

MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL

Maintenance Committee : Meeting 21 April 2022

Item: MA196 21c) FWAG email

Dear Parish Clerk,

I work for the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group, and I am writing to let you know about a funded pond conservation project we are delivering on behalf of Natural England, which may be of interest to both your fellow Parish Councillors and also to your parishioners. You may have previously heard from us regarding the project, and we are delighted to inform you the project is continuing.

Funding is available for restoring old ponds and digging new ponds in certain parts of Cambridgeshire which fall into strategic areas for great crested newts. **Your parish qualifies for this funding as some of the land around the village is deemed to be especially suitable habitat for bolstering and connecting existing populations of this endangered species.** As such, we are seeking landowners who are prepared to dig or restore wildlife ponds on their land.

The project is part of Natural England's District Level Licencing scheme (DLL) - a strategic approach to licensing for great crested newts, which seeks to provide bigger, better and more joined up habitat for this orange-bellied amphibian at a landscape scale. The ponds restored and created under the scheme will not only provide high quality habitat for newts; they will benefit numerous other pond-associated species. Most of the 150 or so pond projects we've delivered under the scheme to date have been fully funded – you can view some of these ponds at our website: www.fwageast.org.uk/ponds

We have written a short article (attached) to explain the scheme to villagers. We would be very grateful if you could email this to your parishioners/ raise it at you next council meeting/ place it in your parish newsletter, so that we can reach other landowners who may have suitable land, for example, local farmers, smallholders, large rural garden owners, land-based businesses, and parish-owned land.

Please feel free to get in touch if you would like to discuss, require any further details or photos to go with the story.

Many thanks for your time and best wishes,

The FWAG East Ponds Team

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Wildlife Ponds - Funding Available!

Ponds are a cherished part of the parish landscape; familiar historic features found at the heart of most village centres and in the wider countryside. Sadly, due to changes in land use and agricultural practices, the UK has lost around 50% of ponds in the 20th Century. Those remaining are often threatened by pollution. This means the many species of plant and animal that rely on them are also under threat.

Excitingly, funding is now available in certain parts of Cambridgeshire for the restoration and creation of clean water wildlife ponds capable of supporting great crested newts. The funding is part of Natural England's District Level Licencing scheme (DLL), a new strategy for

compensating the loss of newt habitats, which seeks to provide new ponds and bigger, better, more joined-up habitat for this orange-bellied amphibian at a landscape scale.

In Cambridgeshire there is a high demand for such wildlife ponds through the DLL scheme. Most of the 150 or so pond projects we have delivered to date have been fully funded under the scheme. You can view some of these projects at: www.fwageast.org.uk/ponds.

We are seeking local farmers, smallholders, large rural garden owners, land-based businesses and parish-owned land to create and restore more such ponds. If you have a location in mind in your parish, please email ponds@fwageast.org.uk to receive further information or arrange an informal chat. Let's do something brilliant for wildlife!

A recently created farmland pond – Credit J McNaughton, FWAG East



A recently restored parish pond - Credit J McNaughton, FWAG East



A great crested newt – Credit Lucy Jenkins, FWAG East

