

Wilbrahams Environment Group Brief Report for 2025-2026

We are a volunteer group whose aim, briefly, is to Promote Maintain and Improve the Natural Environment of the Wilbrahams and Six Mile Bottom for the people of the villages by:-

- (a) Working with individuals and existing organisations in the villages
- (b) Ourselves organising and carrying out projects in the villages with voluntary labour and local expertise.

We do not have a membership fee. We have more than 90 members/supporters registered on our database and we aim to make our events free to all. We promote ourselves through regular member newsletters, articles in the Warbler, the Villages' Community Facebook page and our own Facebook page.

Like other local organisations we have suffered as a result of the closure of the old joint website for the two parish councils, making it much more difficult to promote our activities to local people. We urge the parish councils to bring back something as useful as the "old" system.

Our small Committee (now 7 in number) worked hard during the year on many ideas and projects. In the year we worked with Great Wilbraham Parish Council, the Wilbraham River Protection Society and the Wildlife Trusts BCN. Whilst our supporters come from all three of our villages we have not managed to find a project specifically benefitting Little Wilbraham or Six Mile Bottom; we would like to work with Alan Cody's group there.

Our activities have, however, perhaps for the first time included varied opportunities for our members, indeed all local people, to do something practical to help our local environment – and we hope to continue with this. Here are details of some of the things we have been doing in 2025-2026.

- Solar Farms. Early in 2025 we helped to conclude the Community Benefits Agreement with Ridge Clean Energy which will bring financial benefit to our communities when Ridge's site is operational – which is now anticipated during 2028. We have continued a good relationship with Ridge. Re the much larger Kingsway proposal we, like others, looked closely at the available information and made representations.
- Liaison with Farmers. We have continued to foster relationships with local farmers so that we and residents generally have a better understanding of their practices as they move towards more sustainable, regenerative use of their land.
- Open Events. We showed to a large audience an inspiring film about Rewilding on the Knepp Estate. We enjoyed a Presentation from the Wildlife Trusts about Fleam Dyke. We held a very successful Farm Walk with the owners of the Quy Hall Estate – and a small number of us joined in sowing wild flower seed mix in one of the estate's fields in Little Wilbraham.
- Helping Great Wilbraham PC. We organised a litter pick in Great Wilbraham and planted more trees. We were represented on the Cemetery & Orchard Working Group.
- Little Wilbraham River. Our committee includes a member of the committee of The Wilbraham River Protection Society. WEG is also member of the Dungate Farm Augmentation Scheme Stakeholders group and we attended a lengthy meeting with the

Environment Agency seeking information about and changes to the management of our chalk stream. Recently we have supported the efforts of our MP to seek UNESCO recognition and protection of all chalk streams. The river is a very important feature of our villages which demands protection.

- Work Parties on Fleam Dyke. In September and December members worked to cut back scrub growth on parts of the Dyke under the guidance of the Wildlife Trusts. We plan to continue this practical action for the local environment.
- Footpath along Station Road Great Wilbraham. Early in 2026 it at last became possible to implement an idea we first proposed in 2021, to open up the highway verge to make it possible to walk between the track to the Common and Great Wilbraham village without walking on the roadway itself. With enormous support from our members and GWPC substantial clearance of trees and scrub was achieved, thus making the circular route around the Common, Little and Great Wilbraham much safer for everyone.
- Nature Recovery Plan – and Amenity Woodland up Butt Lane Gt W. For several years we have been working, rather too slowly, to build up a picture of the state of Nature in our parishes and to look for ways to improve it. Both parish councils gave us grants to obtain data, to which we have added information to “Parish Online”. In 2026 the County Council has launched a scheme “From the Ground Up” intended to help parishes develop a nature recovery plan. The Wilbrahams are not able fully to join the scheme this year but its resources are already helping us to move forward.

We are active members of GWPC’s Biodiversity and Environment Working Group which, absolutely consistent with a Nature Recovery Plan, has led GWPC to recover possession of a hectare of arable land up Butt Lane so as to transform it into a biodiverse amenity space for all to enjoy. Working with GWPC a large number of WEG members helped to plant 900 hedging plants in January 2026 on the site’s boundaries. Grants from South Cambs DC’s Community Chest fund (obtained by WEG) and from Wadlow Wind Farm Community Fund (obtained by GWPC) are sufficient to fund deer-proof fencing, a rain water collection building and, in the Autumn substantial tree planting for which WEG will be seeking volunteers. All very exciting!

Our objective is to engage with, educate and inform everyone in our communities on environmental issues and to involve people in practical action. We would like opportunities to be more active in Little Wilbraham and Six Mile Bottom!

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