

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON
TUESDAY 21st JULY 2026 AT 7.30PM AT MILLFIELDS PAVILION**

PRESENT:

Cllr A Whyte (Chairman)
Cllr G Fisher
Cllr N Dyne
Cllr S Martin
Cllr C Pearce
Cllr M Wetherfield

IN ATTENDANCE:

Miss J Bowd (Parish Clerk)
There were no members of the public present.

1. To elect a Chairman.
Resolved: That Cllr Whyte be elected as Chairman (Prop Cllr Pearce, 2nd Cllr Dyne) All in favour.
2. To receive Apologies for Absence.
Cllr C Norman- Personal
Cllr G Norman-Personal
3. To elect Vice-chairman.
Resolved: That Cllr G Fisher be elected as Vice Chairman (Prop Cllr Pearce, 2nd Cllr Whyte) All in favour.
4. To Receive Declarations of Interest relating to items on the agenda.
None.
5. To approve Minutes of Meeting held on 17th March 2026.
Resolved: That the minutes of 17th March 2026 be signed as a true and correct record. (Prop Cllr Whyte, 2nd Cllr Dyne) 2 in favour. 4 Abstentions.
6. Public Forum.
To allow any member of the public to address the council on matters on the agenda.
Time Allowed 10 minutes.
None.
7. Garden plots:
 - 7.1 To receive an update on general matters relating to the garden plots and agree actions.
Report provided.
A lengthy discussion took place about the matters raised.
Cllr Martin spoke stating there were many trees around the plots that need cutting back.
Cllr Dyne felt that matters should be self-policing.
Cllr Fisher wondered if the rules on trees needed amending as trees take so much water from the plots.
A discussion took place as to whether an allotment association should be set up.
Cllr Martin spoke to say that the fence along the Eastern boundary is trodden down and she does not see how it can be replaced.
Cllr Fisher noted that the woodland was being used for disposal of weeds and in doing so probably damaged the fencing. This practice is to stop. Regulations state that plots should be kept clear and composting carried out. Clerk outlined the current way concerns over plot maintenance are dealt with.
Cllr Whyte reported a verbal complaint that fruit had been "stolen" from the plots.
Clerk asked for a decision on the fallow plot. Members felt that resting the plot was acceptable but that it should be covered with a membrane to prevent the spread of weeds to other plots.
Cllr Fisher requested an invitation be extended to all committee members to the next plot inspection on 10th August 2026.
Resolved: That an email is sent to all plot holders covering the points raised and asking for opinions on the formation of an allotment associating by 1st September 2026. (Prop Cllr Wetherfield, 2nd Cllr Dyne) All in favour.

Resolved: That the Clerk obtain quotes for replacement chain link fencing on Eastern boundary (Prop Cllr Whyte, 2nd Cllr Pearce) All in favour.

Resolved: That plot 18 be advised that the plot requires covering whilst fallow to prevent the spread of weeds (Prop Cllr Whyte, 2nd Cllr Pearce) All in favour.

7.2 To review annual garden plot rent.

Resolved: That this be held over until full Council has considered setting an annual increase related to CPI/RPI which will apply. (Prop Cllr Dyne, 2nd Cllr Martin) All in favour.

7.3 To consider request to add 3rd party to tenancy agreement plot 11.

Resolved: That the request be approved. (Prop Cllr Martin 2nd Cllr Pearce) All in favour.

8. St John the Baptist Churchyard.

8.1 To consider condition of tree 897 and agree actions.

Cllr Whyte spoke to state that the tree was dead.

Report from Clerk advised that a faculty will be required from the Diocese of Ely and also planning permission as the churchyard is in a conservation area.

Cllr Dyne questioned why the Parish Council was responsible. Chairman advised of “closed” status and the Parish Councils agreement to take over maintenance taken in the 1970’s.

Resolved: That the Clerk obtain quotes for removal of the tree. (Prop Cllr Whyte, 2nd Cllr Pearce) All in favour.

9. Cemetery.

9.1 To review cemetery fees.

Resolved: That this be held over until full Council has considered setting an annual increase related to CPI/RPI which will apply. (Prop Cllr Dyne, 2nd Cllr Martin) All in favour.

10. To consider replacement of sign to entrance Engineers Wood.

Members considered this was an important part of the Parish history and that it should be replaced.

Resolved: That the sign be replaced at cost £232 plus VAT (Prop Cllr Martin, 2nd Cllr Dyne) All in favour.

11. To receive a summary of meeting with project leader “CCC’s Nature Recovery From the Ground Up Project” and agree actions.

Report provided on the meeting held between Clerk and CCC.

Cllr Fisher spoke regarding his concerns over the purchase of the woodlands and the cost of ongoing maintenance.

Cllr Whyte explained the reasonings behind the decision to purchase.

Resolved: That pre promotion work is carried out before a date for a meeting is set. (Prop Cllr Martin, 2nd Cllr Whyte) All in favour.

12. Correspondence:

(i) To consider email from garden plot holder regarding dress code and language of tenants.

It was agreed that bad language is not acceptable but that plot holders must impose some amount of self-policing.

Resolved: That the matter be included in the general email (see item 7.1) (Prop Cllr Martin, 2nd Cllr Whyte) All in favour.

13. Items to report.

- Cllr Dyne requested a review of grass cutting Holywell Front. Chairman advised that this would require a request for an agenda item to be sent into the Clerk.
- Clerk reported that a resident had relayed a message that the Ferryboat was unhappy about the amount of litter being placed in their bins from visitors to the Front.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Chairman

Date

Environment meeting 15th September 2026

Garden Plot update

- **10/8/26 Inspection** carried out by Assistant to the Parish Clerk, Cllr Whyte & Cllr Martin. Three plots that were reported as untended have all made progress on their plots and will continue to be monitored.
Noted a conifer has been planted on Plot 17 – to advise tenant this is against the Tenancy Agreement and request it is removed.
Fence on boundary with Engineers Wood – get quotes to repair/ replace.
Tap nearest the car park is dripping – Groundsman has repaired.
Report received advising of bees/ wasps near the tap nearest the Cemetery – wasps are looking for water. Not considered an issue, now improved due to change of weather conditions.
Plot 9 has a buddleia Cllrs requested that this is cut back – tenant has cut back to size allowed.
- No vacant plots. 1 new tenant on waiting list and 1 deferring to Jan 2027. 6 existing tenants on waiting list for specific 2nd plots.
- Plot 17 – has area of overgrown tree/ bush – tenant has started to cut back
- Trees on plots
- Annual Rent Invoice has been issued, 6 tenants paid to date. Increased in line with Council decision to use CPI September. New rents £51.50 full plot and £27.00 half plot.

For decision:

- Whether to contact individual tenants regarding trees on plots at the end of the season and to then write to individual tenants if trees have not been cut back to within permitted size.

Summary of responses to email sent (12 responses received, 21 – no response):

	No	Yes
Allotment Association	11	0

	Not Heard any	Address directly with person
Bad Language	3	2

	Should of contacted individual plot holders	Will cut back at end of season
Trees	2	4

	Request to repair corner road/ Cemetery	Prune trees	Accept it/ No benefit to repair	Would like it repaired
Fence	1	2	2	2

Copy of email sent:

Dear Garden plot tenants,

Following the Environment committee meeting held on 21st July 2026 where a general review of the garden plots was considered, I am asked to email all plot holders with regards to several matters raised by members.

It was noted that many of the plots were well maintained and producing a wide variety of produce. However, the following items are giving cause for concern.

- The tenancy agreement states that:

“12.1 Fruit trees shall not be planted without first obtaining written consent from the Parish Council. A decision will be made based on the requested location and size of tree. Please note tree size will be restricted to a maximum size of 6ft x 6ft at maturity. Fruit trees must not be planted along the boundaries of your garden plot.”

Many plots have trees of various species, some of which may not have obtained permission, and many which exceed the designated size limit so taking light and water from the plot and those of neighbours.

For this reason, Council asks that all plot holders that have fruit trees and /or bushes, arrange for them to be pruned to within the maximum permitted size.

Any non-fruit trees are to be removed.

- The boundary fence on the Eastern side of the plots has now been trodden down to the point where it is no longer serving its intended purpose. Whilst not proven, it would appear that much of the damage has been caused by plot holders using the woodland as a dumping ground for weeds from their plots. This practice must cease with immediate effect.

The tenancy agreement clearly states “14.4 You must not put anything in the hedges, ditches or dykes.”

Council will seek quotes for the replacement of this fencing, but any subsequent actions will be dependent upon price and also the current practice of dumping rubbish ending.

The Council has also received complaints that crops have been stolen from plots. This is obviously disturbing and upsetting for the plot owners concerned. Council is not sure what can be done to prevent this happening again in the future but would welcome any feedback on the matter.

A complaint has also been received regarding bad language being used whilst undertaking work at the site. This is not acceptable. However, Council members felt that this really does need to be self-policing in so much as you must be prepared to speak to any person causing offence at the time and in person.

As this message refers several times to the tenancy agreement, I am attaching a copy (in blank) and would ask that you all refresh your minds as to the terms of your agreement as tenants. If you are a long-standing tenant, you may have a slightly differently worded agreement but in essence the principles remain relevant.

Finally, Council would like each plot holders' thoughts on whether or not the garden plots would operate more efficiently if an allotment association was formed. Obviously, this would be a major structural change and would require the formation of a management committee who would be responsible for the day to day running of the plots, collection of rents, payment of bills and maintenance of communal areas. The Council would retain ownership of the land. Please can you reply to this email with your comments either for or against the suggestion **by 10th August**.

Council will be re inspecting the plots on 10th August with a report going to the next meeting to be held on 15th September, so please can you reply to this email at your earliest convenience.

Garden Plot: Noticeboard.

The staff have received a suggestion that a noticeboard is installed in the garden plot site just inside the main gates. The verbal requests came when visiting the site.

Suggested location: Inside main gates to left hand side.

To be used for:

- Notices to/from Tenants and Parish Council.
- Helpful advice – e.g. hosepipe ban.
- “free ads”

Noticeboard plus posts :

Parish Noticeboards: Shield Wood Effect Outdoor Freestanding Noticeboards with Sunken Posts Ex. VAT **£647.95** Inc. VAT **£777.54**

Barriers direct: Noticeboard, Double Door, Aluminium Frame
Ideal for External Use | 8 and 18 x A4 Sizes

£640.06

Inc. VAT

£533.38 Excl. VAT

Weathershield:

Freestanding Lockable Outdoor Sign Blue Frame (Surface Mounted) 780x1031 (WxH) £809.97 inc VAT £971.96

Environment budget:

Garden plots. £1100.00. available £1050.00

For decision:

Does Council wish to purchase a noticeboard for the garden plots.



Cambridge Trees Ltd
Professional Tree Services

39 London Street
Godmanchester PE29 2HX
Tel: 01480 802550
Mob: 01480 802550
Email: office@johntalbot.co.uk

Billing Address:

Jane Bowd
Holywell-cum-Needlingworth PC
Needlingworth Village Hall
Overcote Lane
Needlingworth, PE27 4SW

Site Address:

Holywell Church
Holywell
St. Ives
PE27 4TG

QUOTATION 2223

Date: 29th July 2026

DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	TOTAL
T897 Hawthorn outside south door of Holywell church fell to ground level and remove from site	£275.00	£55.00	£330.00
Grind out Hawthorn stump to 250mm below ground level all arisings to be removed from site.	£125.00	£25.00	£150.00
SUB TOTAL:	£400.00	£80.00	£480.00
		TOTAL:	£480.00

Following inspection, the Hawthorn is confirmed to be dead, showing no evidence of leaf emergence during the current growing season, and removal is recommended. John Talbot

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. This quotation shall be valid for six months from the date on the letterhead.
2. Our payment terms are full payment upon satisfactory completion of the works.
3. Please see our 'Guide to Working with Cambridge Trees Ltd' attached separately
4. Cambridge Trees Ltd holds current public, employers and professional indemnity insurance - details and certificates are available on request
5. All work to be completed in line with BS3998 (2010) 'Recommendations for Tree Work' where appropriate unless instructed otherwise by the customer.
6. Upon acceptance of our quotation, we shall check for the presence of legislative protection (Tree Preservation Orders etc).
7. All arising waste material shall be taken from site and returned to our premises unless agreed otherwise.



QUOTE

Holywell cum Needingworth Parish Council
Needingworth Village Hall
Overcote Lane
Needingworth
St. Ives
PE27 4TU

Date
26 Jul 2026

Expiry
24 Aug 2026

Quote Number
QU-0400

Bryan Mutter Tree Surgery
21 Harris Crescent
Needingworth
ST. IVES
Cambridgeshire
PE27 4TE
01480464526
bryan.mutter@icloud.com

To fell dead Hawthorne tree and grind stump to 4" below ground level in church yard	650.00
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Removal of created waste	
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Subtotal	650.00
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TOTAL NO VAT	0.00
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TOTAL GBP	650.00
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Terms

On completion of work

27 JUL 2026

27 JUL 2026

ATLAS

TREE SURGERY LTD

Andrew Fenwick
Unit 11, Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over, Cambridge, CB24 5QE
Tel: 01954 201892 Mobile: 07956 410416
andrew@atlastreesurgery.com

Mrs Bowd
Holywell Parish Council
Holywell
Cambs

28th July 2026

Dear Mrs Bowd,

Re: Tree work in The Churchyard.

Further to your recent email, I have priced up the work and quote as follows:

Dead Hawthorn – Fell to ground level.	£340 + VAT	=	408
Grind out the stump.	£120 + VAT	=	144
			552

This price includes chipping the brushwood and removing all arisings from site.

All staff are trained and certificated. The company carries both employers and public liability insurance, all documentation can be produced on request. Tree work is carried out to British Standard 3998.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Fenwick

HOLYWELL-CUM-NEEDINGWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

CEMETERY FEES

1/10/26

1. Interments.

For the interment of:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| a. The body of a still born child or a child under one year of age. | Nil for resident. |
| b. The body of a person aged 1 to 18 | £139 |
| c. The body of any other person. | £279 |
| d. Cremated remains. | £209 |
| e. Additional fee for interments held outside of
Monday – Saturday, 9.30am – 4.30pm, as per regulation 3.2 | £348 |

2. Exclusive Rights of Burial.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| a . Purchase of grave space for the exclusive right of burial
in an earthen grave. | £314 |
| b . Purchase of grave space 450mm (18") by 600mm (24")
for the exclusive right of burial of cremated remains. | £139 |

3. Memorials and Memorial inscriptions.

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| a . Erection of an inscribed Headstone. | £132 |
| b. Cremated ashes tablet. | £104 |
| c. Additional inscriptions. | £92 |

4. Other Charges.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a. Ministers' Fees - to be arranged by Funeral Director. | |
| b. Fee for searching Register of Burials and taking extracts. | £69 |
| c. Transfer of Burial Rights. | £91 |

NB. All of the above fees are **increased by 400%** for persons who reside outside the Parish of Holywell-cum-Needlingworth*. E.g. To buy a plot is £1256
The only exception will be for residents who have left the village to move into a nursing care home.
The cemetery is closed for burials to anyone who has never lived in the Parish.

*This may be waived at the discretion of the Clerk.

NB. Fees relating to funerals of children under 18 and stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy are to be considered in line with the current The Social Fund (Children's Funeral Fund for England) Regulations 2019 No. 1064

Trees Falklands/Engineers Wood.

Groundsman has reported concerns over a tree to the rear of the tractor shed. Should it fall potentially it could damage the building.



Cllr Mortlock has reported tree in picture below.



Does Council want staff to obtain quotes for removal/felling of both trees.

The National Emergency Briefing film, also known as the People's Emergency Briefing, is a UK-focused public information film on the climate and nature crisis, featuring leading experts and designed to inform and mobilize communities.

Overview

The film presents the **national implications of climate and nature breakdown** and highlights credible, positive responses in a clear, accessible format for public audiences across the UK

It was created as a catalyst for wider public discussion and as a stepping stone toward a live televised national briefing introduced by the Prime Minister and delivered by independent experts .

The film is action-focused, emphasizing the choices available to individuals, communities, and institutions to address the crisis **Featured Experts**

The film includes contributions from **Chris Packham, leading climate and nature scientists, a former general, and Jennifer Saunders**, providing frank and evidence-based insights on the current state of the environment and potential solutions .Each 10-minute briefing within the film covers the impacts facing the UK, the possibilities if action is taken, and the science-based pathways forward

Screenings and Accessibility

- **Community Screenings:** The film is being shown in local communities, workplaces, and institutions across the UK throughout 2026, with an interactive screening map available to locate events near you
- **Hosting a Screening:** Individuals or organizations can host screenings, with guidance provided for facilitating discussions and engaging local MPs
- **Age Recommendation:** The film is recommended for audiences aged 16 and above, based on expert advice
- **Subtitles:** Subtitles are available in multiple languages, including Arabic, Bengali, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese (Brazilian), and Welsh, with more languages being added [g](#).
- **International Screenings:** The film can also be screened outside the UK, with support provided for registration and hosting

How to Watch

The film can be booked for public screenings or previewed by contacting the National Emergency Briefing team via their website or email. Free licenses are

available for not-for-profit groups A summary and trailer are also available online to provide an overview of the content

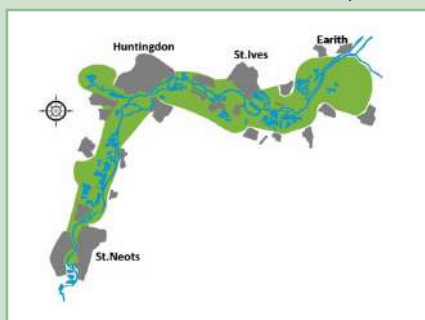
Purpose

The National Emergency Briefing film aims to **create a societal tipping point** toward urgent climate action by informing citizens, encouraging discussion, and promoting community-led responses . It serves as both an educational tool and a platform for civic engagement, helping people understand the scale of the crisis and the steps they can take to contribute to solutions.

CEMETERY & GARDEN PLOTS	budget 2026/27	ytd 2026/27	expected 31/3/27	budget 27/28				
Rates	450	214	428	450				
Water Rates	800	106	465	600				
Tree / hedge works	3000	1200	3200	3500				
Maintenance	3100	85	1958	2000	increase required if fencing to ge done between GP/Engineers wood.			
Skips	0	0	0	0				
misc	150	0	0	100				
	0							
TOTAL	7500	1605	6051	6650				
Holywell Churchyard								
Trees	1000	0	500	1000	Hawthorn			
memorial inspection	1000	0	0	500				
Repairs	500	0	386	1000	fencing			
				2500				
COMMON LAND								
Repair work	1000	0	0	1000				
Tree works	1500	50	50	1000				
Misc	100	7	0	100				
TOTAL	2600	0	50	2100				
Engineers wood	0	0	0	2500	PC ownersip/maintenance work			
new allotments/cemetery								
Legal Work	0							
Valuation & plans	0							
Reserve for future work	1000	180		1000				
	1000							

TOTAL								
Budget	13600			14750				

The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) is a charity with the objective 'To promote for public benefit the conservation, restoration, and enjoyment of the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the Great Ouse Valley and environs in the county of Cambridgeshire.' The area is nationally recognised and valued for its wildlife, leisure, natural and heritage attractions which contribute to the county's natural green spaces.



Our Partner Members contribute knowledge, expertise, resources and energy so that together we can champion the unique appeal of the Great Ouse Valley.

To become a Supporter or make a donation, please visit our website. Here you will also find news of our current projects, our media coverage, planning issues and much more.

All photographs in The Valley are by GOVT unless otherwise indicated.

SAVE THE DATES!

28 October 2026

Great Ouse Heritage Landscape Partnership Inaugural Meeting St Ives Corn Exchange, 5pm. Chair Paul Bristow, Mayor, Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority. Partner Members only.

31 October 2026

Partner Members Meeting 10.30 am, Hartford Village Hall, 16 Main Street, Hartford PE29 1YS
Guest speaker **Howard Osborne**, author of *Source to Sea: Walk the Ouse Valley Way*. Refreshments on arrival, lunch to follow.

Like and follow us on Facebook and visit us on www.greatousevalleytrust.org.uk



ANOTHER WOW! DAY TRIUMPH

We once more celebrate our wonderful long-distance footpath

In spite of the intense heat we had another great WOW! Walk the Ouse Way Day on 12 July. Hundreds of walkers joined us to walk a little (or a lot) of the 26-mile path between St Neots and Earith. This year we worked closely with Hunts Ramblers, and the one-day Holywell ferry again proved popular. We also provided a free shuttle bus to bring people back after their walk. There were inevitably a few teething problems with this new initiative but lessons can be learnt for next year. We are grateful to the Looker Energy Environmental Fund for help to fund the buses, and also the new feather flags for each of our nine hubs.



The hats have it at Godmanchester!



Volunteer heroes save the day: from Muir Housing Group, Huntingdon (left), and Capital Delivery, Stansted Airport

our own volunteers, plus groups from Muir Housing Group and Stansted Airport, came to the rescue with cutters and strimmers. Then, in the last few days and in the nick of time, County Council Highways work parties carried out a major cut of the whole route to allow the WOW! Day to proceed. We are determined to not let this happen again.

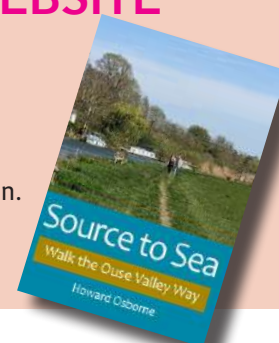
The Ouse Valley Way footpath is one of our areas greatest assets but it still does not get the publicity, attention or maintenance it deserves. In spite of the Trust's persistent efforts over many years to encourage the County Council to introduce a proper maintenance regime, this has proved to be a real challenge. Over the winter we intend to work with all stakeholders to ensure a system is devised that really works into the future.

This year's high temperatures have caused us to reconsider our timing for the event, and May 2027 has been suggested as an alternative. What do you think? However, the event was nearly cancelled again because poor maintenance of the path resulted in sections becoming impassable. And elsewhere, bramble and nettle growth made walking a very unpleasant experience. At the last minute

FIRST GUIDEBOOK AND WEBSITE

The Ouse Valley Way doesn't pass just through Cambridgeshire. It runs for 151 miles from source to sea. We are delighted to announce that our Supporter, Howard Osborne from Buckingham, has published the first guidebook to the path, as well as an audio companion.

Visit <https://greatouseways.info/> and come and meet the author on 31 October.

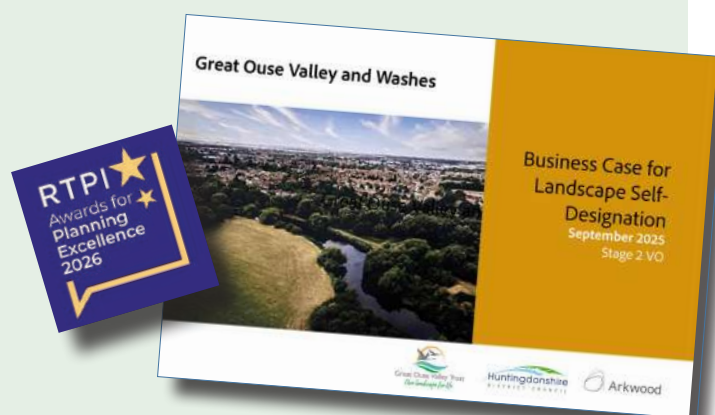


AWARD FOR OUR DESIGNATED LANDSCAPE PLAN

Prestigious recognition for our business case report

We are thrilled to announce that the business plan report for a self-designated landscape for the Great Ouse Valley, commissioned jointly by the Trust and the District Council and produced by Arkwood Landscape Consultants, has won a planning excellence award! At the Royal Town Planning Institute's ceremony in Cambridge in June, it was declared the outright winner for *Best Project in the East of England 2026*. The report will now become a finalist in the national awards to be judged in September.

This significant award reflects the importance of the report's conclusions, and motivates our determination to speed up the self-designation process for the **Great Ouse Heritage Landscape**.



The professional award and the business case judged.



The happy Arkwood and Trust representatives and the award itself.

What next? During a recent meeting with the Trust, Paul Bristow, Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, offered to chair a meeting of all our Partner Members and key stakeholders in October. This will be a first step in a forming Great Ouse Heritage Landscape Partnership to further advance our bid to secure designation of our precious landscape. With commitments established, governance and a constitution agreed, we can identify initial funding and develop a Partnership Plan and communications strategy to raise awareness and gather public support.

With local government reorganisation looming, this is a real opportunity to recognise Cambridgeshire for its unique and nationally important environment. Our new Prime Minister has made it clear that he will give local Mayors' offices more power and more funding to support growth without compromising nature. So, we are excited that with confirmed support from our MPs Ben Obese-Jecty and Ian Sollom, and recognition from our District Council that designation offers advantages for health, well-being, biodiversity and economy for our region, we can now see a way forward to achieving our goal.



The river through St Neots. Photograph by Maciek Platek.

NEW PARTNER MEMBER

Welcome to St Neots Town Council!

St Neots benefits from its superb location on a particularly wide section of the river creating a classic piece of English townscape. The town has been a great supporter of the Trust. Past Mayors, Richard Slade and Stephen Ferguson, have not only joined us for WOW! Day but also campaigned with us on the National Highways redundant tree guard scandal. Nicola Hatton, the Town Council's Environment Officer, and Councillors Carly Robinson and Ben Pitt, gave us a lot of help with this year's WOW! Day in supervising the shuttle bus departures from Riverside Park. So we are delighted that the Town Council is now formally a Partner Member of the Trust, which will help us to better represent this upstream section of the Ouse Valley.

BALSAM UPDATE

The scale of the problem

The August 2025 and February 2026 issues of The Valley outlined the story to date. We trialed removal of this persistent invasive plant in St Ives and learned a lot. It is becoming an enormous problem as it spreads rapidly along our waterway, eradicating our native flora and interdependent biodiversity. And it requires considerable effort to remove. We appealed for volunteers and now have a core dedicated team, but could do with more.

We asked for sightings. We spent three Saturdays on the Portholme Meadow banks, and realized we had cleared less than half before running the risk of spreading the seed – there is only a short window before the seed pods explode!

Other locations have been reported including Buckden and St Neots. The St Neots coverage looks daunting due to the shockingly large area covered. Working with our Partner Member St Neots Town Council, we will plan an appropriate level of activity for next year.



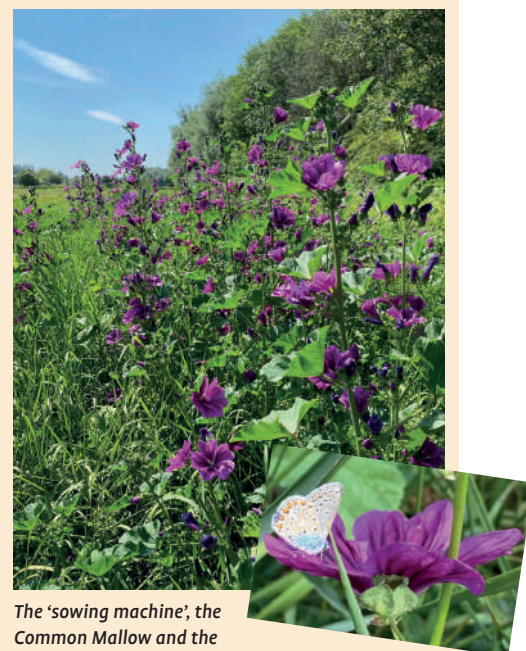
It's demanding but very satisfying work to bash Balsam!

It is important that we take a holistic, coordinated approach as seeds are spread from area to area by the river. If you have seen the plant elsewhere please let us know via our website. Please don't remove any plants yourself as you may unintentionally spread seeds! Instead, please register with us on the website as a Supporter (Balsam) volunteer, and we will be in touch when we plan the Balsam Bashing work parties next year.

SOWING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

Biodiversity on Nobles Field

We reported in the August 2025 issue of *The Valley* on the District Council's Biodiversity for All work we undertook on Nobles Field in St Ives. The second phase was for invading bramble and nettles to be cut back, and for three 5m-wide strips to be seeded with a wildflower mix to attract more insects, improve pollination and provide more food for birds. In April The HDC work party first cut and removed the grass, then scarified the ground, and finally scattered the seed using a push-along machine. Then it didn't rain for ten days. As doubts crept in unexpected showers suddenly produced stunning results. The most dominant arrival is Common Mallow, seen here putting on a splendid show, and already attracting a variety of butterflies. Now we have to be patient – again! It will not be until next year that we shall hopefully see the full succession of blooms, which should then self-seed for repeat showings thereafter.



The 'sowing machine', the Common Mallow and the result!

HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

A crucial decision ahead

Huntingdonshire's emerging Local Plan reaches a critical point on 9 September, when our District Councillors will decide whether it is ready to progress towards independent examination.

GOVT has joined 31 other Town and Parish Councils, residents' groups and community organisations to form the North Huntingdon & St Ives Cumulative Impacts Group. We share concerns about the scale of growth proposed – around 24,000 new homes in the wider Huntingdon and St Ives area – and whether the evidence and infrastructure needed to support it are in place.

The Plan needs to address the cumulative impacts on roads, healthcare, water supply and wastewater, flood risk, biodiversity, our rivers and the landscape. At present, we believe there is insufficient vision, and no overall masterplan, for how this unprecedented level of growth and its impact will work together.

Councillors now have an important choice: press ahead to meet a timetable, or pause and ensure Huntingdonshire has a robust, infrastructure-led and sustainable plan that works for both existing and future communities.



Earmarked developments totalling 24,000 houses.

STOP PRESS!

Town centre car park plans

St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives are wonderful, historic towns that help define the character of the Great Ouse Valley. Undoubtedly they could be made even more successful and attractive, but we fundamentally disagree with the approach taken by Capital&Centric, the District Council consultants. As we go to press, the Trust is dismayed to see the random proposals presented to 'regenerate' the town centres of our three market towns. We believe the suggestions are ill-considered and counterproductive. The company's recent presentations give no indication of the rigorous townscape analyses required in such an undertaking. We also believe the process has not been adequately scrutinised, and that the District Council now needs to stop and rethink.



The Yard and Cattle Market Garden envisioned for St Ives.