

Case Study: Cottenham Community Nature Sites



Nature recovery work in Cottenham has been very successful in bringing together numerous partner organisations, funding opportunities and resident volunteer groups to achieve real gains for nature across the parish.

Much of this has been coordinated through local community group Sustainable Cottenham. Their nature recovery branch, which was headed by Cllr John Loveluck, leads the way on nature-related projects. By working with Cottenham Parish Council, and other partner organisations such as the New Life on the Old West (NLOW) project, the Scouts, and Cambridgeshire ACRE, an array of projects within the parish have been achieved across several sites.

- Crowlands Moat: This mediaeval moated site hosts great crested newts, as well as mature trees and wild grass areas. A recent reed clearing project with volunteers from Sustainable Cottenham and the Scouts, has increased the open water habitat favoured by great crested newts for breeding.
- Creation of a pond complex on the Old Rec with varying depths and gradients to suit different species of birds, fish, amphibians, and invertebrates. The land is parish-owned; ponds were Designed by Natural England and funded by NLOW, with local volunteers undertaking hedge planting around the ponds to provide a barrier and further habitat improvement.
- The parish owned 'WARG field' hosts wildflowers, grasses, and bee orchids, as well as 3 new apple trees and a newly created pond, funded by the National Lottery. The WARG field has benefited from a change to the Parish Council's mowing policy which leaves areas uncut for these plants to flourish.
- Fen Reeves wood is formerly agricultural land, planted in 1993 and now in the ownership of the parish council. It is being managed for nature and improved access, with bulb planting, coppicing, path clearance and bird and bat box installation recently undertaken by Sustainable Cottenham volunteers, with plants and tools provided by NLOW project.