

Final Evaluation Report

Fenland Orchards Project

Undertaken by Rose Regeneration

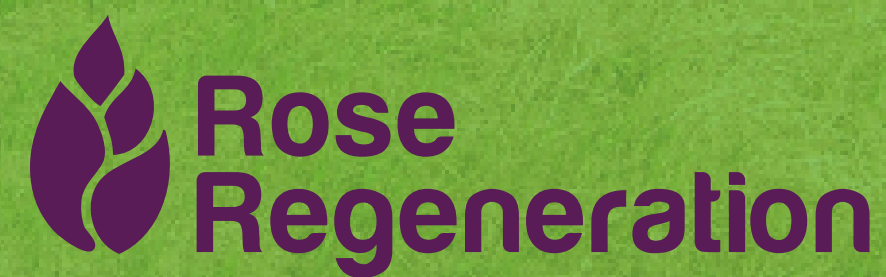


THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®



Evaluation

Rose Regeneration was appointed to undertake an external evaluation in November 2022. Baseline, interim and final evaluation reports were produced.



About

Rose Regeneration & Fenland Orchards Project



Rose Regeneration is a specialist rural and coastal evaluation business with a track record of working with voluntary and community sector organisations for approaching 20 years. Jessica Sellick, a researcher/project manager has produced this report.



CP Learning Trust (CPLT) works to bring about collaboration amongst providers and regeneration of areas with low learning attainment, pursuing funding on behalf of communities in order to raise aspirations and skills. CPLT has delivered a three-year National Lottery Heritage Fund project highlighting the rich heritage of orchards in Fenland. CPLT has been supporting people of all ages to work together to create a new community heritage orchard.



Key Insights

Fenland Orchards Project

CP Learning Trust delivered a 3-year National Lottery Heritage funded project to highlight the rich heritage of orchards in Fenland.

Big Picture

- Proportion of Cambridgeshire classified as traditional orchard is **less than 1%**.
- One of the most nature depleted counties.
- Gap between the heritage assets Fenland has, and how local communities engage with them.

Consultation

70%

of respondents reported that they were unaware of the history of orchards in Fenland.

96%

reported that they, or others in their local community, would like to participate in a community heritage orchard project.

95%

felt an orchards project would be beneficial to the local community.



Orchard

3-acre site previously used for crops has been turned into a community orchard.

100 heritage trees & **890** native species planted.

440 more for planting around the perimeter.

Time lapse video: <https://www.facebook.com/FenlandOrchardsProject/>

Community learning & outreach

13



presentations and talks delivered.

16

local events participated in.



26

activities and workshops delivered

Social Return on Investment



- Strong Institutions
- Quality Education
- Sustainable Communities
- Partnership Working
- Good Health
- Life On Land

Beneficiaries

1,542 people directly engaged

255 workshop participants

45 people involved in site development

41 young people involved in site management

29 regular volunteers

16 organisations substantively engaged

3 schools and 182 pupils engaged

Benefit Cost Ratio

The project has a BCR of **£3.9/£1**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) ranks BCR; with anything above '2' categorised as offering 'high' value-for-money.



Where next?

“This project is not temporary and it won't go away, it will go on into the future”.

The project has ignited the imagination of the local community, built pride in place, and connection to the past.

Summary

Why is the project needed?

CP Learning Trust (CPLT) has been delivering a three-year National Lottery Heritage Fund project to highlight the rich heritage of orchards in Fenland. CPLT has been supporting people of all ages to work together to create a new community heritage orchard.

The first orchard was recorded in Fenland in the mid-1800s. As orchards were grubbed up or neglected, unique varieties of trees and the skills used to produce them were lost.

Back in 2019, CPLT carried out a consultation exercise with local residents.

This revealed that:

- 70% of respondents were unaware of the history of orchards in Fenland.
- 96% of respondents reported that they, or others in their local community, would like to participate in a community heritage orchard project.
- 95% of respondents felt an orchards project would be beneficial to the local community.

Wisbech as a place has high levels of economic inactivity and in-work poverty, with fewer residents reporting being in good or very good health.

A 3-acre piece of land on Lynn Road, Wisbech was identified as a suitable site for a community heritage orchard. CPLT made a formal application to Wisbech Town Council to lease the land and a 30-year agreement was entered into.



Summary

What does it do?

The Fenland Orchards Project was launched in August 2021. Under the strapline 'celebrate, learn, work', the project has been bringing the local community together to create a new community heritage orchard.

Alongside the development of the orchard site, CPLT has also been delivering:

- A programme of fun, interactive and engaging events for the local community.
- Training courses and support for volunteers to plan, plant and manage the orchard site.
- Sessions for school children to learn about growing fruits and vegetables.

All of this work has been co-produced with local residents and groups to develop their skills, capacity, enthusiasm and innovation to manage the orchard.

CPLT is also delivering outreach work at other orchard sites and green spaces in Wisbech and surrounding areas; and working with partners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of community green spaces.

The project is overseen by a steering group comprising representatives from the Town Council, Orchards Church of England Academy, Wisbech Museum, Wisbech in Bloom, Clarion Housing Group, and Cambridgeshire County Council. They are monitoring project delivery and the external evaluation.



Summary

Who has it helped?

Why local residents decided to engage in the project:

"I went for a walk around the orchard and could see what was going to happen and I wanted to be involved".

"I wanted to start joining in with community activities and this has really helped me to do that."

"I am curious and eager to get involved in the outdoors and nature".

Inclusion and participation has been important to CPLT in ensuring everyone is encouraged to learn about heritage.

People with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and/or mental health issues; young LGBTQ+ people; people who are homeless and long-term unemployed; veterans; asylum seekers and refugees; and older people have all participated in the project.

"We have ensured that the project is providing a well-rounded offer inclusive of all ED&I groups [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion]", project steering group member.



Summary

What difference has it made?

“There’s lots of stuff here now growing quickly, and the classroom is coming, and the pond is nearly there, and there’s wildlife...”

“I try to get to the orchard at least two times a week, weather permitting. It gets me out in the fresh air and I always feel better”.

“This project is encouraging people to replicate and create something in their own garden”.

- Heritage is in better condition: from a vacant field, CPLT and the local community have worked together to plan and create an orchard full of heritage rootstock.
- Heritage is better identified and explained: project staff, volunteers and participants have delivered talks and presentations and produced digital resources showcasing the rich heritage and history of orchards in the Fenland area.
- Residents have developed new skills: enabling the local community to maintain the orchard site and ensure it will continue and be passed on to future generations.
- Residents are experiencing improved wellbeing: feedback from volunteers and participants suggests the project is giving them a sense of belonging, a peer support network, and a more positive outlook.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a way of developing a value for outcomes arising from the project. Ten project outcomes were identified and quantified. This shows that the project is delivering £4.54 of social value for every £1.00 invested in it. HM Treasury ranks anything over £2.00 as delivering a ‘good’ level of social value.

A Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) analysis was undertaken to assess the value-for-money being delivered by the project. The analysis reveals that the project has a BCR of £3.9/£1. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) appraisal guide (2023) ranks BCR; with anything above ‘2’ categorised as offering ‘high’ value-for-money.



Summary

Where next?

The investment from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been used to kick-start the work needed to bring this rich heritage back to life. CPLT has developed a sustainability plan, identifying the resources needed to continue and grow the work beyond this initial period. This includes exploring continuation funding, and looking at further opportunities for partnership working.

“This project is not temporary and it won’t go away, it will go on into the future”.

“What’s the future? It’s not just about the orchard, I want to see more green spaces all connected up for the local community”.

The investment from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been

- Responding to feedback from volunteers and participants to increase the amenities on the site (e.g. electricity, shelters to use during adverse weather, information boards),
- Digital/virtual tours: CPLT intends to create a virtual tour of the orchard using technologies such as photogrammetry.
- Adult learning and green skills development: provide training in at-risk heritage skills (e.g. flint napping, hurdle making, rush matting, corn dolly making). This includes working with learning partners and colleges to provide participants with routes for onward learning and qualifications.
- Creation of heritage habitat areas on orchard site: working with Cambridge University to develop a Fen garden. CPLT made a successful bid to the Woodland Trust for 440 trees to plant around the perimeter of the site (planting from March 2024).



The Big Picture.



The Big Picture

Fenland Orchards Project

Orchards have played an important role in communities for many centuries, providing a focal point, a community gathering space, and a place where people and nature successfully work together to create abundant harvests. Alongside this, many customs and traditions developed, as well as thousands of different variations on *Malus domestica* (apple); each cultivar with its unique flavour, texture, use and story, linking people to place and heritage.

As orchards were grubbed up, or simply faded due to neglect, unique varieties along with the skills used to produce them were lost. Now most of the world's commercially grown apples come from just four or five parent varieties. However, in recent years, community orchards have had a renaissance as people rediscover the benefits and pleasures of growing fresh fruit from trees.

“Community orchards are a growing movement, with many fruit trees being planted each year. In another decade, as the trees reach maturity, we will start to see a significant harvest and they will become a really important resource. We believe community orchards can be a small but vital piece of the puzzle in addressing the multiple crisis of our times – climate, ecological and social”.

Fergus Walker, Glasgow & Strathclyde Project Manager, The Orchard Project

CP Learning Trust (CPLT) has been delivering a three year National Lottery Heritage Funded project to highlight the rich heritage of orchards in Fenland. The project has sought to ignite the imagination of the local community, and build pride in place and connection to the past.

A 3-acre piece of land on Lynn Road, Wisbech was identified as a suitable site for a community heritage orchard. CPLT has a 30-year lease on the site from Wisbech Town Council. Under the strapline ‘celebrate, learn, work’, the Fenland Orchards Project is seeking to bring the local community together to create a new community orchard. CPLT is also delivering a programme of community outreach activities.

Revitalising heritage

According to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC), the proportion of the county which can be classified as traditional orchard is less than 1%, yet a handful of parishes have a high proportion of traditional orchard. In Fenland, the first orchard was recorded in mid-1800s, with orchards contributing to the growth and development of Fenland towns, including Wisbech.

Natural England's National Character Area Profile (46. The Fens) indicates that while overall woodland cover and hedgerow habitats are sparse, extensive orchards and associated windbreaks are located in the Wisbech area, creating a distinctive though dwindling landscape cover. While the loss of orchards in the area has been significant (i.e., through neglect, poor management or land sales for development), the NCA signals how there are opportunities to restore and manage traditional orchards where there is a traditional pattern, including around Wisbech.

‘The presence of old/original fruit varieties could be important for future crop breeding. Traditional orchards are inherent to historic landscape character’.

Fergus Walker, Glasgow & Strathclyde Project Manager, The Orchard Project NCA 46. The Fens, page 51)

The RSA Heritage Index brings together 120 sources of data to show where heritage is. Fenland is ranked 6th out of 125 local authority areas for heritage potential – meaning there is a gap between the heritage assets the district has, and how local communities engage with them.

The Big Picture

Fenland Orchards Project

Protecting the environment

Cambridgeshire is one of the most nature depleted counties in England. The area has adopted a 'Doubling Nature' ambition, and a Local Nature Recovery Strategy is being developed to help deliver this.

The Fenland Orchards Project was set up to support the planting of a community orchard in an under-used peri-urban space. In taking on a site which had previously been used for growing crops, planting heritage trees is seen as making a contribution to mitigating climate change.

For the Ancient Tree Forum, orchards are a valuable habitat for a wide range of species, from fungi and lichens, insects and other invertebrates, to birds and mammals. The People's Trust for Endangered Species recommended elements of woodland, pasture and grassland be included on the orchard site to increase plant diversity and create a mosaic of habitats to support a wide range of species.

The Fenland Orchards Project is increasing people's understanding and connection with nature across Wisbech and the surrounding countryside.

Inclusion and participation

At the start of the project, CPLT carried out two consultation exercises: one with local residents, and one with strategic stakeholders and potential partners.

Local resident consultation findings:

- 70% of respondents reported that they were unaware of the history of orchards in Fenland.
- 96% of respondents reported that they, or others in their local community, would like to participate in a community heritage orchard project.
- 95% of respondents felt an orchards project would be beneficial to the local community.

Stakeholders and partners consultation findings:

- 100% of respondents reported a need for a community environment project.
- 85% reported that they, and the people they support, have insufficient awareness of Fenland orchards.
- 100% reported an orchards project would be beneficial to the local community.
- 85% of respondents said they would like to get involved in the project.

"This level of support clearly shows the right time for this project is now, ensuring that the heritage and importance of Fenland orchards will be handed down for generations to come", CPLT staff member.

According to the Census, Fenland is worse than the median for the proportion of people aged 16-64 years with Level 3 or above qualifications, and worse than the median for life satisfaction. Wisbech as a place has high levels of economic inactivity and in-work poverty. 28.2% of people living in Fenland are neither employed nor seeking work. 20.6% of children in Fenland are living in relative low income families, accounting for 25% of all low income families within Cambridgeshire.

Supporting greater inclusion, access and participation in heritage has been a core component of the Fenland Orchards Project. The project has been co-designed and co-delivered with local residents and groups to develop their skills, capacity and innovation to sustain and manage the orchard site and outreach activities.

The Big Picture

Fenland Orchards Project

Community wellbeing

Many residents in Wisbech, and Fenland, experience issues related to poor physical health or mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, debt, behaviours such as low confidence and low self-esteem, generational deprivation and physical, economic and social isolation.

Heritage can help people find meaning and purpose in their lives. Common Ground has emphasised the need for more places to relax and play in as well as for shared activities to enable people of different groups and backgrounds to come together. This includes highlighting the role of community orchards in reviving fruit growing and sharing knowledge and horticultural skills.

“Heritage is about that feeling of belonging, knowing that this is your place and understanding how your history fits within the wider history. It is a part of being human”, Laura Drysdale, Director of the Restoration Trust, leading on the Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership project.

‘Broad Horizons’ is seeking to develop a vibrant creative and culture sector in Fenland. This work has highlighted a lack of capacity within the creative and heritage sector (with many active groups run by volunteers operating with little financial or infrastructure support), and an ambition to connect more people into heritage activities.

The Fenland Orchards Project is being implemented with residents to:

- Offer local volunteering opportunities to combat social isolation and loneliness.
- Provide an outdoor space to spend time immersed in nature, and getting fresh air.
- Provide activities on-site and a community outreach programme to build peoples heritage knowledge.

COVID-19 has further highlighted the role of green spaces and connecting to nature in delivering physical and mental health benefits.

The Fenland Orchards Project is intended to build individual confidence and self-esteem, and provide opportunities for residents to be physically and mentally active.



About the Fenland Orchards Project.



About

Fenland Orchards Project

The Fenland Orchards Project was launched in August 2021. Under the strapline ‘celebrate, learn, work’, the project has been bringing the local community together to create a new community heritage orchard on a 3-acre site on the outskirts of Wisbech leased from the Town Council for 30-years.

Alongside the orchard site, CPLT has also developed and been delivering:

- A programme of fun, interactive and engaging events for the local community.
- Training courses and support for volunteers to plan, plant and manage the orchard site.
- Sessions for school children to learn about growing fruits and vegetables.

CPLT is also delivering outreach work at other orchard sites and green spaces in Wisbech and surrounding areas; and working with partners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of community green spaces.

“I hope this project will encourage others to replicate this and plant something in their own garden”,
CPLT staff member.

The need for the Fenland Orchards Project and what it was set up to do

“Of significant concern for us is that the loss of orchards means the loss of a quintessential part of our landscape, but equally important, the loss of an abundance of cultural and historical skills, traditions and associations”, **project volunteer.**

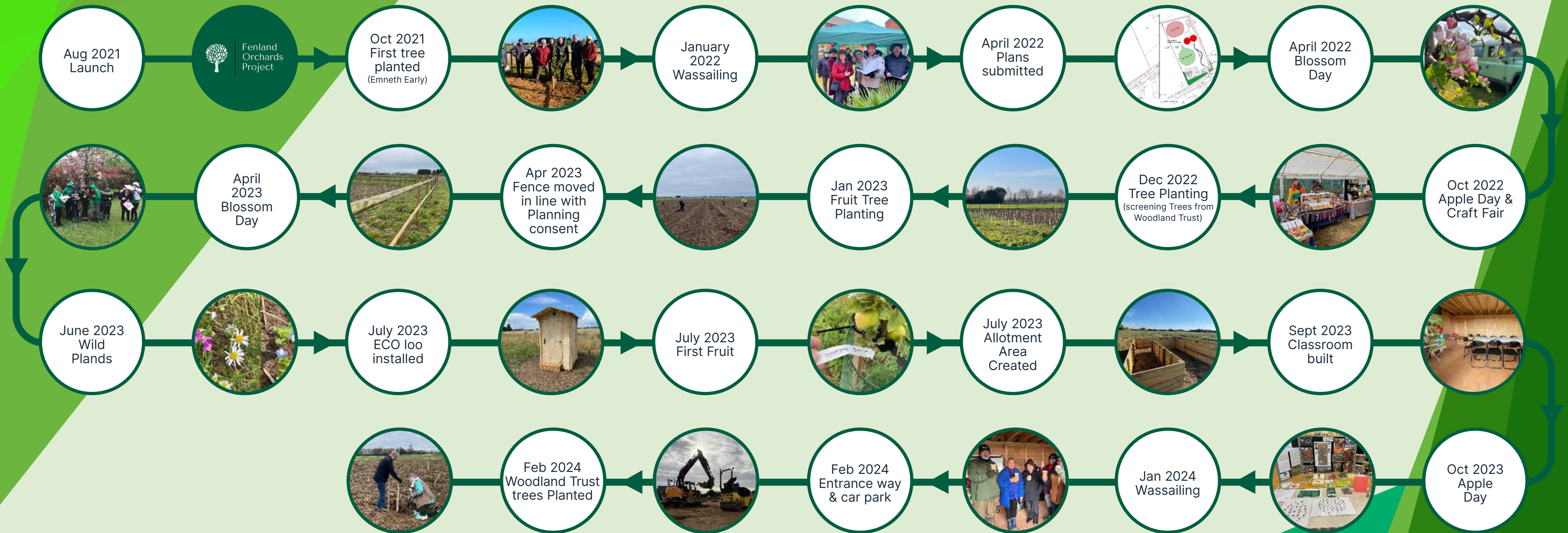
The initial development of the project involved looking at how to celebrate, present and access local orchard heritage. To assist CPLT in doing this, a project steering group was set up. Comprising representatives from Wisbech Town Council, Orchards Church of England Academy, Wisbech Museum, Wisbech in Bloom, Clarion Housing Group, and Cambridgeshire County Council, the group meets on a quarterly basis to support the implementation of the project and ensure its legacy and sustainability.

The timeline overleaf has been produced by CPLT staff with project volunteers, participants and steering group members. It highlights some of the key events that have happened since the project was launched.

About

Fenland Orchards Project

A time lapse video of the orchard has been produced by CPLT staff for the local community, partners and stakeholders (available here: <https://www.facebook.com/FenlandOrchardsProject/>).



About

Fenland Orchards Project

The Theory of Change Standard Format.

The diagrams summarise why the project is needed, the activities it is delivering and the outcomes and longer-term change people want to see happen. The first diagram follows a standard format, while the second diagram was developed following feedback from the project steering group and residents who found the first format constraining. To assist the local community in understanding the scale of what the project can achieve, a second, tree format, theory of change was also developed.

Need

The first orchard was recorded in Fenland in mid-1800s. As **orchards were grubbed up or neglected** unique varieties of trees and skills used to produce them were lost.

CP Learning Trust (CPLT) carried out a consultation with local residents. This revealed **residents had little or no knowledge of the heritage of Fenland orchards**.

Parts of Fenland, including the town of Wisbech, have a higher proportion of residents on Universal Credit compared to other parts of the county and country. There are high levels of economic inactivity and in-work poverty. Fewer residents report being in good or very good health.

CPLT submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to begin Fenland Orchard Project.

Activities

The activities the project is delivering include (but are not limited to):

- the creation of new community heritage orchard on a 3-acre site on the outskirts of Wisbech.
- A programme of fun, interactive and informative community events.
- Training courses for volunteers on how to manage community orchards.
- An outdoor classroom for school and college pupils to learn about growing fruit and vegetables
- Outreach work at other orchard sites and green spaces in Fenland.
- Work with organisations to raise awareness of the benefits of community green spaces.

All of these activities are co-designed **with** and **for** residents and community groups, with some of the activities delivered **by** residents.

Outputs & Outcomes

Celebrate

- The creation of a new outdoor space for residents to come together.
- Identifying local heritage, finding new ways of presenting and accessing it (e.g. a digital 'year in the life of an orchard'; resident/community storytelling).
- **Reconnecting people to nature and heritage.**

Work

- Providing new volunteering opportunities and pre-employment support.
- Establishing partnerships with other organisations to develop the orchard.
- **Raising the aspirations of residents their prospects for the future.**

Learn

- Residents of all ages, genders, abilities and ethnic origins are learning new and traditional skills.
- Encouraging healthier lifestyles (food, exercise).
- Improving levels of community wellbeing.

Long Term Change

The heritage of orchards is shared with residents leading to a **healthier, stronger and more resilient community**.

Volunteering opportunities give **people a stake in their local community**.

Community capacity built so they are able to maintain the orchard site and grow its activities.

Working with partners to invest in Wisbech/surrounding areas - increased awareness of the preventative work of the project.

The **community orchard site is a demonstrator and hub for good practice on Fenland's orchards**. This is shared with other groups wanting to establish similar green spaces in their community.

Work with other orchard sites and green spaces in/surrounding Wisbech leads to a **strategic network** connecting various habitats and the communities around them.

About Fenland Orchards Project

The Theory of Change: Community Format.

LONG TERM CHANGE

Demonstrator site for community led orcharding

Increasing statutory sector awareness of preventative work

Building community capacity to lead the project

Enhancing the Environment and promoting re-wilding projects

roseregeneration.co.uk

OUTCOMES

Improving biodiversity and wildlife habitats

Partnership working with organisations to develop the orchard

Restoration of a 3-acre site into an assessable green space

Encouraging healthier lifestyles (food,

Digital year in the life of an orchard

Resident/Community Storytelling

CELEBRATE
WORK
LEARN

ACTIVITIES

Volunteering opportunities to look after the orchard

Traditional orchard skills and training

A programme of fun, educational and interactive community events

The creation of a new community heritage orchard

Building relationships with local organisations

NEED

Orchard faded due to economic difficulties

Orchards historically contributed to growth of towns such as Wisbech

First orchard recorded in Fenland in mid-1800s

To enhance the knowledge relating to heritage orchards



About

Fenland Orchards Project

The people and organisations the project has engaged with

*"I wanted to be part of this amazing apple orchard and [name of CPLT staff member] came to see us and said this was going to be a traditional orchard and I wanted to support it", **local resident**.*

*"I have recently retired and I was walking around the town and hearing what was going on. I went for a walk around the orchard and could see what was going to happen and I wanted to be involved", **local resident**.*

*"There's planting around the town already but here [orchard site] we can really plant and cover a much larger area", **project volunteer**.*

Prior to making a full application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, CPLT developed partnerships with a wider range of organisations including adult learning and skills providers, housing providers, infrastructure support organisations, employment support agencies, carers groups and mental health services. CPLT has been working with these partners and local groups to ensure the project reaches new and diverse audiences. This includes people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and/or mental health issues; young LGBTQ+ people; people who are homeless and/or long-term unemployed; veterans; asylum seekers and refugees; and older people.



About

Fenland Orchards Project

The table below summarises the main community engagement activities that have taken place between August 2021 and February 2024.

Project delivery (to 20 February 2024)

| Location | Description | Number of people engaged |
|--|---|--|
| Presentations and talks delivered | | |
| Braza Club, March | Talks/presentations covering: | 33 |
| Nene and Ramnoth Jnr Sch | The social and economic history of Fenland orchards. | 32 |
| Tydd St Giles Village Hall | Sharing information about the project – and how to get involved. | 24 |
| Marshland Hall and Tea Room | | 24 |
| Wisbech Library | | 23 |
| St Peters Church Hall | | 14 |
| Estover Sports Club | | 12 |
| March U3A | | 72 |
| March Rotary Club | | 21 |
| March orchard creation group | | 15 |
| Masonic Widows | | 25 |
| Lawsons Market Garden | | Participation in organic gardening discussio |
| Orchard site | Presentation and site visit for PECT energy advisors to discuss planting and future plans | 4 |

About

Fenland Orchards Project

The table below summarises the main community engagement activities that have taken place between August 2021 and February 2024.

Project delivery (to 20 February 2024)

| Location | Description | Number of people engaged |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Participation at local events | | |
| The Secret Garden Touring Park | Apple Day Craft Fair | 122 |
| Thomas Clarkson school | Career Day | 90 |
| Wisbech Park | WisBeach rock festival | 89 |
| Orchard Academy | Careers Fair | 60 |
| Gorfield village playing field | Gorfield Show | 55 |
| Somers Road Car Park | Veterans Day | 43 |
| William H Norman Orchards | Blossom Day | 33 |
| Wisbech Community Farm | National Lottery Community Fund Platinum Jubilee project launch for People and Animals | 30 |
| Lyncroft Care Home | Wassailling choir | 25 |
| The Secret Garden Touring Park | Blossom Day | 23 |
| The Secret Garden Touring Park | 'Celebrate the Fens' outdoor activity day | 19 |
| Nene and Ramnoth Outdoor Education Area | Wassailling activity day | 15 |
| The Secret Garden Touring Park | Bushcraft activities for families | 15 |
| The Secret Garden Touring Park | Veterans coffee morning | 11 |
| St Peter's Church Hall | Apple Day & Craft Fair | 251 |
| Walsoken Village Hall | Coffee morning and community event | 103 |

About

Fenland Orchards Project

The table below summarises the main community engagement activities that have taken place between August 2021 and February 2024.

Project delivery (to 20 February 2024)

| Location | Description | Number of people engaged |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Activities and workshops organised and delivered | | |
| The Secret Garden Touring Park, Wisbech | Willow Weaving x2 sessions | 18 |
| | Wood Carving Workshop | 16 |
| | Into to Bushcraft | 12 |
| | Visual Arts Workshop | 10 |
| | Ceramics Workshop | 9 |
| | Wood Turning (pole lathe) | 8 |
| EEAOP, West Raynham | Pruning (apples + plums) | 13 +1 |
| Orchard Site | Planting x2 sessions | 14 |
| | Landscaping | 8 |
| | Tree Protection | 5 |
| | Scything Workshop | 5 |
| | Willow Weaving | 9 |
| Ferry Project | Cooking with apples x2 sessions | 21 |
| REMO Store, Wisbech | Craft & Heritage workshops (x10) | 107 |

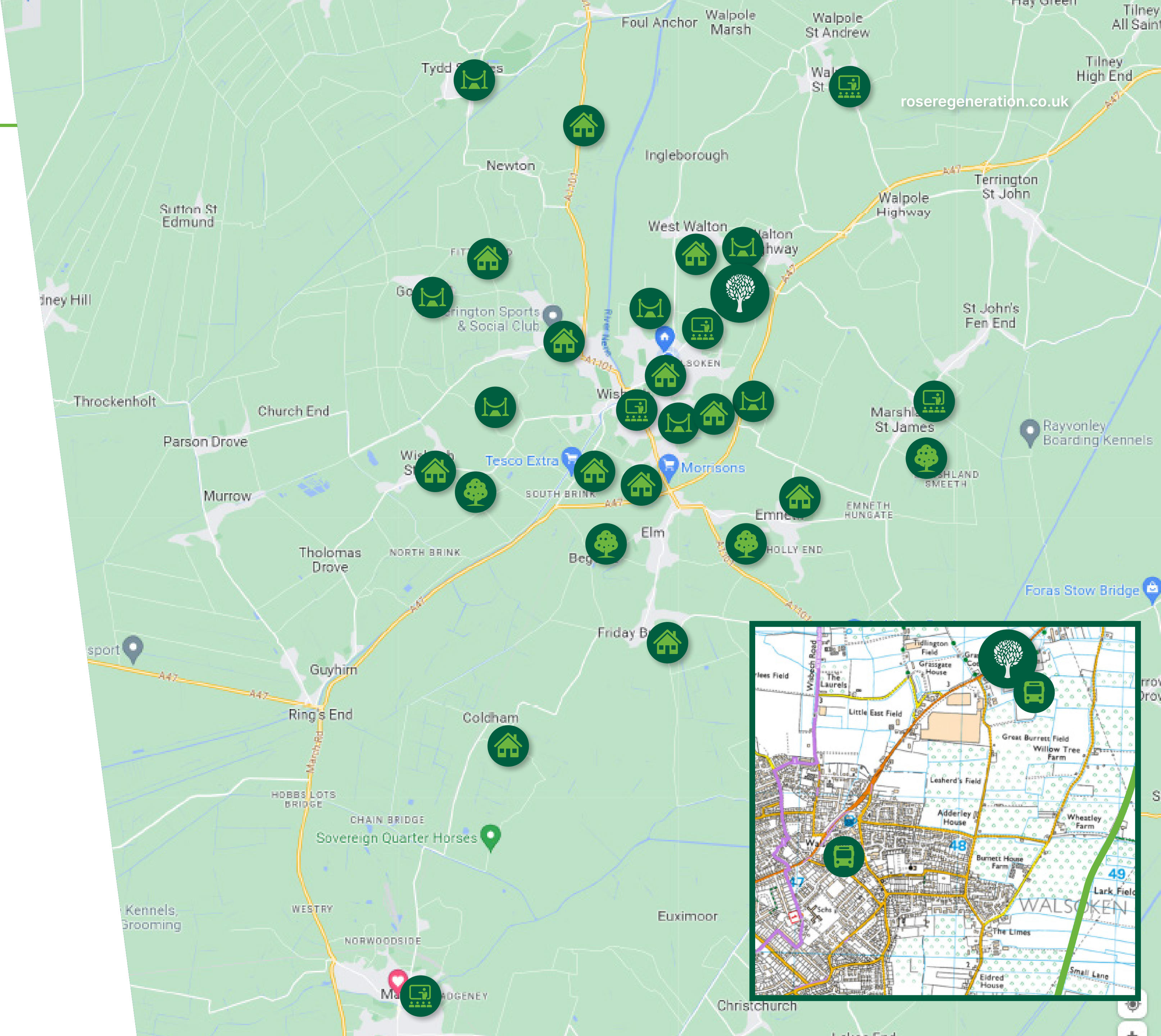
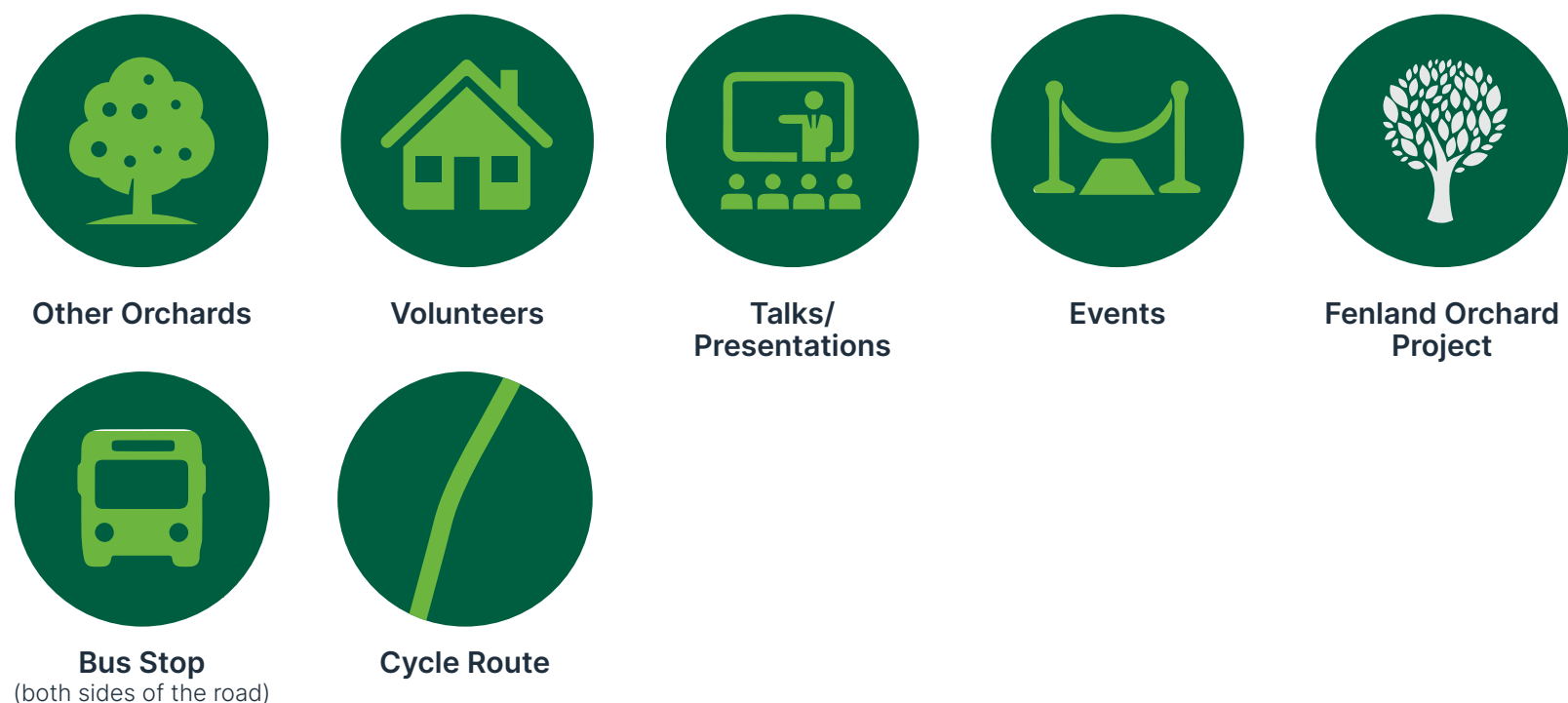
About Fenland Orchards Project

The people and organisations the project has engaged with

"We expected from the very beginning that people participating and engaging would share their knowledge and understanding with their families and other households", CPLT staff member.

"I try to get to the orchard at least two times a week, weather permitting. It gets me out in the fresh air and I always feel better. I now enjoy spending time in my garden or in my mother's garden, rather than just sat in watching TV", participant.

Since the project started a wide range of activities have been delivered across Wisbech and surrounding areas. The map shows some of these delivery locations.



About

Fenland Orchards Project

Changes made to how the project has been delivered

“The agility of the project in coping with change, and continuing to build legacy and sustainability as one of its core pillars has been great to see”, steering group member.

Since the application to The National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund was received in November 2019, the **project has had to adapt and flex to changing internal and external circumstances.**

Some examples include:

- COVID-19: this resulted in a prolonged period of restrictions, starting from March 2020, and ending in July 2021 when the Government removed all limits on social contact and business premises were permitted to re-open. It led the project’s official launch to be delayed until August 2021.
- Staffing: a full-time project development worker was appointed and joined the project on 1 August 2021. They left in December 2021. A temporary worker was recruited and began working on the project in January 2022. They were permanently appointed through an open and competitive recruitment process in February 2022.
- Change in land use: the orchard site had previously been used for growing crops. At the time of application CPLT was advised the change of land use to a heritage orchard would be straightforward. While Wisbech Town Council was fully supportive of the project, Norfolk County Council required additional site plans to be drawn up to satisfy planning requirements. This cost £2,583, with the cost absorbed within the existing budget for the project rather than through a request for additional grant funding.
- Planning permission: CPLT applied for, and was granted, planning permission from Norfolk County Council for changes to the site and to erect an outdoor classroom and storage shed. However, the original decision was deferred twice by the Council, owing to staff leave and absence, and when permission was granted in October 2022 the Council requested the entrance gate be widened and site access be further improved.

- Cost of living pressures: since late 2021 the prices of many essential goods began increasing faster than household incomes. While nearly everyone is affected some households are particularly vulnerable. Data collated by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Public Health Intelligence Team in November 2022 shows a higher proportion of households on Universal Credit in Wisbech compared to other wards in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Child poverty, fuel poverty and income deprivation are all above the national average in Fenland.

These circumstances have shaped the project in three key ways:

- I. The pandemic and planning delays led the project to be re-phased with delivery initially focused on increasing people’s knowledge and awareness of the heritage of Fenland orchards and more recently on the creation of a traditional orchard. Staff have looked at how/where/when face-to-face activities could be delivered in other locations in Wisbech and surrounding areas and how to increase community engagement in the project. This means the community orchard is becoming part of an integrated network of green and open spaces across the town rather than a standalone or separate site.
- II. The pandemic highlighted the role of green spaces and connecting to nature in delivering physical and mental health benefits. Project staff delivered activities to support residents with the immediacy of the pandemic (e.g., delivering activities online, delivering activities in-person when restrictions allowed). The project also orientated to look at pandemic recovery and more recently cost-of-living pressures to plan and deliver activities to help people maintain and/or improve their physical, mental, and emotional health. This emphasis on health and wellbeing is greater than originally planned.
- III. Project collaboration and networking with partners and stakeholders is more extensive and wider-ranging than was originally envisaged. When the project was being developed emphasis was placed on building a relationship with People and Animals (on adjoining site). However, supported by the steering group, the partnership working has been much more extensive than planned.

About

Fenland Orchards Project

Grant Terms

| Approved purposes of HLF grant | Project implementation |
|---|---|
| <p>Provide high visibility acknowledgement of the National Lottery Heritage Fund on site, online, and in all activities.</p> | <p>The funder's logo and a written statement of support are displayed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff email signatures. • Project Facebook page and Instagram feed. • Throughout the orchard site. • Event posters, banners, and display boards. • On workshop leaflets, handouts, and resources. • Any electronic or hard copy information shared about the project. • In addition, the funding is acknowledged when discussing the project with volunteers, participants, partners and stakeholders |
| <p>Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the development of the project.</p> | <p>CPLT's vision is for everybody to have the opportunity to improve their life through learning; and the charity's values and principles are centred around respecting the equality and diversity of all.</p> <p>CPLT considered the possible barriers and challenges potential volunteers and participants might face and how these might be overcome. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low confidence, self-esteem, and social exclusion: the delivery model developed identified the importance of providing a relaxed and inviting environment where people feel able and encouraged to experience new things and share their knowledge • Limited mobility: the importance of ensuring all delivery venues are fully accessible. • Hearing and/or visual impairment: providing resources in accessible and suitable formats and reviewing venue layout and seating. • Mental and physical health issues and/or disabilities: consideration of delivery timings, activities, location, and venue layout. • Limited access to transport: deliver activities at times which align to bus timetables, encourage and support car sharing, and provide transport if needed. • Young children and/or people with caring responsibilities: providing activities which are suitable for family members to attend together and that fit around school hours. |

About

Fenland Orchards Project

Grant Terms

| Approved purposes of HLF grant | Project implementation |
|---|--|
| Employ a full-time Fenland Orchards Project Worker, supported by two existing staff. | The full-time project worker is supported by a part-time project coordinator and part-time finance and administration manager. They receive support from the chief executive and the project steering group. The project is overseen by CPLT's board of trustees. |
| Deliver workshops, courses, presentations, and activities to around 360 people of all genders and ethnic groups at various Fenland locations. | <p>All project activity is reported on the project Facebook and Instagram feeds.</p> <p>The table and map in the About section provide a summary of the activities, workshops, presentations, and events held. This work has covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social and economic history of Fenland orchards. • Traditional orcharding skills (e.g., planting, pruning, grafting, willow weaving). • Orchard biodiversity (e.g., recording species, building bug and bee houses). • Heritage crafts (e.g., tapestries, embroidery). <p>1,542 people of all genders and ethnic groups have directly participated in project activities.</p> |
| Form a Steering Group. | The steering group meets quarterly to guide and monitor project delivery and the external evaluation. |
| Develop a website and promote the project throughout the Fenland area. | <p>The project has a web page, Facebook site, and Instagram feed.</p> <p>All project activities are advertised and reported on these platforms.</p> <p>CPLT also provides regular updates to local groups and organisations including schools, colleges, libraries, museums, community and faith groups, housing associations and specialist organisations (e.g., mental health) and local authorities. Some of these organisations also host information about the project on their sites (e.g., HAY Fenland https://hayfenland.co.uk/activities/fenland-orchard-project/).</p> |
| Recruit, induct and train 20 volunteers over the life of the project. | The project has recruited, inducted, and is supporting 29 regular volunteers. Volunteers have been involved in planning and developing the orchard site, and been provided with opportunities to learn new skills (e.g., clearing ground, preparing the soil, planting heritage rootstock and maintenance). |
| Develop a community orchard. | The timeline in the About section highlights the development of the site since the project was launched. The first tree was planted in October 2021 and the site is now fully planted. 440 trees will be planted around the perimeter of the site from March 2024. |
| Evaluate the project. | Rose Regeneration was appointed to undertake an external evaluation in November 2022. They produced a baseline report, interim report and final report. |

About

Fenland Orchards Project

Learning lessons along the way

CPLT planned time for regular reflection and made a commitment to ‘learn as you go’ to help make learning just as much a part of the project as the activities being delivered.

Learning at a project level:

- To prepare the budget CPLT worked out what the project would cost. At the application stage this comprised 15 cost headings covering people (e.g. staff, volunteers, professional fees), heritage (e.g. land lease, heritage fruit trees), publicity and promotion, community events and evaluation. The budget also included a contingency of £2,058 and inflation of £1,258. The budget did not make any provision for capital works. At the planning stage Norfolk County Council applied two conditions requiring capital works which were not highlighted during preliminary discussions: (i) road access and (ii) site access. These costs were absorbed within the overall budget for the project rather than through a request for additional grant funding. Considering the nature and risk of the project at the outset including (a) the possibility of needing to carry out capital works, (b) allocating around 10% of the budget into a contingency pot, and (c) increasing the funding allocated to inflation, may all have helped the project respond to unforeseen requests.
- At the application stage CPLT set out the problems they might encounter and how these would be managed. Being unable to recruit sufficient participants, being unable to access land owned by the Town Council, and budget overspend were all highlighted. Given the changing circumstances indicated in section 2.3, having a dedicated project risk register reviewed by the project staff team, project steering group and CPLT trustee board at regular intervals may have supported CPLT in managing risk (via a ‘heat map’ showing likelihood and impact) and with its forward and strategic planning.

- At the application stage having an end of project independent evaluation report was referenced. A formative evaluation was commissioned to measure the impact of the project in real-time. By evaluating the project whilst it is being implemented CPLT has been able to find out how effective, efficient and sustainable the support it is providing is. This focus on evaluation has led CPLT to work with Rose Regeneration to routinely collect data and stories to show examples of change. This has also involved asking service users how they want to give feedback, leading to different insights and learning. The evaluation has been overseen by the project steering group.

CPLT is also delivering outreach work at other orchard sites and green spaces in Wisbech and surrounding areas; and working with partners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of community green spaces.

“We were surprised that people embraced evaluation. We have been really inspired by this and as a result we have made changes to the project in response to their feedback”, CPLT project worker.

Learning at an organisational level:

- CPLT has used this project as a springboard to support the charity to become more organisationally and financially sustainable. This includes ensuring CPLT is in a strong position to adapt to changing circumstances and is able to take advantage of new opportunities. Work undertaken by CPLT to do this includes a ‘diagnostic’ to understand CPLT’s current position and how this has developed; and a programme of organisational development (e.g. governance review, trustee training, investigating income generating activities, the development of digital resources).

**What difference is
the project making?**

What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

To understand the difference the project is making in ensuring everyone has opportunities to learn, develop new skills and explore heritage (regardless of their personal circumstances or background), participant journey mapping was undertaken. This is a simple flow chart setting out the journey of participants into, through and out of the project. The diagram was developed with project staff, volunteers and participants.

While recognising how the project is person centred, this mapping highlights three key stages and nine significant steps that participants take when they engage with the project.

Stage 1: co-designing project activities with local communities

A wide range of community members have been involved in the planning and implementation of the project.

1. Promoting the project

The project worker has raised awareness with residents, local groups and organisations through social media, talks and presentations, and stands at local events. The project worker has also liaised with the project steering group to build local linkages and connections; and with CPLT staff/other projects and trustees.

2. Referral

Participants can self-refer into the project (i.e., making contact via email, phone, or online), or they can be referred by another resident, group or organisation. Word-of-mouth and peer referral have been important for this project.

Stage 2: project delivery

The orchard has been planted and is being maintained by the local community, facilitated by project staff and CPLT.

3. Triaging

The project worker holds an initial/first meeting face-to-face with the participant to find out how they would like to engage in the project and to start to build a picture of their interests, needs, circumstances, life and professional experiences. This initial meeting also provides the participant with information about the project, and the project staff, and is important in deciding whether the project is right for them. It also starts to build rapport and trust with the participant to match them up with project activities/opportunities. If the project is not right for them the project worker identifies other opportunities within CPLT or at another organisation that could assist them.

4. Enrolment

The participant completes an enrolment form – confirming their contact details, household situation and employment status.

5. Participation

The beneficiary engages in one or more of the following strands of the project:

- (i) Activities on the orchard site.
- (ii) Outreach activities (e.g. talks/presentations/stands).
- (iii) Education and learning (e.g. workshops/courses).
- (iv) Activities that underpin the project such as communications (e.g. helping with project flyers, social media).

Each of these strands are co-designed with participants.

What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

CPLT is also delivering outreach work at other orchard sites and green spaces in Wisbech and surrounding areas; and works with partners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of community green spaces.

6. Monitoring

The project worker checks the activities participants are engaging in and how these are helping them. This includes in-person review and insights from feedback form(s).

“Communication is important in keeping in contact with participants – what they want to do, what they don’t want to do. There’s ongoing, real-time monitoring and we all want to work to the best interests of the community and the orchard”, project worker.

Participants are not expected to engage in the project in a set or standard way – and the activities they engage in and their frequency may change over time. For example: some participants want to enrol on a workshop(s) while others want to work on the orchard site in the long-term. Some people have come into the project wanting to use heritage or landscaping skills from their professional background but then decide to participate in other strands of the project.

7. Access to other support/services

Participants may also access other non-project support from another CPLT project (e.g. literacy or numeracy), or from an external organisation. For example, the project has connected beneficiaries to social prescribers/health providers, colleges and training providers.

Stage 3: looking ahead

The orchard is viewed by residents and organisations as an open and welcoming space, and as part of a network of green spaces in the town.

8. Outcomes

The project worker monitors the activities participants are engaging in and how these are helping them – this may cover (but is not limited to): improvements in health and wellbeing, learning new skills, identifying local heritage, increasing the biodiversity of the local environment, and meeting up with other residents. There are examples of beneficiaries who have moved on to take up formal learning and training opportunities via Cambridgeshire Skills and who are engaging with health services (e.g. social prescribing, mental health).

9. Sustaining

Some engagement will be time-limited and for other participants their engagement will be longer-term. Contact is maintained with participants (current and previous) through project social media platforms, CPLT Update (regular newsletter) and through providing people with formal volunteering opportunities on the project. In the longer-term, over the next 3-5 years, it is intended that the project will build community capacity, skills and leadership so they can grow and maintain the site with less day-to-day input from CPLT.

“The whole community benefits [from the orchard] and it’s down to the community and volunteers... CPLT has provided the support and the infrastructure to get it established but it needs to continue to be community driven into the future”, project worker.

These stages and steps are illustrated in the diagram overleaf.

9. Sustaining

Some beneficiary participation will be time-limited or for a standalone activity (e.g. training course) while for others their engagement will continue into the longer-term. Contact is maintained through i) Project social media, ii) CPLT newsletter, and/or iii) volunteering opportunities.

7. Access to other support/services

This could be from other CPLT projects and/or support from an external organisation(s).

5. Participation

Beneficiary engages in i) activities on the orchard site ii) outreach activities e.g. talks/presentations/stands iii) education and learning e.g. workshops/courses, and iv) activities that underpin the project such as communications. These activities are co-designed with beneficiaries.

3. Triaging

Project worker meets beneficiary in-person to start to build a picture of their skills and interests, and to decide whether the projects is right for them.

1. Promotion

Raising awareness through social media, talks and presentation and stands at local events. Projects worker also promotes to community groups and organisation.

8. Outcomes

Beneficiary complete distance travelled questionnaire to measure the difference the project is making - this may cover (but not limited to): improvements in health and wellbeing, learning new skills, identifying local heritage, increasing the biodiversity of the local environment, and meeting up with other residents.

6. Monitoring

Project worker checks the activities beneficiaries are engaging in and how these are helping them. This includes in-person review and feedback form(s).

4. Enrollment

Beneficiary completes an enrollment form and a 'getting to know you' distance travelled questionnaire.

2. Referral

Beneficiary makes contact with the project i) self-referral (online, email, phone), ii) through project worker outreach or iii) another organisation.



What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

People /individual benefits

People engaged in the project were asked to describe it in one word. Their responses are shown in the tree cloud opposite:

Participants, volunteers, staff, partners and stakeholders all consistently used the following terms to describe the project: People, Heritage, Partnership and Sustainability. The words chosen also resonate with the people involved in designing and delivering the project (e.g. community, volunteers); the activities being delivered on the orchard site (e.g. trees, apples, skills, education, learning, story-telling); the difference the project is making now (e.g. uplifting, self-belief, collaboration); and the role it can play in the future (e.g. hope, health, wellbeing).



What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

Participants explained how they had got involved in the project and the difference it has made:

Jo

How did you hear about the project?

I saw it advertised in my parish magazine.

What have you done?

I've helped to plant some fruit trees.

What has changed for you as a result?

I wanted to start joining in with community activities and this has really helped me to do that...I get ideas when I meet other people.

If you hadn't come to the project, would you have done something else?

Probably some housework...but that wouldn't have been as much fun!

What do you plan to do next?

I am going to go along to more events – I'm interested in willow weaving and making mosaics. And I can't wait for a picking day once the fruit is ripe.

Phyllis

How did you hear about the project?

I picked up a leaflet in a shop in the town centre.

What have you done?

I am helping out at the orchard.

What has changed for you as a result?

I am curious and eager to get involved in the outdoors and nature and I can do that here.

If you hadn't come to the project, would you have done something else?

Probably nothing at this time.

What do you plan to do next?

Hopefully learn some new skills.

John

How did you hear about the project?

I heard one of my neighbours talking about it.

What have you done?

I've done some cookery workshops.

What has changed for you as a result?

I really enjoy coming along and spending time with other people, and I've learnt new things.

If you hadn't come to the project, would you have done something else?

I would have been at home, on my own, sleeping or doing odds and ends to try and keep busy.

What do you plan to do next?

I want to carry on and do more workshops.

Lucy

How did you hear about the project?

Initially I saw it on social media – but then I heard someone talking about it.

What have you done?

I am very interested in food history and growing fruit. I've been to a talk about the history of the apple, I've been to the orchard, and I've done a cookery workshop.

What has changed for you as a result?

I have really enjoyed finding out about growing food, cooking food and working with other people.

If you hadn't come to the project, would you have done something else?

I don't know – I would've found something to do at home.

What do you plan to do next?

The orchard is for people of all ages and it is a very interesting project and I want to carry on coming along to informative sessions.

The project has linked participants into other support, and helped project staff to make connections with other service providers, building their internal capacity and expertise.

What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

The table below sets out the progress the project has made in achieving the outputs and outcomes agreed with the National Lottery Heritage Fund:

| Outputs and outcomes | Evidence |
|--|---|
| How are you getting a wide range of people involved in your project? | <p>Since the project began CPLT has worked with partners to ensure the project reaches new and diverse audiences. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Animals: this organisation has referred people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, and mental health issues onto the project. • Kite Trust: has referred young LGBTQ+ people. • The Ferry Project: has referred people who are homeless and/or long-term unemployed. • Rosmini Centre: has referred asylum seekers and refugees. • Age UK: has referred older people. • Cambridgeshire Justice Services (community sentences and payback). 41 young people are regularly volunteering at the orchard as part of their community sentence. • A member of the project steering group sits on the Office for Disability's Regional Stakeholder Network. This forum seeks to amplify the voices of disabled people and tap into local networks to reach more disabled people and organisations that support disabled people. |
| People will have greater wellbeing. | <p>Feedback forms developed for volunteers and participants engaging in project activities included questions on whether the project was leading them to do something differently and how they feel about life.</p> <p>Analysis of 65 forms highlights how the project has helped people to connect with others in their local community, be physically active, and how they are changing the way they approach challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants described how the project had given them a renewed sense of belonging, self-worth, and enabled them to get support or provide support to others: <i>"we're exchanging our skills and experiences", "I came because I wanted to help [name of participant] but I get so much pleasure out of coming along too and being here with other people", "I came because I wanted to learn to socialise again".</i> • Participants and volunteers described the importance of being outside, in green space and with nature: <i>"we're becoming the custodians of the site, and the future", "I'd always worked in an office and it's been great to get stuck in and work with other people to make this a beautiful place for people to come and be".</i> • Participants and volunteers described how the project is giving them a more positive outlook and changing how they feel about life/their circumstances: <i>"it's good to get out and mix with others", "it's the enjoyment, and you get different ideas which you take home with you", "I've also met up with people [other participants] when I'm not at the project".</i> <p>A review of comments on the Facebook and Instagram feeds for the project also indicate how it is improving community wellbeing: <i>"Thank you for a very relaxing and informative morning". "I can't wait to go back now it's all been planted". "I'm looking forward to getting outdoors tomorrow". "It was great to be involved in apple day". "Thank you for a very relaxing and informative morning".</i></p> |

What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

| Outputs and outcomes | Evidence |
|--|--|
| People will have developed skills. | <p>26 workshops were held up resulting in 255 participants learning new skills or developing their existing skills.</p> <p>CPLT records the skills that volunteers and participants have learned at workshops.</p> <p><i>"For most of us this was a refresher of old skills, but we learned about the blood bubble". A great workshop and terrific fun". "A great workshop and terrific fun". "I thoroughly enjoyed learning how to do wood carving, thank you".</i></p> <p>More widely, these sessions are important in mitigating the following challenges that people living in Wisbech and Fenland face:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment, industry, growth, and economy: a high proportion of people are in low wage, low skilled jobs in the town; a high proportion of people have never worked and/or living in households with intergenerational unemployment; and a high proportion of people are claiming benefits. • Skills and qualifications: a higher percentage of the resident population have no qualifications at all compared to the East of England and England as a whole; and historically there has been a fragmented approach to the delivery of adult learning opportunities. |
| Heritage will be in better condition. | From a vacant field, CPLT has worked with the local community to plan and create an orchard full of heritage rootstock. The activities that volunteers and participants are engaging in will ensure that the heritage of Fenland orchards (the skills, crafts, traditions) will continue and be passed on. |
| Heritage will be identified and better explained. | A series of presentations and talks have been delivered showcasing the rich history and heritage of orchards in the Fenland area. 13 presentations were delivered engaging some 303 local residents of all ages. |
| The creation of digital outputs to help people engage with and learn about the heritage in your project. | The project has created a time lapse video taking the site from an empty field to community orchard. This has been shared on the project's Facebook page and with local museums and schools. The project worker also recorded a podcast for 'Fenland Chat Hour', a community-based magazine show. |

"This project has provided the community with an opportunity to come together, to meet with people where they have something in common, and where in many cases long lasting friendships have developed", steering group member.

What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

Organisational benefits

Internally, the project has provided CPLT staff and trustees with opportunities to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date (shown in green).

| Training | CEO | Projects Co-ordinator | Development Worker | Finance and Operations Manager | Trustees |
|---|-----|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| Safeguarding, Adults, Children and Young People | | | | | |
| GDPR | | | | | |
| Prevent Training | | | | | |
| Recruiting and making the most of Volunteers / Volunteer Managers Support | | | | | |
| Grow Your Own Charity Course | | | | | |
| Safer Recruitment Training | | | | | |
| Charity Commission Trustee training | | | | | |
| Bid writing and finding fund-ing | | | | | |
| Green skills/Sustainability | | | | | |

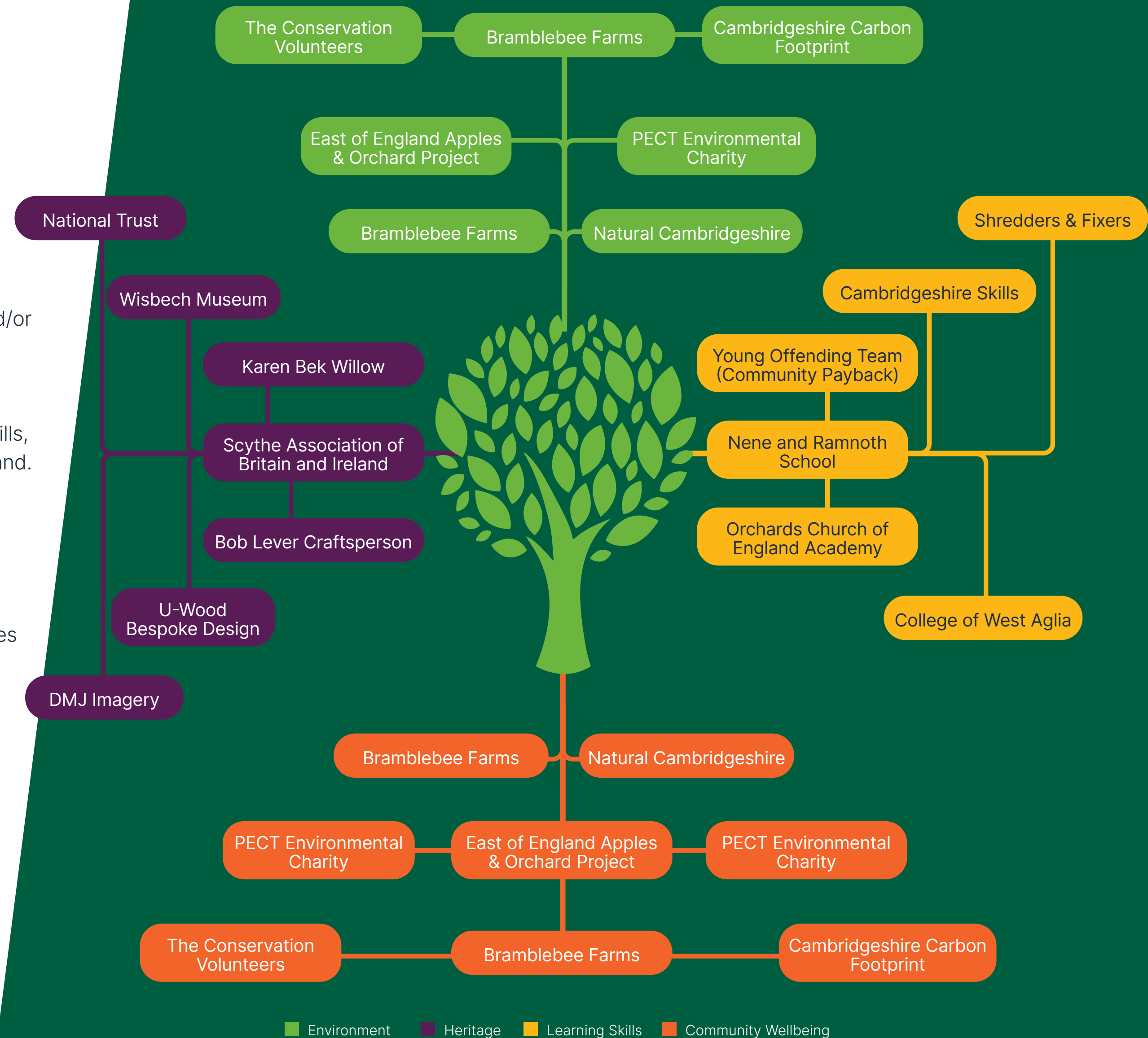
What difference is the project making? Fenland Orchards Project

Externally, CPLT has undertaken extensive organisational networking and collaboration. This includes working with other organisations to develop and deliver the project, and bringing organisations together to work on the project. CPLT has worked with 29 core organisations during the development and/or delivery of the project. The diagram overleaf shows these organisations connecting to the project on a frequent and/or substantive basis.

The diagram highlights how CPLT has been worked with public, private and voluntary & community sector organisations to deliver the project. These collaborations cover different sectors (environment, heritage, skills, community); and while some of these organisations may be national or regional, all have a footprint in Fenland.

Connections with these organisations have benefitted the project in the following way:

- CPLT has accessed professional advice and expertise on land preparation, biodiversity, and wildlife; and the type, variety, planting and care of trees.
- CPLT staff and volunteers have built their understanding of ancient traditional crafts such as willow weaving and scything that will be important in maintaining the orchard. This also extends to the structures on the orchard site (e.g., classroom and toilet facilities).
- CPLT has built its relationships with schools, colleges, and further education providers. This includes looking at curriculums and providing opportunities for teaching and learning outdoors. In practice CPLT has delivered workshops and events on sites across Wisbech. These links have been further deepened and developed through the provision of an outdoor classroom on the orchard site.
- CPLT has supported new community groups to set-up and flourish – this includes supporting Shredders and Fixers to become a constituted group and prepare an application to the National Lottery Community Fund.
- CPLT has built its relationships with NHS, local authorities, and academic institutions – this work has particularly focused on how the project can support people to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.



What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

CPLT has built links with other orchard sites where volunteers can go along and learn how to care for orchards with older trees – this includes visiting a site where the trees are 100+ years of age. This is future proofing the project as all the trees on the orchard site are currently young.

Nene and Ramnoth School, Wisbech

How did you hear about the project and what led your organisation to get involved?

We feel it is important for our pupils to learn about and love our local environment. We met the project worker and wanted to work with them on our outdoor learning environment.

How has your organisation participated in the project?

A group of key stage 2 children (years 3-6, aged 7-11 years) worked with the project worker on apple day and bushcraft days.

Has the project led you to do anything differently internally within your organisation or externally?

It has inspired the children to have ideas for their own outdoor spaces which they have taken home to their families.

What is your overall impression of the project and the people it is supporting?

The project worker works tirelessly to develop the project with the local community. The orchard is becoming a wonderful area to celebrate local land history.



What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

System influence

The project is complementary to statutory services and is not intended to duplicate or replace other services that participants may also require. Some examples of how the project supports other services and providers include:

- Developing a dedicated schools programme to help children and young people thrive. The project has worked directly with 3 schools and 182 pupils. Building on this success, a new schools programme is being delivered in 2024-2025. This includes a calendar of orchard events and celebrations (on the orchard site and online) and a 'dig for victory', the creation of an allotment area for local schools to support the national curriculum.
- Providing taster sessions so local people can learn green skills and agritech skills, and get the training they need to improve their employment prospects. The project has provided 255 workshop participants, 29 regular volunteers and 41 young people with training and learning opportunities. Building on this success, CPLT is working with the College of West Anglia (COWA) to provide hands-on opportunities for students to learn that will contribute to their college qualification – students will also be working to install a wind turbine and voltaic cells on the orchard site to generate green electricity.
- Tackling the wider determinants of health and giving people opportunities to be as healthy as they can be through providing green space to help people benefit physically (exercise, maintaining a healthier weight) and mentally (reducing levels of anxiety). Building on existing links with social prescribers and Primary Care Networks (PCNs), who have made referrals into the project, CPLT will add the project to the JOY app to streamline the referral process. CPLT will also be working with PCNs and Support Cambridgeshire to promote volunteering opportunities.

*"We have developed new links with organisations which have led people experiencing anxiety, depression and mental health issues to participate in the project", **project worker.***

The project is also working to reduce or prevent youth crime, and anti-social behaviour. 41 young people have been involved in helping to maintain the orchard through CPLT's partnership with Cambridgeshire Justice Services.

Quantifying the social value delivered by the project

*"We've identified a number of other, softer outcomes that have been delivered... these are important in recognising the wider benefits the project is having", **project worker.***

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a way of developing a value for some of the less tangible outcomes resulting from the project. SROI provides a wider view of what is being achieved – measuring broader societal outcomes.

At the start of the evaluation 10 project outcomes were identified with CPLT staff and the project steering group. Information collected from regular volunteers and participants on these outcomes was then aligned to an accredited measurement tool called the Social Value Engine. This sourced a financial proxy for each outcome. This information is shown in the table overleaf.

What difference is the project making?

Fenland Orchards Project

| Project outcome | Financial proxy | Volume |
|---|--|------------------------|
| 1. People benefitting from a programme of community events. | Cost of a community wellbeing programme with a network approach. | 1,542 people. |
| 2. The creation of a new community orchard /green space. | Cost of creating 100m2 of wildlife habitat. | 15,175.712m2 |
| 3. The planting of heritage trees on the orchard site. | Average cumulative impact over 50-years of planting trees. | 990 trees. |
| 4. Providing outdoor space for residents to come together, meet and socialise | Value for educed social isolation | 41 people |
| 5. Providing residents with practical skills and training. | Improved wellbeing resulting from participation in vocational training and learning. | 255 people. |
| 6. Providing opportunities for local residents to engage in regular volunteering. | Value that frequent volunteers place on volunteering. | 29 regular volunteers. |
| 7. Finding new ways of identifying, accessing, presenting, and sharing heritage with residents. | Therapeutic effect of heritage. | 303 people. |
| 8. Running sessions for schools, children, and young person groups. | Cost of a presentation/activity session for a school. | 6 sessions. |
| 9. Engaging with young people who have offended. | Cost of a young offender in the youth justice system. | 41 young people. |
| 10. CPLT building substantive links with other organisations. | Cost of inefficient collaboration. | 16 organisations. |

Each of the ten project outcome areas and financial proxies were then adjusted to take account of the following deflators:

- Deadweight: what would have happened anyway, without people engaging in the project?
- Attribution: what proportion might other organisations/agencies have contributed to these outcomes?
- Drop off: what proportion of the outcomes will volunteers and participants sustain and what proportion will deteriorate over time?

These adjustments were made using the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities appraisal guide which provides guidance on assessing the additionality of interventions so that their net impacts can be identified. The guide includes a standard approach to assessing the increase in social value that can be uniquely attributed to the intervention being appraised.

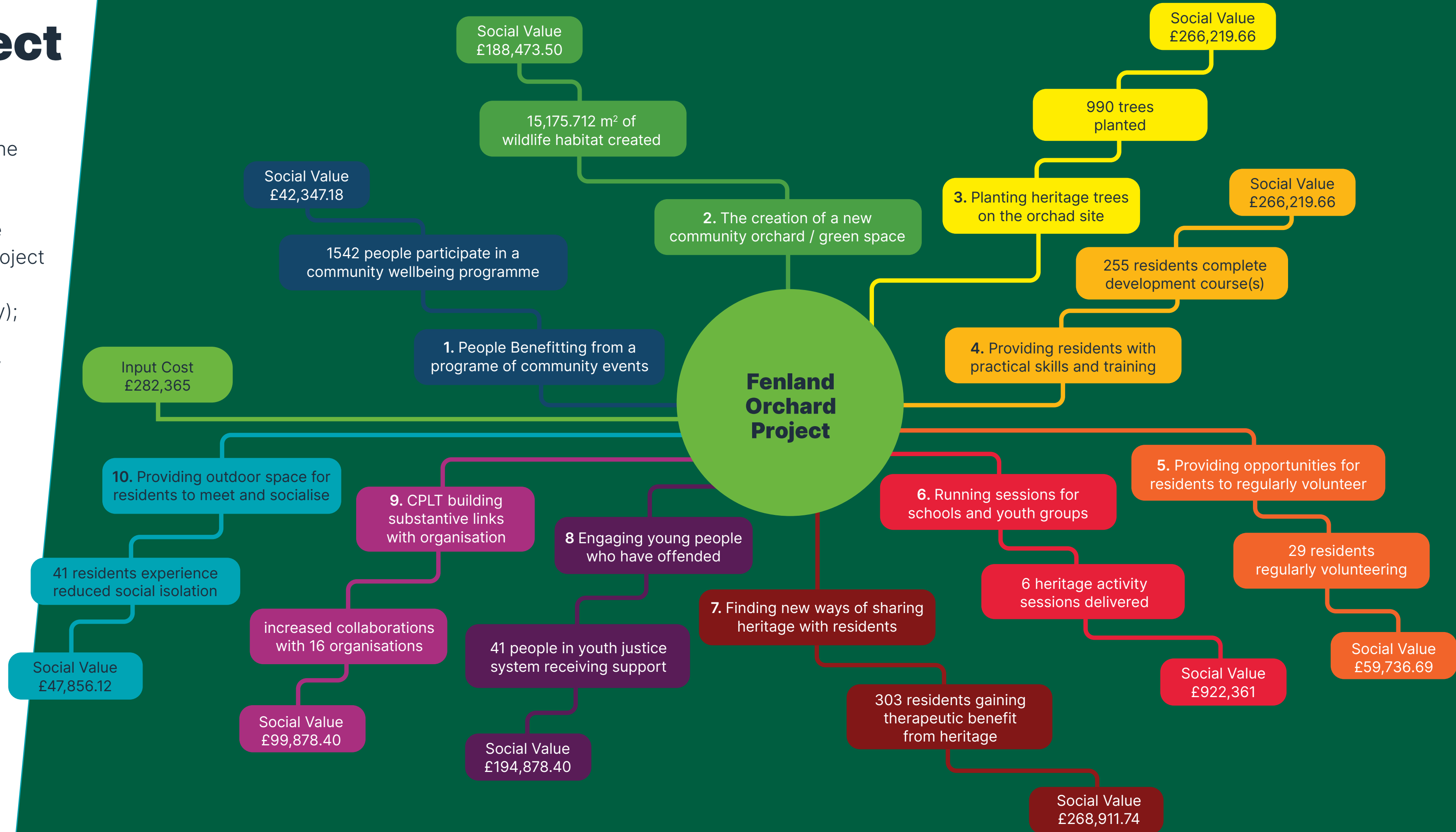
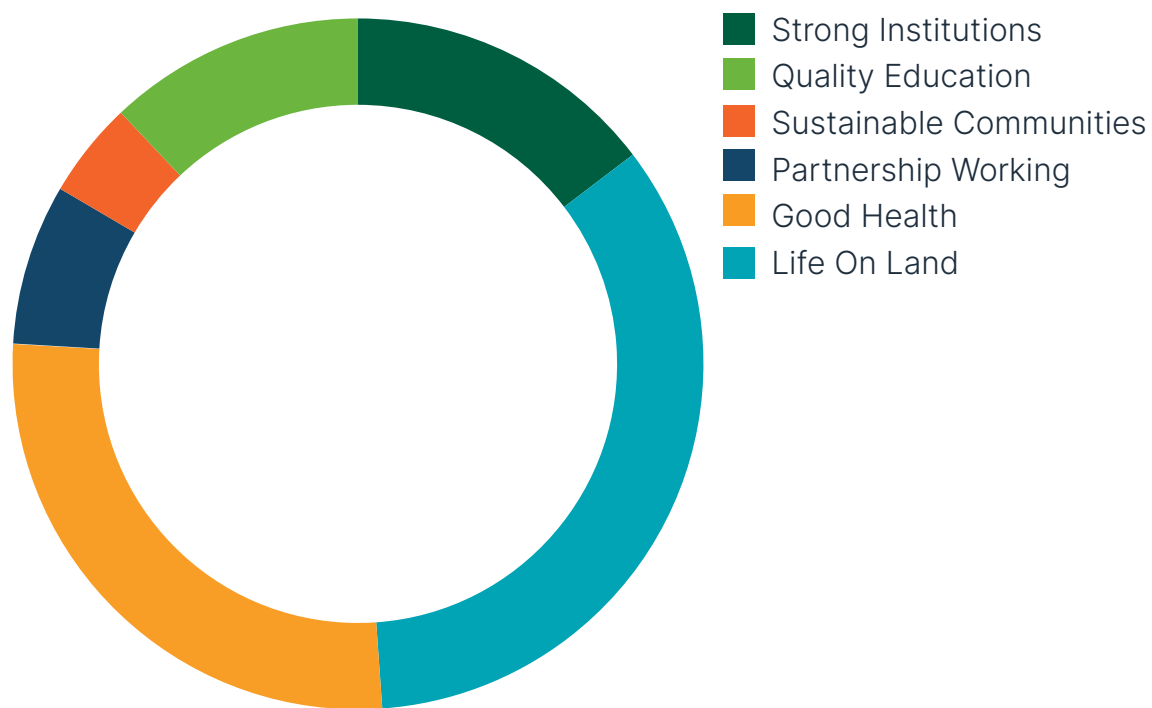
These figures have then been divided by the inputs i.e., the amount of National Lottery Heritage funding drawn down (£246,000), volunteer time (£24,910) and in-kind contributions (£11,455). Dividing the net social value delivered for by these input costs shows that £4.54 of social value has been delivered for every £1.00 invested in the project.

HM Treasury guidance on cost benefit analysis, which provides the foundations of SROI, identifies a ratio of 1:2 as acceptable and over 2 as good; therefore, the project is generating a good level of social value. The social return on investment is summarised in the wiring diagram overleaf.

What difference is the project making? Fenland Orchards Project

We have set out a map showing the impact associated with the social value assessment opposite:

The Social Value Engine aligns the outcomes delivered by the project to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project is delivering against 6 of the SDGs – particularly ‘life on the land’ (by providing natural habitats and increasing biodiversity); and ‘good health and wellbeing’ (by creating a healthy place to address the wider determinants of health). Project delivery against the SDGs is shown in the chart below.



How much the Project costs - is it offering value-for-money?



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Fenland Orchards Project

The original budget was based on CPLT estimating what it thought it needed to deliver the project. CPLT drew on its experience of delivering other, similar work; and liaised with other organisations delivering community heritage projects.

How much funding CPLT received for the project

CPLT requested £246,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This funding has been used for people (e.g. staff, volunteers, professional fees), heritage (i.e., land lease, heritage fruit trees), publicity and promotion, community events and evaluation. Additional costs relating to the planning permission and capital works have been absorbed within this budget and no additional money was requested.

In January 2024 £11,241.72 of the Lottery Heritage funding was unspent. This was as a result of reduced events costs and full recovery costs (due to COVID-19 pandemic) and reduced new staff costs as there was a period when one member of staff left and a new one was recruited. CPLT made a request to the Funder to allocate this to the creation of a car park due to safety and access to the site that were overlooked in the capital works for the project. This request was also made on behalf of residents and local groups who felt needing to park elsewhere and cross a busy, main road was a barrier to them accessing the orchard. It also complements the entrance roadway (completed in January 2024).

In addition to grant funding CPLT also estimated the value of the volunteer time contributed to the project (£24,910) and other in-kind contributions such as free venue hire or equipment loans (£11,455).

The added value that CPLT brings

CPLT is working with other partners and stakeholders to support them to make connections within and beyond the project. This is leading to new collaborative ways of working, including harnessing other funding streams into these organisations, and building the capacity of local groups and charities. For

example, CPLT is a member of 'community collaboration - Cambridgeshire, a network of organisations developing collaborative relationships and projects. CPLT is developing relationships with 2 social enterprise hubs in the network: REMO (Eco Hub in March) and People & Animals CIC (Wisbech Community Farm).

CPLT has supported 'People and Animals' to create a new social enterprise hub at Wisbech Community Farm. CPLT is looking to increase its partnership working with the College of West Anglia (with the orchard site becoming a demonstrator site for sustainable and green projects); and CPLT is working with 'Love Wisbech' to develop a local food and agricultural festival with a programme of events including apple day (the first one-day international food event took place on 17 February 2024).

Value-for-Money

Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is an assessment of the value-for-money being delivered by an intervention. The assessment follows a set process derived from HM Treasury Green Book. This involves:

- Identifying the benefits delivered by an intervention.
- Ascribing a value to the benefits arising from the intervention.
- Adjusting for the benefits for additionality and optimism bias.
- Dividing the value of the benefits by the cost of delivering the intervention.

The benefits and values derived from the SROI analysis have been used and discounted following the norms for health and wellbeing interventions set out in a Government Additionality Guide. The analysis has then been tested for sensitivity. Two tests have been carried out to ensure the BCR is not overinflated. In the first test, the impact of the project's work with young people in preventing re-offending has been removed. In the second test, an optimism bias of 40% has been applied. The table below shows the findings of the core analysis (derived from the SROI analysis) and these two sensitivity tests.

How much the project costs – is it offering value for money?

Fenland Orchards Project

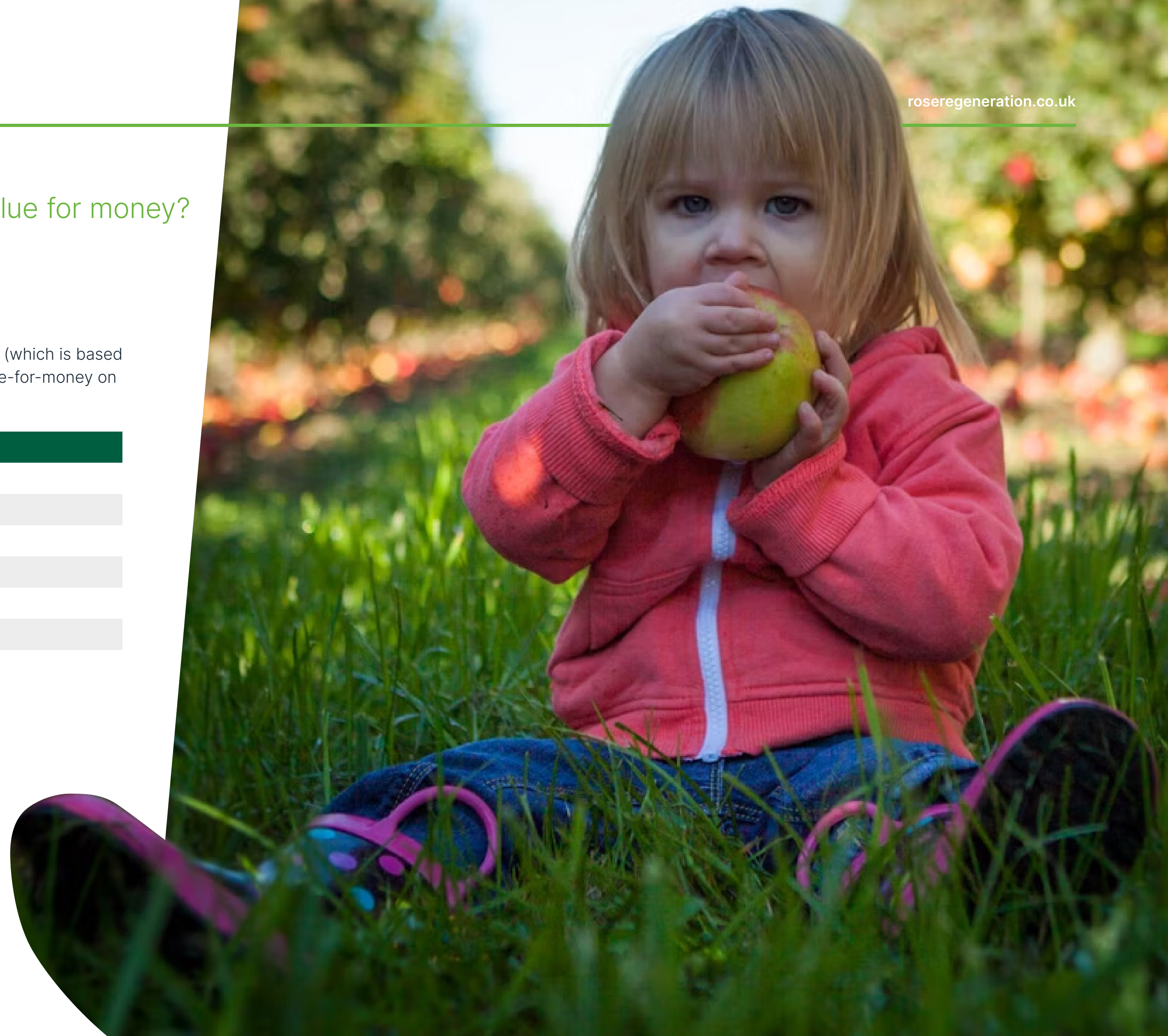
| Value for money assessment (£M) | | Core scenario | Sensitivity test 1 No Young Offender Component | Sensitivity test 2 Optimism Bias 40% |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Economic benefits | | | | |
| Delivering a programme of community events | | 42347 | 42347 | 42347 |
| The creation of a new community orchard space for wildlife | | 188474 | 188474 | 188474 |
| Planting of heritage trees on the orchard site | | 266220 | 266220 | 266220 |
| Providing outdoor space for resi-dents to come together, meet and socialise | | 47856 | 47856 | 47856 |
| Providing residents with practical skills and training | | 159945 | 159945 | 159945 |
| Providing residents with regular volunteering opportunities | | 59737 | 59737 | 59737 |
| New ways of presenting heritage with residents | | 268912 | 268912 | 268912 |
| Running sessions for schools, children and young person groups | | 298 | 298 | 298 |
| Engaging with young people who have offended | | 194505 | | 194505 |
| CPLT building substantive links with other organisations | | 99878 | 99878 | 99878 |
| Additionality Factor 0.66 (HCA Additionality Guide - people access to new cultural facilities) | | | | |
| Total economic benefits | (A) | £1,328,171.17 | £1,133,666.35 | £1,328,171.17 |
| Total economic benefits | | | | |
| Full Project Costs | (B) | £282,365.00 | £282,365.00 | £282,365.00 |
| Optimism Bias - Green Book Gide outsourcing mid-range - 20.5% | (C) | £57,885 | £57,885 | £112,946 |
| Total public sector | (D)=(B)+(C) | £340,250 | £340,250 | £395,311 |
| Benefit Cost Ratio | (A) / (D) | £3.90 | £3.33 | £3.36 |

How much the project costs – is it offering value for money?

Fenland Orchards Project

The analysis shows a BCR of £3.9/£1. According to DLUHC'S appraisal guide (which is based on HM Treasury guidance) the project is categorised as delivering 'high' value-for-money on the basis of the table set out below:

| VfM Category | Implied by... |
|--------------|--|
| Very High | BCR greater than or equal to 4 |
| High | BCR greater than or equal to 2 and less than 4 |
| Medium | BCR greater than or equal to 1.5 and less than 2 |
| Acceptable | BCR greater than or equal to 1 and less than 1.5 |
| Poor | BCR greater than or equal to 0 and Less than 1 |
| Very | Poor[footnote 201 BCR below 0 |



Where next?



Where next?

Fenland Orchards Project

“This project is not temporary and it won’t go away, it will go on into the future”, project volunteer.

“85% of people involved in the project want to continue to be involved – there is an opportunity to expand and increase heritage volunteering opportunities for the local community...there is good community engagement and momentum that as a trusted project and organisation we want to capitalise on with partners and stakeholder”, CPLT staff member.

To ensure the work continues and the orchard thrives, CPLT has co-produced and co-delivered the project with residents, volunteers, partners and stakeholders. The National Lottery Heritage Fund investment over the last 3-years has been used to kick-start the work needed to bring this rich heritage back to life.

How this project marks the first chapter of a much longer journey

The orchard is providing residents in Wisbech and Fenland with access to green, open space and activities. In the short term it is bringing residents together and giving them a stake in their local community so that they can more fully participate in society and widen their support network. In the longer term, it is providing residents with the skills, capacity and confidence to maintain the orchard site and to grow its activities. To assist residents to become custodians of the orchard CPLT has built links with other, established orchards. This has led regular volunteers to visit these sites so they can develop the skills needed to maintain the orchard as the trees grow and mature over time.

Over the last 3-years CPLT has shared learning and practice with other organisations looking to take-on or enhance community green spaces. In the longer-term there are opportunities to build a more formal, strategic network connecting various habitats and the communities around them.

The project has increased awareness amongst statutory bodies and other organisations of the preventative and early-intervention work that takes place at the orchard. In the longer term there are opportunities to work more substantively with health providers to see how the orchard can act as a catalyst to encourage healthier lifestyles and behaviours.

How this project has strengthened CPLT’s organisational and financial sustainability

“This project has built CPLT’s capacity and helped us to become more sustainable in what has become a much tougher funding position...it has also raised our profile and reach with other organisations and enabled us to take on other contracts”, CPLT staff member.

For the project CPLT developed a sustainability plan, identifying the resources needed to sustain the work beyond the National Lottery Heritage Fund period. This includes exploring continuation funding, and looking at further opportunities for partnership working. CPLT has successfully bid for other monies to support activities on the orchard site.

More widely, CPLT has harnessed the project to ensure the charity is in a stronger position to adapt to changing circumstances and to take advantage of new opportunities. This has included a programme of organisational development (e.g. a governance review – skills audit of existing trustees and recruitment of 4 new trustees, investigating income generating activities).

Where next?

Fenland Orchards Project

Building in new areas of work

Future project activities underway or in development include:

- Responding to feedback from volunteers and participants to increase the amenities on the site (e.g. electricity, shelters to use during adverse weather, information boards) and activities (e.g. fruit picking). CPLT has submitted a successful bid to Clarion Futures Green Fund to add a poly tunnel, decking area and signage to the orchard site.
- Digital/virtual tours: building on the digital outputs generated for the project, CPLT intends to create a virtual tour of the orchard using technologies such as photogrammetry. This includes the project worker undertaking an accredited drone pilot qualification. Drone footage will be linked into local heritage maps enabling people to access heritage in a new way.
- Interactive schools programme: aligned to the national curriculum and encouraging children and their families to access the orchard.
- Adult learning and skills development: increasing the existing learning opportunities by using the orchard site to provide training in at-risk heritage skills (e.g. flint napping, hurdle making, rush matting, corn dolly making, ladder making and rope/twine) and developing more growing and grafting workshops. CPLT would like Cambridgeshire Skills to accredit some of these training courses so participants can work towards gaining a qualification. This also includes working with learning partners and colleges to provide participants with routes for onward learning and further qualifications. CPLT would like the site to become a demonstrator hub for horticulture and green skills.
- Reaching new client groups: CPLT has submitted an application to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to provide coffee mornings for veterans and to run skills sessions at the orchard.
- Creation of heritage habitat areas on orchard site: CPLT is working with the University of Cambridge to develop a 'Fen Garden'. Working with volunteers, this will provide a habitat rich in biodiversity and support new approaches towards regenerative agriculture. CPLT has also made a successful bid to the Woodland Trust for 440 trees to plant around the perimeter of the site (planting commencing in March 2024).

"The cost of living and community issues are even greater now than when the project started", CPLT staff member.





Final Evaluation Report

Fenland Orchards Project



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