**2,219**	**-**
Cash funds this year end	**708**	**-**	**-**	**708**	**2,219**

Cash funds			Endowment £	Total £	
CAF Bank Account	**708**	**-**	**-**	**708**	**2,219**
		-	**-**	**-**	
Total cash funds	**708**		**-**	**708**	**2,219**

Assets retained for the charity's own use			Endowment £	Total £	
4 x PCs	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Recording equipment	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Audio reproduction equipment	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Furniture	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
			-	**-**	
			-	**-**	
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**



Signed by Chair of Trustees: …… Stephen Prior, 20th October 2026