



# Pride Of Place

## *Summary Report by East Cambridgeshire District Council, May 2025*

The Pride of Place grant scheme by East Cambridgeshire District Council was a community-focused initiative designed to enhance and celebrate the local environment. Grants aimed to support projects that fostered community pride, improved public spaces and help preserved the natural environment of the district. By providing financial assistance to local groups and organisations, the grant encouraged collaborative efforts to create more vibrant, attractive and nature friendly public places.

The initiative specifically targeted a range of projects, such as beautification efforts, which included planting flowers in public gardens, restoring ponds, upgrading parks and playgrounds, habitat creation and wider educational opportunities.

The grants sought to empower local communities by involving them directly in the decision-making process, encouraging them to propose projects that they believed would best serve their local area. Through this collaborative approach, the Pride of Place grant not only provided the necessary financial resources but also inspired a sense of ownership and pride among the residents, enabling them to take an active role in shaping and improving their surroundings and hopefully long term care of improved sites.

### Summary of Project Implementation

The Pride Of Place Grant composed of forty-two projects and involved sixteen parish councils, one town council and one district council, five churches, one charity and two primary schools. The project categories are summarised below.

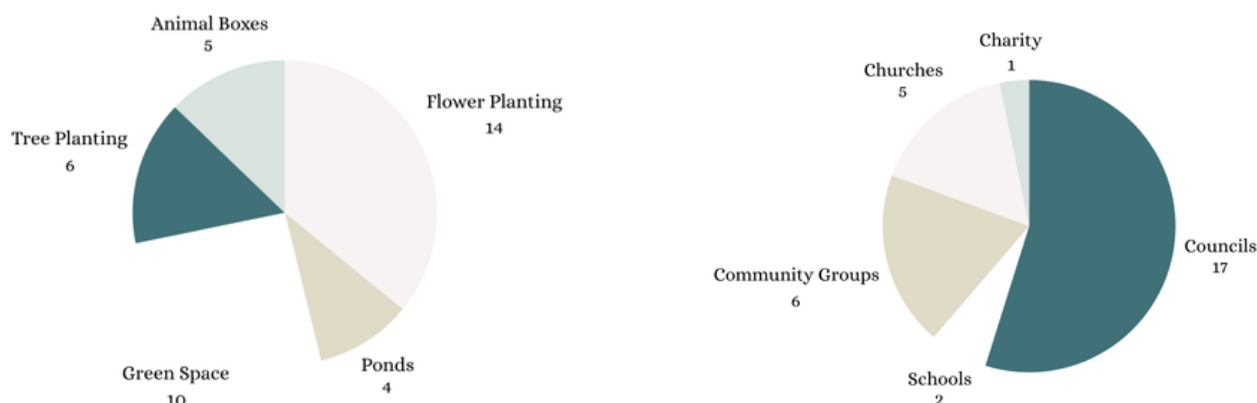


Figure 1 pie charts displays the types of projects created using the Pride Of Place Grant and the types of organisations

The selection process for qualifying projects under the Pride of Place Grant was structured to ensure that all funded initiatives were both community-driven and environmentally responsible. The primary aim was to support projects that would deliver tangible benefits to local ecosystems while fostering community involvement and long-term stewardship.

### Assessment Criteria

All project proposals were evaluated against a set of key criteria to determine their eligibility and alignment with the grant's objectives. These criteria included:

- Demonstrable environmental benefits (e.g. enhancing biodiversity, supporting climate resilience, promoting sustainability)
- Evidence of community involvement in the planning and/or delivery of the project
- Potential for long-term impact or a lasting legacy within the local area

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- Feasibility of implementation within the allocated budget and designated timeframe

### Applicant Support and Proposal Development

Throughout the process, applicants were offered structured guidance to help shape their proposals. In instances where initial project ideas required refinement, support was provided to ensure alignment with the grant's environmental and community engagement goals.

#### Case Study 1: Burrough Green Parish Council Pond Restoration

*Burrough Green Parish Council received £14,700 for the local pond's rehabilitation, enhancing the area's beauty and benefiting the community. The village pond over the years lacked investment and needed dredging and tidying up to enable wildlife to flourish and the parishioners, the primary school and the wider community to enjoy the benefits of the pond, including as a source of education for the local primary school. The project also included a bench for public use that overlooks the pond and planting grass around the pond. Snails have been integrated to eat the algae, together with the addition of oxygenating plants. The revitalising of the pond will boost biodiversity, creating a haven for wildlife.*

*The local housing association will help maintain the pond. The grant has improved the area and now inspires greater appreciation of nature. This pond is situated by the local cricket club (Bradley Road, Newmarket CB8 9NG).*

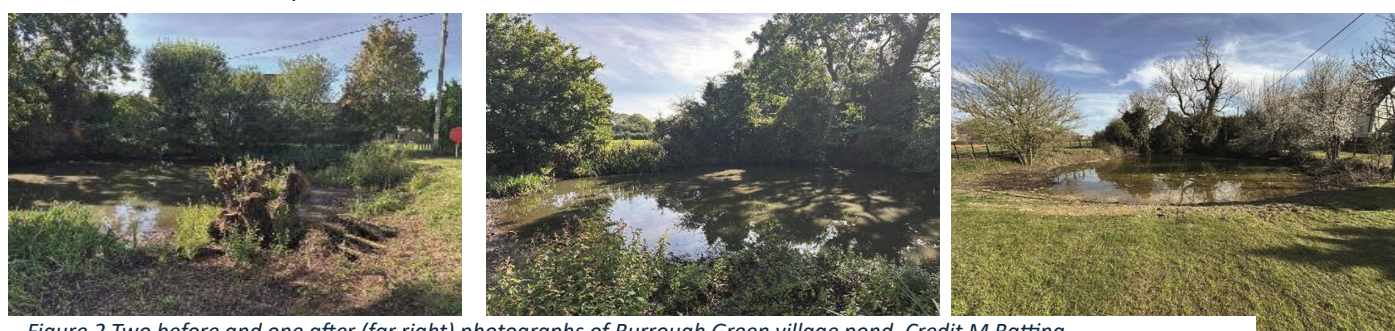


Figure 2 Two before and one after (far right) photographs of Burrough Green village pond. Credit M Batting

### Promotion and Delivery Setup

The promotion of the Pride of Place Grant opportunity was conducted through a variety of channels, including the District Council's own website, press releases and through direct contact with parish councils who then promoted the grant to their community.

In addition, prospective applicants were supported through written guidance materials about what kind of projects would be suitable. Submissions were assessed with a focus on identifying projects that offered the greatest potential for community engagement, environmental value, and practical deliverability. Successful projects demonstrated strong local relevance and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to the district's environmental priorities. With the District Council's support, very few projects were rejected outright either because of being out of scope or could not demonstrate reasonable likelihood of being deliverable.

This structured and supportive approach ensured that funded projects were inclusive, impactful, and reflective of the values underpinning the Pride of Place initiative.

#### Case Study 2: St Margaret's Church, Chippenham

*St Margaret's Church in Chippenham was awarded £2,585 to support its commitment to environmental stewardship and community engagement.*

*The grant was utilised for three parts of a wider project that promises to transform the church grounds into a haven of biodiversity and beauty. The first part of the project focused on the planting of wildflowers. These vibrant blooms not only added a splash of colour to the landscape but also attract a variety of pollinators, including bees and butterflies, contributing to local biodiversity.*

*In addition to wildflowers, the church created a perennials path. This trail was lined with hardy perennial plants, providing year round interest and a peaceful place for reflection and relaxation. The path will offer visitors a chance to connect with nature, enjoy the changing seasons, and experience the tranquillity of the church grounds. The grant also supported the repair of posts around the church property. These posts are essential for maintaining the integrity of the church's boundary and ensuring the safety and*

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*security of the grounds. By restoring them, St Margaret's Church is committing to preserving its historical and cultural heritage for future generations.*



*Figure 3 Images of the renovations made at St Margaret's Church. Credit P Mangell*

*This initiative was more than just a landscaping project; it was an opportunity to engage the local community. This involvement fostered a sense of ownership and pride in the community, strengthening bonds and encouraging environmental awareness. The transformation of its grounds not only enhanced the aesthetic appeal of the area but also create a welcoming space for all to enjoy. The church and wider community look forward to the planting to fully bloom over the coming years.*

### Environmental Benefits

The environmental benefits of the Pride of Place scheme are significant and multifaceted, directly contributing to habitat restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and community engagement across the district. By supporting a wide range of community-led initiatives, the scheme helped to re-establish native ecosystems and promote sustainable land management practices.

One of the most direct benefits was the creation and restoration of key habitats. Projects funded through the scheme included the development of wildflower meadows, planting of native hedgerows and trees, and restoration of ponds—each of which plays a vital role in supporting local wildlife. Wildflower meadows provided food sources for pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, and moths, whose populations are in decline across the UK. New and restored hedgerows created ecological corridors for birds and small mammals, improving their ability to move and breed safely across the landscape. Tree planting contributed not only to biodiversity, offering food and shelter to countless species, but also helped improve air quality and sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

The installation of bird and bat boxes offered immediate benefits to local fauna by increasing the availability of roosting and nesting sites, especially in areas where natural tree cavities are scarce. Rewilding and pond restoration projects helped rebalance aquatic and semi-aquatic ecosystems, improving water quality, supporting amphibians such as newts, and encouraging a greater diversity of invertebrates. These interventions contributed to more resilient ecosystems that are better able to withstand environmental stressors, such as drought, flooding, and habitat fragmentation.

In addition to habitat improvement, many projects reduced the carbon footprint of community green spaces. Tree and hedge planting act as carbon sinks, while reduced reliance on mowing and chemical treatments through rewilding efforts decreased emissions and supported healthier soil biology. Projects that introduced edible planting areas, such as vegetable gardens, also encouraged local food production and reduced dependence on imported produce, aligning with broader sustainability goals.

Beyond individual habitats, the cumulative effect of these projects enhanced ecological connectivity across East Cambridgeshire. By linking fragmented green spaces and creating safe passages for wildlife, the scheme supported regional biodiversity at a landscape scale. This connectivity is essential for species adaptation in response to climate change and other environmental pressures.

Overall, the Pride of Place scheme significantly improved the ecological integrity of public spaces, enriched biodiversity and contributed to climate action at a local level. These environmental benefits will continue to grow as the funded projects mature, delivering lasting value for both nature and the communities that care for it.



### Case Study 3: Isleham Parish Council's Wildlife Houses

Isleham Parish Council was awarded £984 to fund the installation of 24 wildlife houses aimed at supporting local biodiversity. These included a range of bird boxes, bat houses, insect hotels and hedgehog boxes, many of which were designed to support species that are protected and/or endangered. For example, hedgehogs, a species in notable decline across East Cambridgeshire due to habitat fragmentation, were a key focus of the project.

The project also aimed to raise awareness of local ecological issues and foster a greater connection between residents—particularly young people—and their natural environment. Most of the wildlife houses were installed in the old cemetery, where small-scale rewilding activities were also being carried out. Additional houses were placed around the new village pond and within a picnic area next to the village hall, where the council began establishing a small wildflower plot to further support pollinators and other wildlife.



Figure 4: Series of photographs showing community involvement in the Isleham Pride of Place project. Credit R Nouch

Children from the local school played an active role in the project. They assisted in the placement of the wildlife houses, wrote an article for the Isleham Parish Magazine, and created informational signs to accompany the insect and bird boxes. The children also continued to support the project by participating in wildlife monitoring and recording at the designated sites, contributing to ongoing community-led conservation efforts.

This initiative demonstrated how local action, education and environmental stewardship can come together to make a meaningful impact on both people and nature.

### Community Benefits

The community benefits of the Pride of Place scheme were also wide-ranging, fostering stronger connections between residents and their local environment while enhancing health, education and social inclusion. By funding projects that were community-led and designed to reflect local needs, the scheme empowered people to take an active role in shaping and caring for the spaces around them.

One of the most immediate benefits was the improvement in access to high-quality green spaces. Enhancements such as new pathways, benches, and signage made parks, nature areas, and village greens more accessible and welcoming, particularly for children, older residents and people with limited mobility. These improvements encouraged regular use of outdoor spaces, promoting physical activity, relaxation and mental well-being.

The scheme also strengthened community cohesion by encouraging collaborative projects that brought together residents, schools, parish councils and local organisations. The process of planning, applying for and delivering the projects helped build local networks and foster a shared sense of ownership and pride in place. Many projects included opportunities for volunteering, hands on learning and intergenerational engagement, creating valuable opportunities for skill-sharing and community-building.

Educational benefits were also notable. Several funded projects incorporated environmental education elements, such as a vegetable garden at Sutton Primary School and school engagement activities. These helped raise awareness of local biodiversity, conservation practices and sustainability issues. Involving children in planting and habitat creation not only supported classroom learning but instilled a sense of environmental responsibility from an early age.

Importantly, the scheme helped foster long-term community stewardship because applicants were required to show how projects would be maintained and continue delivering benefits, the funded initiatives laying the groundwork for ongoing local involvement. This has helped to create a culture of care, where communities are actively invested in protecting and enhancing their local environment for future generations.

Overall, the Pride of Place scheme delivered meaningful community benefits by improving access to nature, encouraging collaboration, supporting well-being, and embedding environmental awareness. It demonstrated how small-scale, place-based investment can have a transformative and lasting impact on the quality of life in local communities.

### **Case Study 4: Woodditton Community Group**

*The Woodditton Community Group was initially awarded £950 to support a local bulb planting initiative aimed at enhancing biodiversity and improving the visual appeal of the area. As part of the project, a community bulb planting day was organised, involving local volunteers in hands-on conservation and beautification efforts, as illustrated in Figure 6.*



*Figure 5: Photographs from the volunteer bulb planting day, Woodditton. Credit K Brown*

*During the first phase of the project, volunteers successfully planted a significant number of bulbs; however, the total area covered was approximately half of the original target. Despite this, the activity generated strong community engagement and made a visible contribution to pollinator support and the enhancement of public spaces.*

*In recognition of the project's success and its positive environmental and aesthetic impact, Woodditton Community Group was awarded an additional £1,000 Pride of Place Grant to support the continuation of the bulb planting initiative. The extended funding allowed the group to expand planting efforts across the remaining target area, further promoting pollinator friendly habitats and strengthening community pride through local environmental stewardship.*

*This project exemplified how small-scale, volunteer-led initiatives could contribute meaningfully to local environmental goals and community cohesion.*

### **Case Study 5: Coveney Parish Council**

*Coveney Parish Council has successfully rejuvenated the village pond, a cherished community landmark, with the support of a £7,500 grant from the Pride Of Place initiative. This completed project has improved accessibility and safety, with the construction of a new boardwalk and ramps for individuals with reduced mobility, which has encouraged greater community engagement with the pond's natural beauty.*

*A new seating area has been created, promoting community interaction, offering a peaceful location for gatherings and relaxation. The initiative also focused on ecological enhancement, including the planting of spring bulbs that now attract pollinators and boost biodiversity. The replanted eroded bank was stabilised, preventing erosion and supporting the pond's ecological health.*





Figure 6: Photos of the pond restoration project at Coveney. Credit N Laredo

*The progress included volunteer-led vegetation management in October 2024, the installation of a wheelchair-accessible path in January 2025 and the planting of native plants in February 2025. Mechanical dredging in February 2025 successfully removed excess reeds and silt while ensuring the safety of local wildlife.*

*However, this project was not without its issues as work stalled due to the need for a newt evaluation for the pond as there was thought to be great crested newt populations which are protected under European law. Qualified ecologists ensured all work was done with newt management plans in place.*

*By March 2025, the disturbed pond bank was reseeded, perennials were planted on the slope, and a wheelchair-accessible picnic bench was installed. This initiative has not only improved the physical landscape but also fostered community spirit, encouraging pride and stewardship among residents. The project has become a lasting source of joy and pride for the village.*

### Legacy

The legacy of the Pride of Place grant scheme lies in its lasting environmental and social impact across East Cambridgeshire. By funding projects that were not only designed to enhance natural spaces but also to be sustained by the communities themselves, the scheme fostered a culture of long-term guardianship and environmental responsibility. The physical improvements—such as new habitats, increased biodiversity, and accessible green infrastructure—will continue to benefit both wildlife and residents for years to come.

Just as importantly, the relationships, skills and sense of ownership built through these projects have empowered local groups to continue caring for their environment beyond the scope of the grant. In doing so, the scheme has left behind more than just improved landscapes; it has helped to create resilient, engaged communities with the knowledge and motivation to protect and enhance their surroundings well into the future.

### Further Information

For further information on the Pride of Place scheme, and wider nature recovery activities of East Cambridgeshire District Council, please visit our website [www.eastcambs.gov.uk](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk) or email [climatechange@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@eastcambs.gov.uk).